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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941

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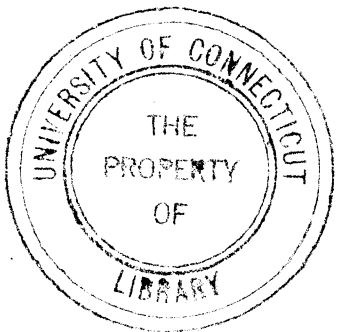
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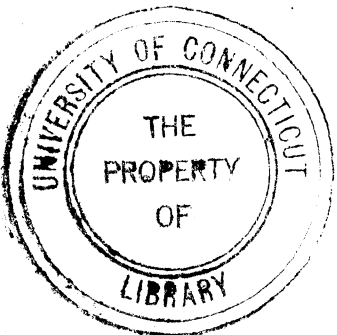
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1941

(In Seven Volumes)

Volume II  
Europe



United States  
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Washington : 1959

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE PUBLICATION 6788**

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## PREFACE

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.

The responsibilities of the Historical Division for the preparation of this *Foreign Relations* volume 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. Nuermberger.

The compilers of *Foreign Relations*, 1941, Volume II, were N. O. Sappington and Francis C. Prescott.

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 1941, the arrangement of volumes is as follows: Volume I, General, the Soviet Union; Volume II, Europe; Volume III, The British Commonwealth, the Near East and Africa; Volume IV, The Far East; Volume V, The Far East; Volume VI, The American Republics; Volume VII, The American Republics.

E. R. PERKINS

*Editor of Foreign Relations*

FEBRUARY 18, 1959.

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## BELGIUM

### BELGIAN AND BRITISH PROTESTS REGARDING CHANGE FROM BELGIAN TO PANAMANIAN REGISTRY OF TANKERS WHICH HAD BEEN OPERATED BY BELGIAN SUBSIDIARY OF AN AMERICAN OIL COMPANY

855.852/28

*The Belgian Ambassador (Van der Straten-Ponthoz) to the Secretary of State*

No. 216

WASHINGTON, January 11, 1941.

SIR: Under date of November 27th 1940, I had the honor to address to the Department of State a memorandum<sup>1</sup> with respect to the requisitioning by the Belgian Government of four tankers registered under the Belgian flag and belonging to the Belgian Gulf Oil Company, S. A., a Belgian company, a subsidiary of Gulf Oil Corporation of Pennsylvania, and the subsequent attempt by Gulf Oil Corporation to effect the same [*sale*] and transfer of these vessels to Gulf Oil Corporation and the transfer thereof to Panamanian flag and registry.

My Government attaches a deep importance to this matter. It involves the attempt by an American corporation within American jurisdiction to effect the sale and change the registry of a vessel flying the Belgian flag and under requisition of the Belgian Government without the required consent of the Belgian Government, which is a flagrant violation of Belgian law. This was done at a time when Belgium was at war and facing a great national emergency. Accordingly, I wish to lay before Your Excellency in somewhat greater detail than I was able to do at the time of addressing the memorandum mentioned above, what my Government considers to be the pertinent facts of this matter.

Shortly after the invasion of Belgium, the Belgian Government, then still at Brussels, acting under legislation specifically providing for the requisition in time of war of vessels flying the Belgian flag, namely the Law of May 12, 1927 and Royal Decree of May 3rd, 1939, took action for the requisition of its entire merchant marine in aid of the more effective prosecution of the war against Germany. Instructions to this effect were telephoned from Brussels on May 17, 1940 by the Director General of the Marine,<sup>2</sup> acting also on behalf of the Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of Communications, to the Belgian

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> H. De Vos.

Embassy in London, this being at the moment the only means of communicating from Brussels with the outside world. The Ambassador<sup>3</sup> was instructed to communicate the requisition instructions, as transmitted to him, to the various diplomatic and consular officials of Belgium abroad. Such action was promptly taken by the Belgian Ambassador and the Belgian Government requisitioned, as provided for by Belgian law, through its Consuls, among other vessels, four tankers belonging to Belgian Gulf Oil Company, S. A., as follows: The motor tanker *Belgian Gulf* at Philadelphia on May 20, 1940; the motor tanker *Good Gulf* at New York on June 3, 1940; the motor tanker *Spidoleine* at London on June 5, 1940; and the motor tanker *Lubrafol* at New York on June 7, 1940.

Under date of June 27, 1940, Gulf Oil Corporation was notified of the action taken and that all future voyages of the vessels would have to be submitted for prior approval to the Belgian authorities in London. This communication was acknowledged by Mr. B. P. Newton of Gulf Oil Corporation who was both a Vice-President of that Corporation and Managing Director of Belgian Gulf Oil Company, S. A. Thereafter, on July 17, 1940, pending arrangements for the effective employment of these vessels in war service and in order to prevent hardship to the owners, the Belgian Government granted a temporary four months' license to certain owners of Belgian tankers which remained under requisition (such license including the four tankers referred to above), to operate the said tankers for their own account between any country of North, South or Central America, with the exception of Mexico, subject to due notification to the Belgian authorities at London with respect to each trip undertaken. During this period, the officials of Gulf Oil Corporation and Belgian Gulf Oil Company, S. A., complied with the various requirements of the Belgian Government, sought and received permission to make the permitted voyages, acquiesced in the requisition of their vessels, and acted under the license given to them for such purpose. In fact, in a telegram which the Belgian authorities in London received under date of August 2nd, 1940, from Mr. B. P. Newton, whom we have mentioned above, Mr. Newton stated:

"Have decided not to insure against war risks tankers belonging our company and trading western hemisphere. We hold Belgian State who has requisitioned these tankers released from all responsibility as far as war risks insurance is concerned. Marine risks covered by us."

Under date of January 20, 1940, the Belgian Government entered into an arrangement with the British Ministry of Shipping to charter to the latter all Belgian tonnage in order that such tonnage might be

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<sup>3</sup> Baron de Cartier de Marchienne.

effectively used in the prosecution of the war in which the two countries were engaged against Germany. Accordingly, notification was given to the officials of Gulf Oil Corporation at the end of October 1940 that upon the termination of the four months' license referred to above, the operation of the four tankers belonging to Belgian Gulf Oil Company, S. A. would be taken over by the Belgian Government and the ships would be chartered to the British Ministry of Shipping. The answer received by the Belgian Government to this communication was a notification to Captain Boel, Chief of the Belgian Economic Mission in London, who was then in New York, dated November 15, 1940, signed by Mr. B. P. Newton, abruptly stating that the latter Company had "sold the four steel motor tank ships, namely, the *Spidoleine*, *Good Gulf*, *Belgian Gulf* and *Lubrafol*, to Gulf Oil Corporation some time ago and I understand that Gulf Oil Corporation has registered them under the Panama flag."

This letter followed, as I have indicated above, months of correspondence between the officials of Gulf Oil Corporation and the Belgian authorities in this country and in London in which the former had indicated complete acquiescence in the requisition and evidenced every willingness to cooperate with the Belgian Government.

Belgian Gulf Oil Company, S. A. and the officials of the Gulf Oil Corporation were, of course, well aware of the fact that under Belgian law, to which Belgian Gulf Oil Company S. A. was subject, the sale and transfer of a Belgian vessel, even apart from the question of the requisition by the Belgian Government, was then prohibited without the approval of the Belgian Government. In fact, in a previous case relating to another tanker in which the Gulf Oil Corporation was interested, they had sought such approval and they had also made inquiry of the Belgian Consulate in New York on the very subject and had been informed that the approval of the Belgian Government was a requisite to such transfer. Such a restriction on the transfer of vessels is furthermore a usual provision of the laws of maritime countries, including the United States with which the Gulf Oil Company must of course be familiar.

With minor exceptions, the entire Belgian merchant marine has been requisitioned for war purposes by the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium in the exercise of its sovereign rights and devoted to the task of the preservation of the country's life as a nation.

Under Belgian law, the sale and transfer of vessels without the consent of the Belgian Government is null and void. My Government has not consented to the sale and transfer of these four vessels nor has its consent been requested. They, consequently, remain Belgian vessels under requisition of the Belgian Government and should be recognized as such under Belgian law, international law and practice

under the terms of Article 9 of the Treaty of March 8th, 1875 between the United States and Belgium,<sup>4</sup> which reads as follows:

“The high contracting parties agree to consider and to treat as Belgian vessels and as vessels of the United States, all those which being provided by the competent authority, with a passport, sea letter or any other sufficient document, shall be recognized, conformably with existing laws, as national vessels in the country to which they respectively belong.”

I avail myself [etc.]

VAN DER STRATEN PONTHOZ

855.852/29

*Memorandum Handed by the British Chargé (Butler) to the Secretary of State on January 13, 1941*

#### GULF BELGIAN TANKERS

1. If the U. S. Navy requires that these particular vessels should be available for requisitioning by them, we are of course ready, with the Belgians, to seek a practical solution of this problem. In view of the wish of the U. S. G.<sup>5</sup> to help us in our shipping needs, we feel sure that some arrangements satisfactory to the U. S. Navy, the Belgians, and ourselves can be made, perhaps on the basis of the agreement with Standard Oil Company. In this case the Standard are again hoisting the Belgian flag on their two Belgian tankers, which will remain in American service; while two substitute vessels are being transferred from the Panamanian flag for British use.

2. Any practical solution must, however, uphold those principles of national and international law which are surely the equal concern of the U. S. G. as well as of H. M. G.<sup>6</sup> and the Belgians.

3. It is an unfortunate fact that the desire of the U. S. Navy for these particular vessels was not made known to either the Belgians or to H. M. G., before the arbitrary and illegal action of the Gulf and Belgian Gulf corporations took place.

4. The transfer of ownership from a Belgian to a United States corporation, without the assent of the Belgian Government, is in flagrant violation of Belgian law. This action is a bold attempt on the part of a corporation with international affiliations to flaunt its independence of the Government of the country in which it is domiciled. This effort constitutes open defiance by a corporation of the authority

<sup>4</sup> William M. Malloy (ed.), *Treaties, Conventions, etc., Between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776-1909* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1910), vol. 1, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> United States Government.

<sup>6</sup> His Majesty's Government.

of a belligerent Government to requisition vessels under its registry and owned by a corporation domiciled within its jurisdiction. The attempted transfer of flag is contrary to the principles of International Law.

5. The Gulf Company had previously acquiesced in the requisitioning order of the Belgian Government and had been permitted to operate the vessels for their own account in Western Hemisphere waters under a general license until November 20th. In October they were notified by the Belgians that from November 21st these vessels would be chartered to the British Ministry of Shipping, because of our urgent need for tanker tonnage. The only answer to this notice was a statement that the vessels had been sold by the Belgian Gulf to the American parent and had been registered under the flag of Panama.

6. The Gulf Corporation has been singularly uncooperative in our war effort. They have even on occasion threatened to discontinue sales to the United Kingdom of lubricating oils important for the defense of Great Britain. On the face of it, the attempted transfer of ownership and flag appeared to be a dishonest effort on the part of the Gulf to shirk their responsibilities to the Belgian State when the going was rough and to keep these vessels for their own use at a time when Belgium and her Allies sorely needed them, after the Gulf had for many years secured the advantages of operating a fleet under the Belgian flag.

7. The Belgian Government felt it necessary to take immediate steps in the appropriate District Court of the United States to render the sale of these tankers a nullity. The Belgian Government also decided to bring the facts to the attention of the U. S. G. In both of these procedures the Belgians had the full support of H. M. G.

8. Although the beneficiary interest in these tankers, built in Germany, Holland, France, and Great Britain, is American, the ships flew the Belgian flag and were owned by a Belgian company. There is adequate precedent in both U. S. law and policy to support the right of the Belgian Government to prohibit transfer and to requisition these ships. Furthermore, if the actions of the Gulf Company were allowed to stand, it would appear to constitute a violation of treaty agreements between the United States and Belgium.

9. Because of this and because the principles involved must be matters of the highest concern not only to the Belgian Government but also to H. M. G. and the U. S. G., it was hoped that the U. S. G. would intervene with such steps as might be proper to secure speedy and favourable determination of the issue in the courts.

10. Any weakening of these principles by legal delay or by inconclusive decision would lessen our control under International Law over many hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping and would affect



the right of a belligerent nation in time of emergency to control the property of its citizens.

11. It was only subsequently that either ourselves or the Belgian Government learned that the actions of the Gulf Oil Corporation had received prior assent of the U. S. G., because these ships are of a type of which the U. S. Navy is short. It is understood that the U. S. Navy, while having no immediate need for the ships, is adamant that they should be registered under a flag which will make them immediately available for requisitioning for U. S. service.

12. In view of this new development, we can only reiterate our willingness with the Belgians to explore the possibility of a practical solution which will meet the needs of the U. S. Navy. We feel sure, however, that the U. S. G. will agree that any such solution must be reached by a method which supports the authority of the Belgian Government to prohibit the transfer of ownership or flag of these vessels without its assent, and which upholds the vital principles of International Law and good faith which are involved.

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855.852/30

*The Belgian Ambassador (Van der Straten-Ponthoz) to the Secretary of State*

No. 556

The Belgian Ambassador presents his compliments to the Honorable the Secretary of State and referring to his letter of January 11th., No. 216, regarding the four Belgian tankers *Lubrafol*, *Spidoleine*, *Belgian Gulf* and *Good Gulf*, has the honor to transmit herewith, copy of a letter addressed under date of January 21st,<sup>7</sup> to Mr. B. P. Newton, Vice-president of Gulf Oil Corporation, by Mr. René Boël, Chief of the Belgian Economic Mission in London, and Sir T. Ashley Sparks, Representative Ministry of Shipping in the U. S. A.

In this connection, the Belgian Ambassador takes the liberty of drawing the particular attention of the Honorable the Secretary of State to the passages of the letter regarding the use of the four tankers by the American Navy. The intention of the Belgian Government may be set forth in the following terms: The Belgian Government is prepared, after the vessels are restored to Belgian flag, to consent, on proper request, to the transfer of those tankers, preferably to the United States flag in order that they may be available when and if they are required for United States Government Service. This readiness in the case of the two ships allotted to British service is subjected

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<sup>7</sup> Not printed.

to the provision that equivalent tonnage should be made available to the British Ministry of Shipping in their place.

The Belgian Embassy is ready to enter, at any time, into negotiations with officials of the Department of State and of the Navy in order to discuss the terms of an arrangement covering the abovementioned undertaking.

WASHINGTON, February [*January*] 25, 1941.

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855.852/47

*The Counselor of the British Embassy (Butler) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Long)*

WASHINGTON, January 31, 1941.

DEAR MR. LONG: You will no doubt know that after our meeting about a fortnight ago on the subject of the Gulf Oil Company tankers, the question was discussed at length in New York between representatives of the Gulf Company, M. Boël, Chief of the Belgian Economic Mission in London, and Sir Ashley Sparks, the representative of the British Ministry of Shipping in this country. The outcome of this meeting was set out in the letter which M. Boël and Sir Ashley Sparks sent to Mr. Newton on January 21st. I understand that a copy of this letter was communicated to the State Department by the Belgian Embassy a few days ago.

In their letter M. Boël and Sir Ashley Sparks proposed that in the first place the four vessels should be restored to the Belgian flag in order to dispose of the present legal dispute. Thereafter, if at any time the United States Government required any or all of the vessels to be available for their own service, approval would be forthcoming at once from the Belgian Government for the transfer of the tankers to another flag, preferably to that of the United States, in order to permit their subsequent employment by the Navy Department.

Although all four of the vessels had been earmarked for service under the British Ministry of Shipping, the Gulf Oil Company were informed that the British and Belgian authorities would be prepared to relinquish their claims on these particular vessels at any time that the United States authorities required. However, Sir Ashley Sparks and M. Boël in their discussions with the Gulf Oil Company proposed, subject to the approval of the authorities in London, that if more than two of the tankers are to be made available for United States service, then an amount of tonnage equivalent to the third and fourth tankers should be placed at the disposal of the British Ministry of Shipping. We have been advised, and Mr. Newton was so informed, that the authorities in London would be perfectly willing that any of the ships

left in British service should be used to carry the Gulf Oil Company's quota of lubricating oil to the United Kingdom. Until recently the British authorities have been furnishing tonnage for this purpose.

I hope you will agree that the proposals made to the Gulf Oil Company would offer a satisfactory way out of the present impasse. I need hardly say, however, that if the United States authorities have any alternative suggestions to make, we should be very glad to communicate them to the British Ministry of Shipping.

Yours very sincerely,

NEVILLE BUTLER

855.852/33

*The Belgian Ambassador (Van der Straten-Ponthoz) to the Secretary of State*

No. 831

WASHINGTON, February 6, 1941.

SIR: Under date of January 25th 1941 and with reference to my note addressed to Your Excellency on January 11th 1941, the Embassy handed the Department of State a memorandum transmitting a copy of a letter dated January 21st. 1941<sup>8</sup> and addressed to Mr. B. P. Newton of Gulf Oil Corporation by Sir T. Ashley Sparks, Representative in the United States of the British Ministry of Shipping and Captain René Boël, Chief of the Belgian Economic Mission in London, at present in New York.

To my regret, the suggestions made in this letter have not contributed to an adjustment of the question of the Belgian tankers, as Your Excellency will see from the attached copy of a letter from Messrs. Newton and Proctor<sup>9</sup> of Gulf Oil Corporation dated January 29, 1940 [1941].<sup>8</sup> Your Excellency will note that Messrs. Newton and Proctor state that the sale of these vessels to Gulf Oil Corporation and their transfer to Panamanian registry (which my Government considers null and void) was done "with the assent of the United States Government, that assent being predicated largely on the desires of the United States Navy".

The Belgian Government, having requisitioned these vessels, stands ready to discuss with the United States Government at any time, any and all questions relating to the desires of the United States Navy with respect thereto. We do not consider that conversations on this subject can properly be carried on through Mr. Newton.

My Government further considers, and in this I am confident that our views are shared by the British Government, that the question

<sup>8</sup> Not printed.

<sup>9</sup> David Proctor, secretary of the Gulf Oil Corporation.

of respect for the flag under which a vessel sails, is a matter of vital concern to all governments whose ships sail the seas. The position taken by Gulf Oil Corporation that the Belgian Government is making "an unreasonable demand" to which Gulf Oil Corporation "will not accede" in insisting that proper respect be paid to the flag, renders extremely difficult, as Your Excellency will undoubtedly appreciate, the continuance of direct negotiations with Gulf Oil Corporation. Our point of view in this regard is set forth in a letter which has just been sent to Messrs. Newton and Proctor by Sir T. Ashley Sparks and Mr. Boël, dated February 4th 1941<sup>10</sup> in replying to the letter of Gulf Oil Corporation of January 29 1941, of which copy is attached herewith.

I avail myself [etc.]

V. D. STRATEN

855.852/33

*The Secretary of State to the Belgian Ambassador (Van der Straten-Ponthoz)*

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Belgian Ambassador and has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of his communications, no. 556 of January 25, 1941 and no. 831 of February 6, 1941, regarding the four Gulf Oil tankers lying at Port Arthur, Texas, pending the outcome of libel proceedings instituted in the United States District Court at Beaumont, Texas.

The Ambassador states that these vessels which were owned by the Belgian subsidiary of the Gulf Oil Company, an American corporation, were requisitioned by the Belgian Government pursuant to action taken on May 17, 1940; that during the period from July 14 until November 1940 authority was given the Belgian company to operate the vessels under a licensing system; that at the end of October 1940 notice was given to the company that upon the termination on November 21, 1940 of the license the vessels were to be turned over under time charters to the British Government; that at the beginning of November, and without notice to the Belgian Government, the vessels were sold by the Belgian company to its parent company in the United States and were transferred to the Panamanian flag. This action, it is stated, was illegal for the reasons, first, that Belgian law prohibits the sale of a vessel under the Belgian flag without the formal approval of the Government and, second, the sale of requisitioned vessels is not permissible.

The Ambassador suggests that, since this litigation may keep the vessels tied up for a period of from twelve to eighteen months, an

<sup>10</sup> Not printed.

arrangement should be brought about by which they may be put into operation; that to this end the Belgian Government would be prepared, if the vessels were restored to the Belgian flag, to consent to their transfer to the United States flag, in order that they may be available when and if they are required for the United States Government service.

The concrete proposal as stated in the Ambassador's note of January 25 and the enclosure thereto is that two of the vessels be kept in the service of the American company and that the other two be allotted to the British Government, it being understood that if the two vessels which would be turned over to the British Government were needed by the United States, they would be made available on the basis of an exchange of equivalent tonnage.

It appears from the exchanges of communications which Captain René Boël, Chief of the Belgian Economic Mission in London, and Sir Ashley Sparks, representative of the British Ministry of Shipping in the United States have had with Mr. B. P. Newton and Mr. David Proctor, representing the Gulf Oil Company, that the proposal of the Belgian Government has already been discussed by the gentlemen mentioned and was not acceptable to the Corporation, the latter being unwilling to have the vessels retransferred to Belgian registry and ownership.

Quite apart from the merits or demerits of the Ambassador's proposal, the Department of State is not in a position to require the American company to agree to any particular kind of settlement, although naturally it would be glad to see a satisfactory adjustment of the controversy. While it is noted that the Belgian Government attaches considerable importance to the change from the Belgian to another flag, it is also to be remembered that the ships were and are in fact the property of an American corporation.

In this situation the Secretary of State would suggest for the consideration of the Belgian Ambassador the desirability of bringing about a termination of the libel proceedings under circumstances which would permit the vessels to remain under the control of the American company. It would seem that the interests and contentions of both parties might be adequately safeguarded by a stipulation which could be filed with the court stating in effect that the proceedings are to be terminated without prejudice to their respective rights and contentions and with the purpose of making the ships available for use at a time when the shortage of desirable tonnage is becoming acute.

If such an arrangement should be looked upon with favor by the Belgian Government, the Secretary of State would be glad to take up the matter with the American company.

WASHINGTON, February 15, 1941.

855.852/83

*The Assistant Secretary of State (Long) to the Counselor of the  
British Embassy (Butler)*

WASHINGTON, February 18, 1941.

MY DEAR MR. BUTLER: I am responding, and I am afraid somewhat tardily, to your kind letter under date of January 31, 1941, on the subject of the Gulf Oil Company tankers. You will remember that these are wholly-owned American tankers and are now under libel in United States courts at the instance of the Belgian Government.

Concurrently, the Belgian Ambassador has presented the matter to the Secretary of State, as a consequence of which all of the different phases of the problem have been very carefully considered.

The attitude of the Department of State in this is very definitely sympathetic to the needs of Great Britain in the present emergency and, as you know, a great many efforts are being made to give tangible evidence to that sentiment which is being implemented by many acts of the American Government.

In the present instance there have been communications and conferences between the representatives of the Gulf Oil Company and the representatives of the Belgian Economic Mission and of the British Ministry of Shipping in the United States, in the course of which it developed that the proposals were not acceptable to the American corporation, the latter being unwilling to have the vessels re-transferred to Belgian registry. The Department of State is not in a position to require the American company to agree to any particular kind of settlement though it would be very glad to see a satisfactory adjustment of the controversy.

Consequently, we are suggesting to the Belgian Ambassador to bring about a termination of the libel proceedings under circumstances which would permit the vessels to remain under the control of the American company. It would seem that the interests and contentions of both parties might be adequately safeguarded by a stipulation to be filed with the court stating in effect that the proceedings were to be terminated without prejudice to their respective rights and contentions and with the purpose of making the ships available for use at a time when a shortage of desirable tonnage is becoming acute.

I am [etc.]

BRECKINRIDGE LONG

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855.852/37a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Panama (Dawson)*

WASHINGTON, February 25, 1941—10 p. m.

35. Department is unofficially informed that Panamanian Government is considering cancellation of Panamanian registry issued

to the Belgian vessels *Spidoleine*, *Lubrafol*, *Belgian Gulf* and *Good Gulf*, wholly owned American properties belonging to the Gulf Oil Corporation of Pittsburgh.

Transfer of these vessels from Belgian to Panamanian registry was taken as a step towards making them available to the United States Navy and the transaction was given the assent of the Department.

These vessels are presently the subject of a law suit between the Belgian Government and the Gulf Oil Corporation, brought by the former in Texas jurisdiction to recover the vessels to Belgian registry. Trial was scheduled for February 28. Counsel representing Belgian Government has applied for continuance which has been granted to March 3.

In consideration of the circumstances surrounding the transaction, Department is reluctant to believe that Panamanian Government would initiate the action indicated without taking into consideration any interest the United States Government might have in the transaction.

Certain suggestions have been made to the Belgian Government designed to bring about a termination of the proceedings without prejudice to the respective rights of the litigants and with the purpose of making the ships available for employment to relieve the present tonnage situation.

Please investigate and if information concerning the impending action of the Panamanian Government is verified, bring the foregoing facts to the attention of the Panamanian Government and report to Department by telegraph.

HULL

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855.852/38 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, February 28, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 9:25 p. m.]

34. Department's telegram No. 36 of February 27.<sup>11</sup> Prior to receipt of Department's telegraphic instruction No. 35, Hamilton, vice president of Gulf Oil Corporation, conferred with Panamanian Registrar of Vessels by appointment made informally through Embassy. Hamilton was told by the Registrar that the Belgian Minister to Panama residing in Guatemala had requested cancellation of the provisional certificates of registry which were granted in October

<sup>11</sup> Not printed; it requested that information asked for in telegram No. 35 of February 25 be expedited as it was urgently needed (855.852/37a).

last for 6 months, that Panamanian law requires presentation of certificate of release from the Belgian Government, and that the Panamanian Minister of Finance<sup>12</sup> has given the Gulf Corporation until March 5 to present this certificate. This information has been confirmed to Muccio<sup>13</sup> by the Registrar. Pertinent portions of Department's telegram No. 35 are being brought to the attention of the appropriate Panamanian authorities.

DAWSON

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855.852/38 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Panama (Dawson)*

WASHINGTON, March 1, 1941—11 p. m.

39. Your 34, February 28, 4 p. m. According to the Department's information, attorneys for the Belgian Government base their contention that Belgian consent is required on Article 12, Panamanian Law no. 8 of 1925. The Gulf Oil Corporation was informed in writing by the Panamanian Consul General at New Orleans that the vessels were registered with full knowledge of Article 12, and that it is sufficient to present the Bill of Sale witnessed by a notary in the country where the owner lives.

The foregoing is submitted for your information and it is not desired that you make representations to the Panamanian Government on this point.

HULL

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855.852/39

*The Belgian Ambassador (Van der Straten-Ponthoz) to the Secretary of State*

No. 1337

The Belgian Ambassador presents his compliments to His Excellency the Secretary of State and has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of his communication of February 15, 1941, regarding four tankers lying at Port Arthur, Texas, which have been libeled by the Belgian Government under circumstances which have been fully set forth in the communications which the Belgian Ambassador has had the honor to address to the Secretary of State.

The Belgian Ambassador would be happy to see the matter adjusted on a fair basis, and to that end counsel for the Embassy have been in touch with counsel for Gulf Oil Corporation, having in mind that

<sup>12</sup> J. E. Ehrmann.

<sup>13</sup> John J. Muccio, First Secretary of Embassy in Panama.



many of the problems involved are of a legal character. Counsel for Gulf Oil Corporation have taken the position that while they are prepared to listen to any proposals, it would be useless for the Belgian Government to suggest any solution which involved a retransfer of the four vessels to Belgian registry, and they have further indicated that their position remained as set forth in the letter of January 29, 1941,<sup>14</sup> to Captain René Boël, Chief of the Belgian Economic Mission, and Sir T. Ashley Sparks, representative of the British Ministry of Shipping in the United States (transmitted to the Secretary of State by a letter dated February 6th., 1941, No. 831).

The Belgian Ambassador fully realizes that the Department of State cannot require an American Company to agree to any particular kind of settlement. On the other hand, the Belgian Embassy does not feel that it can consent to the termination of the libel and leave the vessels under the control of the Gulf Oil Corporation since this solution would mean an abandonment of the rights which it is asserting.

The major difficulty which still separates the Belgian Government and the Gulf Oil Corporation in this matter is thus that of the flag. The position of the Gulf Oil Corporation on this point renders it difficult for the Belgian Government to see how a solution can be reached. The question of flag is one of vital moment to a government. It is difficult to understand why it can be of such importance from the point of view of a private company that this private company reject all discussion of the subject.

In this connection the Embassy would point out that the statement in the note of the State Department "that the ships were and are in fact the property of an American corporation" fails to take into account the fact that these ships were the property of a Belgian company, registered under Belgian law and flying the flag of Belgium. In causing these vessels to be so owned and registered, the Gulf Oil Corporation took full advantage of the benefits of Belgian incorporation and Belgian registry in the past, and it is difficult to understand how it can today demand the right to throw off all responsibility which it thereby assumed.

The Belgian Embassy appreciates the interest which the Department of State has taken in this matter and the expressed willingness to assist in working out a solution which will permit the useful employment of four vessels at a time when the need for tonnage is so great. It is with reluctance that the Belgian Government would see vessels tied up during protracted litigation.

Counsel for the Belgian Government had suggested setting the trial for March 10th which would have given a few additional days

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<sup>14</sup> Not printed.

to ascertain in further detail the views of the respective governments in London. Upon the insistence of Gulf Oil Corporation the date of the trial has, however, been fixed for today, March 3rd., 1941.

As previously stated, the Embassy stands ready to cooperate to the fullest extent along the lines previously indicated in meeting any expressed needs of the United States Navy Department with respect to these vessels.

WASHINGTON, March 3, 1941.

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855.852/45

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

No. 1007

PANAMÁ, March 18, 1941.

[Received March 22.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to my telegram No. 56 dated March 17, 10 a. m.,<sup>15</sup> and to enclose copy and translation of Note No. 631 dated March 12, 1941, from the Foreign Office.<sup>15</sup> This note confirms the information that had already been given informally to this Embassy that the Ministry of Finance will not cancel the provisional certificates of registry granted the four former Belgian vessels. These certificates will not expire, therefore, until May 7. Permanent registry will be denied, however, unless a certificate of release from the Belgian Government has been presented prior to that date.

I should like to call attention to the statement in the note that the decision of the Ministry of Finance is based on the provisions of Section D of Article 2 and on Article 18 of Law No. 8 of 1925 (translation forwarded in voluntary report No. 11 dated February 2, 1925, from the Consulate General in Panamá<sup>15</sup> under the title: "Law Upon Registration and Measurement of Vessels"). Mr. Clarence S. T. Folsom of the Gulf Oil Corporation requested some time ago the opinion of his legal advisers, Arias, Fábrega and Fábrega, on the provisions of Panamanian law regarding certificates of release. Mr. Folsom later informed the Embassy that Dr. Harmodio Arias held that there is no provision of law specifically requiring a certificate of release from the government of former registry of vessels. The Secretary of the Ministry of Finance had informed Dr. Arias, however, that since Article 2, Section D of the above-mentioned Law No. 8 of 1925 required proof of the nationality of vessels being presented for registry, and Article 18 provides, among other things, that the Executive Authority shall regulate by decree the provisional registry of ships, the Ministry of Finance has followed the practice of refusing definitive

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<sup>15</sup> Not printed.

registry under Panamanian law unless a certificate of release is presented.

Respectfully yours,

WILLIAM DAWSON

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855.852/49

*The Belgian Ambassador (Van der Straten-Ponthoz) to the Secretary of State*

No. 2049

WASHINGTON, March 27, 1941.

SIR: In my letter of March 22nd., No. 1857,<sup>18</sup> I had the honor to call Your Excellency's attention to the fact that, after May 7th., the provisional Panamanian registry granted to the four motor tankers of the Belgian Gulf Oil Company: *Belgian Gulf*, *Good Gulf*, *Spidoleine* and *Lubrafol*, will be cancelled and that the final registration of said vessels in the Panamanian Merchant Marine will be denied.

It is quite possible that upon the expiration of the temporary Panamanian registry, an attempt may be made to transfer these vessels to United States or other registry.

Accordingly, I beg to call Your Excellency's attention to the fact that the Belgian Royal Decree of October 14, 1937, transmitted to the Department of State by note of January 8th., 1941, No. 120,<sup>18</sup> prohibits the transfer of Belgian vessels without the prior consent of the Belgian Government. This Decree is similar to the provisions of United States law which prohibits any transfers without the consent of the United States Government after the declaration of a national emergency, and specifically provides that such transfers shall be invalid whether occurring within or without the United States. 46 U. S. C. A.—835. See also 46 U. S. C. A.—808.

In view of what I understand to be the long established practice of the United States authorities to require the submission to the Collector of the Port where transfer of registry takes place, of a certificate of the Consul of the country to which the vessel formerly belonged that the foreign registry is closed and cancelled, and in view of the provisions of Article IX of the Treaty of 1875 between the United States and Belgium, I would appreciate it if Your Excellency would take whatever steps may be appropriate to notify the competent authorities of the United States that the Government of Belgium has not cancelled or consented to the cancellation of the Belgian registry of the four vessels above mentioned.

I avail myself [etc.]

V. D. STRATEN

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<sup>18</sup> Not printed.

855.852/55 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Panama (Dawson)*

WASHINGTON, May 5, 1941.

82. Following telegram received from Gulf Oil Corporation, Pittsburgh.

"Referring to our telegram this date<sup>19</sup> informing you that Judge Bryant of the United States District Court for Eastern District of Texas has dismissed libels filed by Belgian Government against motor tankers *Good Gulf*, *Belgian Gulf*, *Lubrafol* and *Spidoleine* and awarded the tankers to claimant, Gulf Oil Corporation, we have the honor to inform you we have asked through our representatives in Panama, that the Government of Panama extend the temporary registration of these tankers for 6 months and thus give us an opportunity to take the necessary steps looking to permanent registration. Your attention is respectfully directed to the fact that we have been unable to comply with the requirements of the laws of Panama in this regard due to the fact that these tankers have been in the custody of the Court and beyond our control. It would be most helpful to us if you would be willing to make appropriate representations to the Department of Foreign Relations of the Panamanian Government or such other department of that Government as to you may seem best. The temporary registration is due to expire tomorrow, May 6, and hence prompt action is imperative."

You are authorized to make known to appropriate officials of the Panamanian Government the contents of the foregoing telegram and to express the view that any action taken by the Panamanian Government without prejudice to the rights of the Panamanian Government or to any of the parties interested in this action, by which these vessels may be placed in operation will be appreciated.

Decision of Court referred to was handed down May 3d.

HULL

855.852/64

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Long)*

[WASHINGTON,] May 20, 1941.

Sir Arthur Salter<sup>20</sup> came in this morning as suggested by Mr. Welles.<sup>21</sup> I presented to him the whole situation and suggested that the Belgian Government might dismiss their appeal. After a very long discussion in which all sides of the case were gone into rather thoroughly, he said that he had authority over the operation of the

<sup>19</sup> May 5, not printed.

<sup>20</sup> Head of British Merchant Shipping Mission, Washington, 1941-43.

<sup>21</sup> Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State.

vessels, but had no authority to make commitments of a political nature; that the appeal could only be taken up with the Ambassador after consultation with their lawyers. He doubted if the Belgian Government should be asked to relinquish any right it might have. The right involved the power of one government to exercise authority over the flag vessels of another government even though the citizens of the first government were the beneficial owners of the vessels to be requisitioned. He thought that was fundamental. I assured him that the American Government had a right to those vessels; that they were wholly owned by American citizens. He insisted that the British law was different and he thought international law would substantiate the decision of the British law.

I tried time and again to get away from the legal technicalities involved and told him that I thought it was a matter of fairly high policy and should be approached as a matter of cooperation between the American Government and the British Government. He agreed entirely to keeping the matter on a high plane, but continued to revert to the legal technicalities.

He said that he would agree to anything which the Maritime Commission might ask him to do, and that if the decision was for them to put one vessel in the shuttle service and keep three vessels on the outside they would accept that decision, and if so notified by the Maritime Commission he would immediately advise Admiral Land <sup>22</sup> that he agreed.

I read to him the document and explained that the steps taken in Panama to terminate Panamanian registry should be discontinued, and said that there had been certain activities in Panama which indicated to us that the Panamanian Government as a result of these activities had decided to withdraw the use of the Panamanian flag from these vessels and that if this happened it would complicate the procedure under appeal because the same conditions would not exist.

He finally left rather hurriedly taking note of the fact that the dismissal of the appeal was not a condition to be proposed to him and reiterated his statement that if Admiral Land should write to him specifying the matters which we had generally and specifically discussed, that he would immediately advise Admiral Land of his acceptance. He said he did not know how he would reach the Belgian Government or approach them on Panamanian registry, but thought that the vessels could continue in operation pending the appeal.

I emphasized the embarrassment caused the Government of the United States by the activities of the Belgian agents in Panama against the interests of the United States.

B[RECKINRIDGE] L[ONG]

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<sup>22</sup> Rear Adm. Emory S. Land, Chairman of the United States Maritime Commission.

855.852/57 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Panama (Dawson)*

WASHINGTON, May 26, 1941—7 p. m.

94. Your 102, May 16, 11 a. m.<sup>23</sup> The suit brought by the Belgian Government in a United States District Court of Texas for recovery of the four tankers in question was terminated on May 3 with dismissal of the libels and award of the tankers to the Gulf Oil Corporation. There may be an appeal.

In order to place the tankers in immediate operation pending possible appeal, the interested parties, with the knowledge of the Department and the cooperation of the Maritime Commission, agreed to certain stipulations substantially as follows:

(1) That one of the four vessels in question under libel by the Belgian Government will be placed in the shuttle service, meaning Venezuelan or domestic northern range service.

(2) That three of the vessels will be operated by the Gulf Oil Corporation in their own interests.

(3) That stipulations will be entered into by their attorneys in Texas in consultation with representatives of the Belgian Government.

(4) That if the Belgian Government agrees that it will facilitate the continuation of the Panamanian registry, the Gulf Oil Corporation will agree that such action will be without prejudice and that in case the ultimate decision of the court of last resort is adverse, to facilitate the return to Belgian registry.

(5) That the vessel going into the shuttle service with compensation will not be considered part of the Gulf Oil contribution to the tanker quota.

(6) That the three vessels in the service of the Gulf Oil Corporation will continue under their operation in the same category as the vessels of any other oil corporation in or out of the pool in the same status.

The Department is in receipt of a telegram dated May 23 from Randolph Bryant, Judge of the United States District Court, Eastern District of Texas, as follows:

"I take pleasure in advising you that on this morning in open court in Beaumont proctors for libellant the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium and for claimant Gulf Oil Corporation have entered into written stipulations approved by this Court in which libellant has agreed without prejudice to facilitate placing the vessels *Good Gulf*, *Belgian Gulf*, *Lubrafol* and *Spidoleine* under permanent Panamanian registry and by which claimant Gulf Oil Corporation is authorized to place these vessels in its service immediately."

Please bring the foregoing to the attention of the Panamanian Government and take all appropriate steps to facilitate permanent

<sup>23</sup> Not printed.

Panamanian registry for these vessels in order that they may be placed in service without any further delay.

HULL

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855.852/65

*The Ambassador in Panama (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

No. 38

PANAMÁ, June 12, 1941.

[Received June 18.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Department's telegraphic instruction No. 94, dated May 26, 7 p. m., and to previous correspondence regarding the provisional Panamanian registration of the ex-Belgian vessels *Spidoleine*, *Lubrafol*, *Belgian Gulf*, and *Good Gulf*.

The Embassy is now in receipt of a note from the Foreign Office, dated June 9, 1941, advising that by Resolution No. 96, dated May 31, 1941, the provisional registrations of the four vessels have been extended for six months from May 7, 1941, and that permanent certificates of registry shall be issued so soon as the requisite documents are received by the Ministry of Hacienda.

Respectfully yours,

EDWIN C. WILSON

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA

### RECOGNITION BY THE UNITED STATES OF THE PROVISIONAL CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT AT LONDON<sup>1</sup>

860F.01/374

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

[WASHINGTON,] February 18, 1941.

Participants: Karel Červenka, First Secretary of the Czechoslovak  
Legation  
Mr. Coe of the Division of European Affairs  
Mr. Atherton

Mr. Atherton stated firstly that this Government was not prepared to change its present position regarding the Czech National Committee in London which is headed by Dr. Beneš.<sup>2</sup> The United States Government, he said, has continued to recognize Mr. Hurban<sup>3</sup> as Minister of Czechoslovakia to the United States. He referred to the previous question of Dr. Červenka as to why Ambassador Biddle<sup>4</sup> had not been appointed to the Czech Government in London, as well as to the various other governments to which he is accredited. Mr. Atherton stated that there was a lack of continuity surrounding the "Government" or Committee in London, a condition which does not exist in connection with our relations to the other governments to which Mr. Biddle is accredited.

Dr. Červenka countered by saying that the resignation of Dr. Beneš from the Presidency of Czechoslovakia was a forced one and had in fact been brought about following German pressure, that the Czech Parliament had never ratified the Munich agreement,<sup>5</sup> that certain guarantees given in the Munich agreement had never been fulfilled and that President Hacha's<sup>6</sup> election as President was unconstitutional

<sup>1</sup> For correspondence regarding the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Germany and refusal of the United States to recognize extinction of the Czechoslovak Republic, see *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, pp. 34 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Eduard Beneš, former President of Czechoslovakia.

<sup>3</sup> Vladimír S. Hurban.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

<sup>5</sup> For text of agreement of September 29, 1938, between Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy, see *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, 3d ser., vol. II, p. 627, or *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. II, p. 1014.

<sup>6</sup> Emil Hacha.



due to the fact that the Czech Parliament was not in full session when Dr. Hacha was elected because the deputies from the separated territories were absent. This, he said, was unconstitutional and, therefore, made President Hacha's election to the Presidency questionable.

Mr. Atherton reiterated that this Government was not at the present time willing to change its position regarding the Czech National Committee.

Mr. Atherton then said that the Czechoslovak Minister had discussed with Mr. Welles the question of the transfer of certain consular officers in the United States from one office to another. Mr. Welles had told him that we wished to be as helpful as possible and that we were willing to accede to the request of the Czechoslovak Legation for such an interchange of officers and, furthermore, that we were willing to accept the requested transfer of a person serving on the staff of the Consulate General in New York to the Legation here as Attaché. Mr. Atherton asked Dr. Červenka to present a list of the required changes, to which we would give our sympathetic consideration.

On leaving, Dr. Červenka said that the Minister would return in a few days and that he would inform him of this conversation.

R[AY] A[THERTON]

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860F.01/367

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] March 14, 1941.

The Czechoslovak Minister called at his request and handed me the attached memoranda urging recognition of the Czechoslovak Government. One memorandum is by the Minister himself and the other by a Czech organization and Czech officials.<sup>7</sup> I replied that I and my associates would be glad to give the fullest consideration to these documents.

I inquired if the Czechoslovak people were divided, and he said they were not except in the case of a German-controlled individual here and there. I assured him that this Government and this country are just as friendly and cherish the same deep friendly interest toward the people of his country that they do toward the people of every other country in similar distress.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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<sup>7</sup> The memorandum of the Czech organization is not printed.

## [Annex]

*Memorandum by the Czechoslovak Minister (Hurban)*

The United States Government has recognized neither the so-called Munich Agreement nor the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Germany. From the point of view of the United States Government, the Czechoslovak Republic exists *de jure*. The uninterrupted recognition of Colonel Vladimír S. Hurban as Czechoslovak Minister to the United States is considered a practical interpretation of this attitude.

Before the organization of the Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia in London and its subsequent recognition by the Allies, the attitude of the United States Government was perfectly understood and fully appreciated by the broad Czechoslovak masses and their leaders. However, since the establishment of the Provisional Government under the presidency of Dr. Eduard Beneš whose resignation, tendered under extreme duress, must not be considered valid, the negative attitude of the United States Government toward the Czechoslovak Government has had most unfavorable repercussions in the struggle against German domination. This is true from the international as well as the national point of view.

The fact that Mr. Anthony Drexel Biddle was appointed as United States envoy to all the refugee Governments in England with the exception of the Czechoslovak, carries not only negative implications for the Czechoslovak Government but has the positive effect of weakening the international prestige of the Czechoslovak Provisional Government. The *de jure* recognition of the Czechoslovak Republic, significant as it is, is not sufficient in view of the fact that a Czechoslovak Government, recognized by the Allies, exists. The Germans immediately seized upon and stressed this point, and reports from Czechoslovakia indicate that the German authorities are making political capital of the fact that the United States Government has not recognized the Czechoslovak Provisional Government. Reports from London, on the other hand, indicate that the relations of the Czechoslovak Government with other States and their representatives, are being impaired because of the weight attached to the question of recognition by the United States.

The discriminatory attitude of the United States Government which singles out the Czechoslovak refugee Government from all other refugee Governments, has a still more unfavorable effect upon the Czechoslovak people, upon those who suffer heroically under Nazi domination as well as upon those who fight heroically with the Allies. The broad masses, especially in Czechoslovakia where all means of public enlightenment are in the hands of the Nazis, interpret the policy of the United States as a retraction from the very definite position

taken after the Hitler coup in March 1939. To a lesser degree but still very important, is the influence upon our fighting forces. Although recognized as one of the best from the military point of view, they cannot feel they enjoy equal prestige with their comrades, Polish, Dutch, Norwegian, etc., in the eyes of the United States.

Since the policy of the United States toward the Allies who are fighting the totalitarian States is definitely fixed, the recognition of the Provisional Government would lend tremendous moral support to the Czechoslovaks and would be a strong factor in encouraging all other nations who are or are likely to become the victims of German world domination. It would be of most disturbing significance to Hitler in his drive to dominate the Balkans and the near East.

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860F.01/370 : Telegram

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

LONDON, April 2, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 1:16 p. m.]

1271. For the President, Secretary and Under Secretary. Dr. Beneš had a long talk with me last Friday.<sup>8</sup> He expressed the hope that it might be possible to secure some clarification of our Government position in regard to the recognition of the Provisional Czechoslovakian Government.

As he explained to the President while in America, before he left Czechoslovakia after the Munich agreement, he had set up an organization to function there in his absence because he had realized at that time that war was inevitable.

He stated that the recognition of his Provisional Government by the British following the fall of France had greatly strengthened his position. He had numerous points of contact in Czechoslovakia and the leaders of the existing regime as well as the people were loyal to him. In fact he had two governments, one in exile and another in Czechoslovakia itself. He had exchanged thousands of telegrams since the beginning of the year with the leaders of the existing regime who were as far as possible following his directions. When questioned however he admitted his hold on the Slovaks was not as strong as on the Czechs.

He stated that he realized that arguments could be made either way as to the juridical position but the question of recognition was realistically speaking a political question to be governed by the political consequences.

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<sup>8</sup> March 28.

Not only did he feel that the political advantages of recognition were considerable but that there was some obligation on the democracies to him and his country. He had refrained from provoking war in order to give the democracies time to prepare. Even our own Ambassador,<sup>9</sup> he remarked, had privately given encouragement to Chamberlain<sup>10</sup> in his Munich policy.

He stated that Churchill,<sup>11</sup> Eden<sup>12</sup> and Halifax<sup>13</sup> understood the situation of his people and had been most friendly. He was particularly pleased that Halifax, just because of his unhappy association with Munich, should have signed the document recognizing his provisional Government.

He pointed out that three possibilities were open to our Government:

- (1) It might do nothing in the way of recognizing his Governments;
- (2) It might be favorably disposed toward recognition but wish to delay actual recognition for some time;
- (3) It might be prepared as he obviously hoped, to consider immediate recognition, in which case it would probably wish to negotiate as the British had done with reference to certain conditions such as frontiers.

Dr. Beneš stated that he had confidence in Mr. Hurban but being without adequate facilities to communicate by cable he found difficulty in keeping Mr. Hurban completely informed of developments here and in Czechoslovakia. For that reason he thought it would be preferable if conversations could be had with him, Dr. Beneš, in London.

Dr. Beneš also recalled that the United States was the first to recognize the Provisional Czechoslovakian Government during the last war<sup>14</sup> and emphasized the point that the Germans were now exploiting the fact that Mr. Biddle had not been accredited to the Provisional Czechoslovakian Government.

Recognizing the equivocal character of his position for the time being Dr. Beneš asked the privilege of keeping in touch with me privately and suggested that I might examine the documents that had passed between him and the British Government.

I should appreciate your advice for further guidance.

WINANT

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<sup>9</sup> Former Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy.

<sup>10</sup> Neville Chamberlain, former British Prime Minister.

<sup>11</sup> Winston S. Churchill, British Prime Minister.

<sup>12</sup> Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>13</sup> Viscount Halifax, British Ambassador in the United States and former Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>14</sup> The United States recognized Czechoslovakia on April 23, 1919; see *Foreign Relations*, 1919, vol. II, pp. 85 ff.

860F.01/877

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

No. 242

LONDON, April 10, 1941.

[Received April 16.]

SIR: In my telegram No. 1271 April 2, 1 p. m., addressed to the President, the Secretary and the Under Secretary, I reported a conversation with Dr. Eduard Beneš on March 28, in which he brought up the question of the recognition of the Czechoslovak Government in exile. In that conversation Dr. Beneš indicated that he would let me have certain documents bearing on the recognition of his Government by the British Government which he hoped that I might bring to the attention of the President.

The following week Dr. Beneš gave to Mr. Cohen<sup>15</sup> a copy of his letter of July 9, 1940 to Lord Halifax, which is attached hereto as enclosure 1,<sup>16</sup> and a copy of Lord Halifax's letter to him of July 18, 1940, which is attached hereto as enclosure 2. This exchange of letters, which was not made public, preceded and laid the basis for Lord Halifax's letter to Dr. Beneš of July 21, 1940, a copy of which is attached hereto as enclosure 3, recognizing the provisional Czechoslovak Government. Lord Halifax's letter of July 21, as you are aware, was publicly released.

Dr. Beneš also handed Mr. Cohen a copy of his memorandum on the political and juridical relationship of the Czechoslovak Republic to Great Britain. This memorandum, a copy of which is attached hereto as enclosure 4, was given privately to Mr. Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, before his departure from London. The memorandum was written, as Dr. Beneš explained, with a view to setting forth the reasons which would justify and make appropriate the British Government's recognizing the Czechoslovak Government in exile as the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic rather than as merely the provisional Czechoslovak Government. Dr. Beneš feels strongly that the form of recognition should be no different from that accorded to the other governments in exile, and he was under the impression that Mr. Eden, while he had come to no definite decision, was sympathetic to his point of view.

Some days later Dr. Beneš handed to Mr. Cohen a copy of a memorandum entitled "Echange des Vues sur la Collaboration Polono-Tchécoslovaque après la Présente Guerre" which was prepared by Dr. Beneš and submitted to General Sikorski.<sup>17</sup> A copy of this mem-

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin V. Cohen, legal adviser to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom.

<sup>16</sup> Enclosures mentioned in this despatch not printed.

<sup>17</sup> Gen. Wladyslaw Sikorski, President of the Polish Government in Exile at London.

orandum is attached hereto as enclosure 5. Dr. Beneš explained that as he understood that General Sikorski had spoken about these conversations at Washington, he thought that the President and the Secretary should have, in confidence, the document he had given General Sikorski. Dr. Beneš said that he did not feel free to transmit the memorandum which he had received in reply from General Sikorski. But he stated that while General Sikorski accepted in principle his political propositions, General Sikorski proposed that they should agree in advance on the frontiers of the two countries and each should then support the other's territorial claims. This, Dr. Beneš was not prepared to do at this time. He thought it unwise at the present moment for Czechoslovakia to become involved in the boundary dispute between Russia and Poland, and for Poland to become involved in Czechoslovakia's boundary dispute with Hungary. He was not unsympathetic with Poland's concern about her frontiers, but even as regards his own country he was not taking the position that the old frontiers were sacrosanct. Dr. Beneš' discussions of the relations between a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation and Russia you will, I believe, find of special interest.

As I explained in my telegram under reference, Dr. Beneš is extremely anxious to secure the recognition of our Government. He feels that the Germans are exploiting the fact that the Czechoslovak Government had not been accorded the same recognition as other governments in exile by the United States, although the United States was the first government to recognize the Czechoslovak Government in the last war. Of course he wanted it understood that he was speaking to me informally as he did not want to be in the position of having requested recognition and of having it refused.

I might add that Major Desmond Morton, one of the principal personal assistants in the Prime Minister's office, in the course of a conversation on other matters mentioned the fact that Dr. Beneš was in close and constant touch with the Government and people of Czechoslovakia over whom he had the greatest influence and that the Czechs were more effective than almost any other subjugated people in their passive resistance to and sabotage of the Germans.

I personally feel very deeply about Czechoslovakia and hope very much that we might recognize the Czechoslovak Government in exile. This could be done on terms which would not unreasonably tie our hands at the Peace Conference. No government with which I dealt at Geneva<sup>18</sup> seemed more genuinely eager than the Czechoslovak to pattern their way of life on American standards.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN G. WINANT

<sup>18</sup> Ambassador Winant had been Assistant Director of the International Labor Office at Geneva, 1935, 1937-39; and Director, 1939-41.

860F.01/381 : Telegram

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

LONDON, May 7, 1941—10 p. m.

[Received May 7—6:10 p. m.]

1805. For the President and Secretary. Supplementing my despatch No. 242, April 10 and my telegram No. 1271, April 2, 1 p. m., Dr. Beneš has told me that he understands that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary are favorable in principle to recognizing him as the legal head of the Czechoslovak Government and he hopes that he may be able to work out with the Foreign Office during the next couple of weeks the details of signing formula which will give his Government more nearly the status of other governments in exile. For the Department's information the Foreign Office revealed that while no definite commitment has been made Dr. Beneš' request for a more definite form of recognition in all probability would be met but there were certain difficulties which had not yet been satisfactorily worked out in the minds of the Foreign Secretary and others who would have to make the decision. Among these are the absence of any technical continuity in Dr. Beneš' Government with any pre-war government, the problem of the relations of Dr. Beneš' Government to the democratic Slovakian and Sudeten German groups and more importantly the need of avoiding any action which might so associate Dr. Beneš' Government with the Czechs in Czechoslovakia as to cause the present Czech set-up in Prague to be thrown out by the Germans. Foreign Office apparently is inclined to think that Beneš unduly stresses the difference between *de jure* recognition and the loose form of recognition which has already been accorded to him.

Foreign Office also emphasizes that any formal recognition that might be given to Beneš' Government would involve a reservation on their part making it clear that the recognition did not commit the British to any postwar frontiers for the countries occupied by Germany. Foreign Office thinks Beneš' contacts within Czechoslovakia are good and that he has the support of the vast majority of the people. But while Foreign Office has high regard for Beneš, Foreign Office officials feel that he is a little too opinionated on the exact form of recognition.

Beneš is frankly troubled about the continued omission of our Government to recognize in any form the Czechoslovak Government in Exile as he thought that you were very sympathetic with his plans as he explained them to you in Hyde Park in the summer of 1939 before he left for Europe. It is true that one hears complaints that

Beneš' Government does not include representation of all political groups in Czechoslovakia but whatever difference of opinion may exist with regard to some of the excluded groups the reasons for the exclusion of the Extreme Right and the Extreme Left are not difficult to understand. As far as I can discover the Beneš Government whatever its imperfections is as democratic as any other government in exile and has as much if not greater influence and contact with the democratic groups in its home land and it is of course pledged to the restoration of democratic government. Being sympathetic with Beneš' desire for recognition and fearing that our failure to recognize his Government is being exploited by the Nazis I should like very much to be helpful in clearing up the difficulties if any which may stand in the way of some form of recognition.

Eden has expressed the hope that our two countries might go along together on this matter of Czechoslovak recognition.

WINANT

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860F.01/417

*The President of the Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia in Exile (Beneš) to President Roosevelt*

LONDON, 4 June 1941.<sup>19</sup>

MR. PRESIDENT: I have hesitated before deciding to send you this personal letter. Since the date of the conversation which I had the honour of having with you just two years ago / on May 28th, 1939/, and in which, in discussing possible war developments which have since been realized, I laid before you our intentions with regard to the restoration of Czechoslovakia, much has happened.

The plans which I then outlined have now been realized. In agreement with my country we have created a new Czechoslovak army on British soil and organized our Air Force, which has now been fighting for a full year with the R. A. F.<sup>20</sup> in repelling German attacks on England. We have unified our political emigration and we are working in close collaboration with our country, with the political leaders of the nation at home, with the intelligentsia and with the other classes of the people. We are proceeding with them in unity and undoubtedly have the nation behind us. We have created a government and all its machinery on British soil.

The British Government and all the British Dominions, having become acquainted with these facts, have given us recognition. And we have just reached agreement with the British Government with

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<sup>19</sup> Although this letter was dated June 4, it was not received by President Roosevelt until July 25.

<sup>20</sup> Royal Air Force.



regard to the extension of our international status to include full *de jure* recognition. In the same fashion we have been recognized by a number of other states.

On 28th May, 1939, I had the honour of speaking to you regarding the great assistance which was afforded by the Government of the United States in 1918 to President T. G. Masaryk in the struggle in which he was at the time engaged in the liberation of our people. Similar support by the United States for my country during this difficult time, after all that has happened to it since Munich, and after all its present sufferings and its really heroic resistance to the German invasion, would constitute an invaluable service to us as well as a great encouragement, giving to the people at home invincible moral and political strength.

In declining, Mr. President, to recognize the occupation and destruction of Czechoslovakia in March, 1939, you rendered our nation assistance which they will never forget, and which has been a great support to them. But the fact that the Government of the United States has not yet found itself able to recognize our Government which has its seat in London is being taken advantage of by the Nazis in order to break down the resistance of our people in their struggle to renew freedom and democracy in our country, to weaken them morally, and to destroy all their hopes for a better future. If, on the other hand, recognition was accorded to us by the United States, a really far-reaching step would be taken against the Nazi dictatorship, by aiding not only the struggle of Czechoslovakia, but that of the whole of Central Europe. Our state and people were a true democratic state; we were the only democracy who were able for a full twenty years to preserve our happy and successful democratic freedom; and had it not been for the events of Munich our land would still be the home of one of the finest democracies in Europe. In the present war it is in the same military and political fight and position as to-day Poland, Norway or Holland. I think that this fact entitles us to your confidence, and to that of your Government.

Should the United States decide to take the same step as that now being taken by Great Britain, I believe that their action would correspond with the spirit of your policy for the support and protection of the freedom and dignity of the modern man, for the preservation of democratic institutions in Europe, and for the elimination from the political world of the barbarous regime which is to-day personified by that Nazi dictatorship which is destroying the small peoples of Europe.

The Czechoslovak Minister in Washington, Mr. Vlad. Hurban, has already approached the State Department with our request, and nego-

tiations are in progress. I myself had the honour of approaching your Ambassador in London, Mr. Winant, in this matter, and laid before him all the necessary information with regard to the question. It would appear, however, that there are certain difficulties in the way of the recognition of our Government by the United States. Forgive me, therefore, Mr. President, if, recalling again my visit to you in Hyde Park, the kind reception which you gave me, and the sympathy which you manifested with regard to our Czechoslovak cause and our Czechoslovak people, I approach you again after two years—in the course of which our movement has achieved a great advance and our people at home have demonstrated beyond doubt in which camp they are uncompromisingly standing—with the request for further aid.

Should assistance be afforded, history will demonstrate that it was not given to those who did not deserve it. And, what is most important of all, it will have been afforded to a nation to whom a great injury was done, and whose cause is a just one.

I wish all your activities unqualified success, and I thank you for all the sympathy and friendship which you have already shown to my country, as well as for everything which your great and powerful country is doing today for the freedom of oppressed European nations, and for the democracy and freedom of the world.

Yours sincerely,

DR. EDUARD BENEŠ

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860F.01/400a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, July 29, 1941—10 p. m.

2849. Please refer to a telegraphic instruction sent to you today [July 30?] <sup>21</sup> requesting you to address a note to the Foreign Minister <sup>22</sup> of the provisional government of Czechoslovakia which constitutes recognition by the United States of that government. The President has asked me to request you personally to inform Mr. Churchill of the contents of the *aide-mémoire* which you are requested to deliver with the note. The President is particularly anxious to have the British Government informed of the position of this Government as set forth in this *aide-mémoire*.

WELLES

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<sup>21</sup> *Infra*.

<sup>22</sup> Jan Masaryk.

860F.01/400b : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, July 30, 1941—1 p. m.

2857. Please address a note to the Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia reading as follows:

"The Secretary of State has directed me to inform Your Excellency that the Government of the United States, mindful of the traditional friendship and special interest, which has existed between the peoples of the United States and Czechoslovakia since the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic, has watched with admiration the effort of the people of Czechoslovakia to maintain their national existence, notwithstanding the suppression of the institutions of free government in their country.

The American Government has not acknowledged that the temporary extinguishment of their liberties has taken from the people of Czechoslovakia their rights and privileges in international affairs, and it has continued to recognize the diplomatic and consular representatives of Czechoslovakia in the United States in the full exercise of their functions.

In furtherance of its support of the national aspirations of the people of Czechoslovakia the Government of the United States is now prepared to enter into formal relations with the Provisional Government, established at London for the prosecution of the war and the restoration of the freedom of the Czechoslovak people, under the Presidency of Dr. Beneš, and, while continuing its relations with the Czechoslovak Legation at Washington, would be pleased to accredit to the Provisional Government an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, to reside in London, for the conduct of relations pending the reestablishment of the Government in Czechoslovakia.

I shall later communicate with Your Excellency regarding the diplomatic representative whom my Government would like to designate."

This note should be accompanied by an *aide-mémoire* in the following sense: The relations between the American Government and the Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia will thus be conducted in a manner similar to that applicable to other refugee governments in London or in the course of establishment there. The relationship does not, however, constitute any commitment on the part of the American Government with respect to the territorial boundaries of Czechoslovakia or the juridical continuity of the Czechoslovak Government under Dr. Beneš. The American Government considers that the occasion for more formal reservations on these points has not arisen.

WELLES

860F.01/417

*President Roosevelt to the President of the Provisional Government  
of Czechoslovakia in Exile (Beneš)*

WASHINGTON, July 30, 1941.

MY DEAR DR. BENEŠ: I have read with close attention your letter of June 4, and recall with pleasure the talk we had at Hyde Park two years ago. We then discussed, as you remember, the unhappy events which had befallen Czechoslovakia, and the projects for carrying on the struggle for your country's freedom.

The cause of the Czechoslovak nation has always been close to the heart of the American people. We do not forget their struggle for independence and recall with pride the wholehearted participation of the Government and people of the United States a generation ago in the efforts of that great statesman Thomas Masaryk and his collaborators, including yourself, to found a democratic republic in Central Europe to safeguard the liberties and provide a means of free political expression to the Czechoslovak people.

From that day there has been a particularly intimate relationship between our two democracies. We have unlimited confidence in the vitality of your people as a nation, and we look forward with eagerness to the day when democratic institutions will again flourish in your beautiful country.

That the bond connecting our two peoples should not be broken we have continued to recognize the diplomatic and consular representatives of Czechoslovakia in the United States in the full exercise of their functions. We have been equally mindful of the courage and resourcefulness of the armed forces and political leaders of Czechoslovakia who have organized themselves abroad for continuing the struggle for the restoration of your country's freedom. It is therefore with a very real pleasure, which I am sure I share with the whole American people, that I can inform you that the American Government has decided to accredit an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary near the Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia in London for the closer conduct of relations in the common interest of the two countries pending the re-establishment of the institutions of free government in Czechoslovakia. Instructions are now being forwarded to the American Ambassador in London so to inform the Provisional Government.

I take this opportunity to assure you of the earnest hope of the people of the United States that the cause of Czechoslovak liberty will prosper.

Very sincerely yours,

[FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT]

860F.01/404 : Telegram

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

LONDON, August 2, 1941—10 p. m.

[Received August 2—5 p. m.]

3384. Your 2857, July 30, 1 p. m. and 2849, July 29, 11 [10] p. m. Note as directed was handed personally to Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia yesterday together with *aide-mémoire*. Masaryk was out of town the day previous when your message was received. He expressed his deep appreciation both officially and personally for the action which our Government had taken.

I told the Prime Minister of action we were taking and advised him of the contents of the *aide-mémoire* as requested in your 2849. He said that he was very "happy" at our action and pleased that we had made the reservations set forth in the *aide-mémoire*.

WINANT

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[On September 17, 1941, Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., was appointed Minister to the Czechoslovak Government established at London.]

## DENMARK

### AGREEMENT FOR DEFENSE OF GREENLAND SIGNED WITH DANISH MINISTER; REFUSAL BY UNITED STATES TO RECOGNIZE ACTIONS OF DANISH GOVERNMENT DEEMED TO BE UNDER GERMAN DURESS<sup>1</sup>

859B.7962/3 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Godthaab (Penfield)*

WASHINGTON, January 29, 1941—8 p. m.

7. 1. The Canadian Government has informed us of their desire to send an Air Force expedition to the vicinity of Julianehaab as soon as weather permits to determine the possibility of the establishment of an aerodrome and related facilities, and of a meteorological and radio station, the latter to be equipped with radio direction finding equipment. An expression of the attitude of this Government has been requested.

2. As you are aware the primary objective of United States policy with respect to Greenland has been to keep that area, as a part of the Western Hemisphere, insulated so far as possible against becoming the scene of belligerent activities.

3. Please inform Governor Svane<sup>2</sup> informally and in strict confidence of the representations made to us by the Canadian Government and advance the friendly suggestion that it would assist us in formulating a reply to the Canadian representations which would be in consonance with our policy as outlined above if we were to receive through you a request from him for the early despatch of a group of American experts to make a survey of the possibility of the establishment by the Greenland authorities of civil aerodromes and additional radio and meteorological facilities in South Greenland. You may say that should such a request be received the United States Government would endeavor to make available to the Greenland authorities the services of a group of experts who would proceed to Greenland as soon as possible. Such expenses as might be incurred would of course be borne by this Government.

4. An urgent reply is requested.

HULL

<sup>1</sup> For correspondence regarding concern of the United States over the defense of Greenland following the occupation of Denmark by Germany, see *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, pp. 352 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Aksel Svane, Governor of South Greenland.

859B.7962/4 : Telegram

*The Consul at Godthaab (Penfield) to the Secretary of State*

GODTHAAB, January 31, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received February 1—6 : 37 p. m.]

## 12. Department's No. 7, January 29.

1. Governor Svane, in agreement with Governor Brun,<sup>3</sup> has orally informed me (and will confirm in writing) that should the American Government be interested in surveying the possibilities of development of civil aviation, radio and meteorological facilities in South Greenland, the Greenland authorities will be pleased to receive a group of American experts to investigate such possibilities.

2. Svane appears to view the project under reference in a realistic light, in contrast with his attitude in regard to weather reporting, and to appreciate that the suggested action is much more to Greenland's advantage than the possible alternative.

3. Flow ice is already reported near Julianehaab and navigation in that area will probably be difficult though not impossible until May at least.

PENFIELD

859B.7962/13

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 13, 1941.

Participants: Mr. Merchant Mahoney, the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires;  
Mr. Escott Reid, Second Secretary of the Canadian Legation;  
Mr. A. A. Berle, Jr.;  
Mr. Cumming;<sup>4</sup>  
Mr. Hickerson.<sup>5</sup>

The Canadian Chargé and Mr. Reid came in this morning, at my request.

Mr. Cumming is drafting a detailed memorandum<sup>6</sup> of the conversation.

I said that we had been giving careful consideration to the situation in Greenland, whose importance of course was underlined by the German air raid on Iceland. We had in mind the observations

<sup>3</sup> Eske Brun, Governor of North Greenland.<sup>4</sup> Hugh S. Cumming, Jr., of the Division of European Affairs.<sup>5</sup> John D. Hickerson, Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs.<sup>6</sup> Not printed.

they had made to us and their desire that an air station be established on Greenland.

I said that our policy had to fall within the requirements of three principles:

(1) We considered the Monroe Doctrine as applying to Greenland;

(2) We considered that any action taken must be taken within the framework of the inter-American continental defense;

(3) It was and remained our policy to preserve the *status quo*, the neutral character of Greenland, through this emergency, and this policy continued now.

We proposed, accordingly, to take up with the Greenland Government the possibility of their constructing and owning and operating an air field, open to the American nations. We were prepared to give them technical and financial assistance for that purpose. We should expect as a condition that such an air field would be open to ourselves and to the other American nations.

We noted the distinction in this case between Canada and the United Kingdom. Canada, as an American nation, formed a vital part of the continental defense.

Once worked out, the air field conceivably might be used by the Canadians, as a belligerent power, subject presumably to the usual rules of neutrality, namely, a limited length of time for stops and fuel to the next station (presumably Iceland)—or other similar rules. This I thought would meet the Canadian point of view.

The first step would be to send a commission of experts there, with the consent of the Greenland Government, and we were working on that. We should be glad to have the Canadians send an observer with our people. We proposed to start this right away.

The Canadians expressed themselves as satisfied.

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859B.7962/8 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Godthaab (Penfield)*

WASHINGTON, February 17, 1941—8 p. m.

13. 1. We have given very careful thought to the representations made to us by the Canadian Government regarding the establishment of landing fields in Greenland since fundamental principles of great importance to this Government are obviously involved. Three general desiderata have been in our minds: First, the United States considers Greenland to be in the Western Hemisphere and therefore included within the general scope of the Monroe Doctrine; Second, the United States has a certain dominant interest in Greenland aris-



ing out of considerations of national and hemispheric defense (the importance of this aspect is underlined by the recent German air attack on Iceland); Third, the policy of the United States with respect to Greenland since the outbreak of the war has been to guard against Greenland being drawn into the scope of belligerent operations and to respect Danish sovereignty in Greenland.

2. We have determined as a first step to send experts to Greenland to ascertain whether it would be practicable from the standpoint of expense, construction time, etc., to build airplane landing facilities at suitable points. If the experts' report is favorable it is our intention so to inform the Greenland authorities and to open negotiations with them, as the representatives of the Danish Government in Greenland, with a view to working out an arrangement by which they will construct the facilities as a Greenland undertaking, but with the financial and technical assistance of the United States. Should such negotiations eventuate it would be made clear that our cooperation in constructing and/or operating the landing fields would be limited to the duration of the emergency; that any arrangements would be entered into with respect on our part for Danish sovereignty in Greenland; and that such arrangements would at an appropriate time be taken up by us with the Danish Government for ratification, revision, or termination.

3. In the event that landing fields are constructed under the conditions mentioned we envisage an arrangement which would assimilate their use to the general scheme of hemispheric defense and open them to the planes of all the American nations.

4. It is important that the foregoing be kept strictly confidential and accordingly we do not wish you to volunteer to the Greenland authorities any of the thoughts we have outlined except, in your discretion, those contained in paragraph 1. You may, however, use the contents of this telegram for your guidance and background and as your own ideas should Governor Svane introduce these topics into his conversations with you.

HULL

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859B.01/346

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State  
(Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 18, 1941.

The Danish Minister <sup>6a</sup> came in, at his request.

I took advantage of his coming to discuss Greenland, briefly. I said that we had considered the matter and that we had stood clearly

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<sup>6a</sup> Henrik de Kauffmann.

on our main lines of policy. We had continued to insist that Greenland was within the Western Hemisphere and therefore must be assimilated to the general hemispheric system of continental defense. Further, that we propose to maintain the *status quo* and the territorial integrity of Greenland. Finally, that in this matter we dealt with Canada, rather than Great Britain, inasmuch as we were cooperating with the Canadians on the defense of the continent.

I said that we had determined to send a commission of experts to Greenland to survey the possibilities of an air field. We had in mind that should it prove practicable, we would then take up in some appropriate way the possibility of construction of a landing field by the Greenland Government and under its control, but open to use by the American nations. In this respect we were, given the circumstances, considering a method of action that was substantially the same as that which we did in other parts of the Hemisphere.

The Minister asked whether it would be well for him to inform the Greenland Government of this fact. I said that I thought the time was not ripe for that; we had best wait until we got the report of the experts to see whether anything could or should be done. The Minister agreed that this was the best way of going at it; said that he had no doubt whatever that we could obtain an agreement in the general sense indicated, if one was then desired. He rather hoped, however, that it would be taken up through him. I said that we could discuss that point later; I merely wanted to let him know how our minds were running.

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859B.7962/28 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Denmark (Perkins)*

WASHINGTON, March 12, 1941—6 p. m.

41. Your 73, March 3, 4 p. m. and 80, March 10, 3 p. m.<sup>7</sup> The Danish Minister, under instructions from the Foreign Office in Copenhagen has inquired regarding the accuracy of press reports that this Government has recently declared Greenland to be a part of the Western Hemisphere and therefore within the sphere of influence of the United States and that the United States is about to establish air bases in Greenland.

With respect to the first point, we have called the Minister's attention to the fact that as early as 1920 the Danish Government was informed that the United States did not recognize the right of a third government to acquire Greenland, should Denmark desire to dispose of that territory. (See Legation's despatch no. 491, June 8, 1920 and pages 1 to 4, Volume II, *Foreign Relations*, 1922.)

<sup>7</sup> Neither printed.

With respect to the second point the Minister has been told that while press reports that the United States contemplates the establishment of air bases in Greenland are purely speculative, this Government has of course for some time been committed to a policy of hemispheric defense and must consider itself free within the framework of that policy to propose such measures as it deems to be in the interest of national or continental defense.

You may orally inform the Foreign Office in the foregoing sense.

HULL

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859B.7982/89

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

No. 515

COPENHAGEN, March 26, 1941.

[Received April 23.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Department's telegram No. 41 of March 12, 6 p. m. and to state that I called on the Foreign Minister<sup>8</sup> on the regular diplomatic day, March 17th, in order to avail myself of the authorization given to inform Mr. Scavenius of the substance of the Department's telegram regarding Greenland. I mentioned to Mr. Scavenius my previous call on March 3rd when he had inquired concerning certain press reports that it was the intention of the American Government to establish air bases in Greenland. I recalled that on that occasion I had told him the only information in my possession was that contained in the Department's press release of January 9th.<sup>9</sup> A copy of this press release had been given to Mr. Scavenius sometime previously.

I then said that I had recently received a telegram from the Department of State<sup>10</sup> informing me that Minister Kauffmann in Washington had raised two questions with the Department: (1) as to a report that the American Government had declared Greenland to be in the Western Hemisphere and consequently within the sphere of American interest, and (2) as to reports that our Government contemplated establishing air bases in Greenland.

With reference to point (1), I started to explain that this question had come up in 1920 when the American Government had stated that it did not recognize the existence of the right of any third government to acquire Greenland in case Denmark wished to dispose of that colony. Mr. Scavenius hardly waited for a full explanation, indicating that he fully understood this matter as an old question already fully disposed of.

<sup>8</sup> Eric Scavenius.

<sup>9</sup> See Department of State *Bulletin*, January 11, 1941, p. 60.

<sup>10</sup> *Supra*.

With regard to point (2), I then said that the Department had informed Mr. Kauffmann that press reports about our intention to establish air bases were "purely speculative" but that the Department had also taken occasion to say to him that for a long time the American Government had been committed to a policy of hemisphere defence and that, in case of an attack upon the American continent or the Western Hemisphere, our Government within the scope of this policy would feel free to take whatever measures it deemed necessary for national or continental defence. The Foreign Minister, who throughout the whole conversation was most urbane and affable, made no protest or evidenced any opposition to the position as thus defined. However, he referred to the phraseology as somewhat "equivocal" and asked whether it meant that the American Government would not take measures to establish air bases in case there was no danger of a German attack. I replied that the Department had not named any country in particular as being likely to make such an attack and that I did not feel that I could undertake to elaborate or interpret the Department's statement which I presumed had been made as definite as was practicable in the circumstances. He then asked me if I could give him a written statement of the Department's position. I replied that I was authorized only to give him an oral account as the Department had already communicated the position of the American Government to Mr. Kauffmann from whom he would presumably receive a communication.

Mr. Scavenius then went on to refer to Greenland in a rather depreciative way as being only a region of icebergs and indicated his full appreciation of the position of the American Government with regard to its own defence needs. Then, to my great surprise, he undertook to draw a parallel between the position of the American Government in thus caring for its defence with the position of the German Government which had deemed it necessary to occupy Denmark in order to forestall its occupation by the British. For the moment, I almost felt as if I might be speaking with the German Minister of Foreign Affairs instead of the Danish. At no time in the course of the interview did the Foreign Minister signify in any way that he had instructed Mr. Kauffmann to raise these two questions with the Department or did he indicate that he had received or expected to receive any message from Mr. Kauffmann. However, I had a very definite feeling that he had already received a communication on the subject and chose not to tell me about it. In this, however, I may be doing him an injustice.

Respectfully yours,

MAHLON F. PERKINS

859B.01/348a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Godthaab (Penfield)*

WASHINGTON, April 4, 1941—4 p. m.

31. 1. As you were informed in the second paragraph of our telegram no. 13, February 17, 8 p. m., it was the intention at that time to work out an arrangement by which defense facilities in Greenland might be constructed as an undertaking of the Danish authorities in Greenland with the financial and technical assistance of the United States. The decision has now been made that defense facilities in Greenland should be constructed and protected by and be under the sole jurisdiction of the United States. Accordingly, as a result of recent developments in the European war affecting the North Atlantic area and the security of the United States and the American Continent, we have had an informal exchange of views with the Minister of Denmark regarding the measures, consistent with the maintenance of free Danish sovereignty over Greenland, which might be taken to guard against Greenland being used by a non-American power as a point of aggression against the rest of the Continent. A tentative understanding has been reached upon the draft of a proposed agreement to this end.

2. The draft agreement may be summarized as follows:

## PREAMBLE

Clause 1 refers to the May 3, 1940 Resolution of the United Greenland Councils renewing their fealty to His Majesty the King of Denmark and expressing the hope that the United States would hold in mind the exposed position of the Danish flag in Greenland, et cetera.

Clause 2 refers to the Agreement between the Governments of the American Republics<sup>19</sup> regarding their common concern in the fate of the American possessions of European powers.

Clause 3 refers to the importance which an adequate defense of Greenland bears to the security of the American Continent from attack by a non-American power.

Clause 4 refers to the fact that although full recognition continues to be given to Danish sovereignty over Greenland, the Government in Denmark is temporarily prevented by existing circumstances from exercising its powers in respect of Greenland.

## BODY OF AGREEMENT

Article I reiterates United States recognition of and respect for Danish sovereignty in Greenland and sets forth the acceptance by the United States, in view of its obligations under the Act of Habana, of the responsibility of assisting Greenland in maintaining its present status.

<sup>19</sup> Convention on Provisional Administration of European Colonies and Possessions in the Americas, concluded at Habana July 30, 1940, Department of State Treaty Series No. 977, or 54 Stat. (pt. 2) 2491.

Article II gives the United States the right to establish landing fields and other defense facilities in Greenland.

Article III grants the United States the right to take all other necessary measures to operate and protect defense facilities in Greenland and further specifies the nature of such facilities.

Article IV opens Greenland defense facilities to planes and vessels of all the American nations for the defense of the Western Hemisphere.

Article V provides for immediate use by the United States of areas necessary for the construction and operation of defense facilities and for the subsequent leasing of such areas for the period the agreement remains in force. This article further provides that the health, welfare and economic needs of the native population shall be given the fullest consideration in the location of defense areas.

Article VI provides for the retention by the Kingdom of Denmark of sovereignty over defense areas in Greenland but grants to the United States during the life of the agreement exclusive jurisdiction within such areas except over Danish citizens and native Greenlanders.

Article VII authorizes the United States to maintain postal facilities and commissary stores for the exclusive use of American defense personnel.

Article VIII provides for freedom from taxation for American personnel and supplies brought into Greenland in connection with the defense establishment.

Article IX contains an undertaking by the United States to respect the political administration of Greenland as well as all legitimate interests in the country and the regulations and customs concerning the native population. It further provides that sympathetic consideration will be given any representations respecting the welfare of the Greenland people which may from time to time be made by the Danish authorities in Greenland.

Article X provides that when the present dangers to the security of the American Continent have passed, the Government of the United States and the Government of Denmark will consult with respect to the modification or termination of the agreement and that after such consultation either party may terminate the agreement upon 12 months notice to the other party.

3. It is proposed that the agreement be signed by the Danish Minister on behalf of His Majesty the King of Denmark in the King's capacity as sovereign of Greenland. The agreement will also contain a statement to the effect that the King's authorities in Greenland have concurred therein.

4. Owing to the acceleration of military events in the North Atlantic area, such as the recent German air attack on Iceland, the extension of the German war area to East Greenland territorial waters and the flights of German planes over Scoresby Sound, we are anxious to conclude the foregoing agreement as soon as possible in order that steps may be taken to accomplish its major purpose, namely the creation of an adequate defense establishment in Greenland. The Minister of Denmark with whom this consideration has been discussed believes

that it is desirable to sign the agreement not later than the end of this week and is telegraphing the authorities in Greenland in this sense.

You may wish to point out that the arrangement is substantially similar to those which the United States has already made and is making with other American governments in pursuance of its policy of hemispheric defense.

5. In discussing the proposed agreement with Svane and Brun, please impress upon them our desire that the matter be kept entirely confidential and not communicated to anyone for the time being. Report by telegraph.

HULL

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859B.01/351

*The Consul at Godthaab (Penfield) to the Secretary of State*

No. 48

GODTHAAB, April 9, 1941.

[Received April 28.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Department's telegram no. 31, April 4, 4 p. m. and to report herewith on the events of the afternoon and evening of April 5.

At about 12:45 p. m. on that day Governor Svane, obviously very much agitated, came to see me and asked if I had received a telegram from the Department that day. After I had replied in the negative he said that he had just received a telegram from Minister de Kauffmann strongly advising him to authorize signature of an agreement the terms of which were to be communicated to him by me. We called up the radio station and were informed that a long telegram for the Consulate was at that moment being received. Svane instructed that the telegram be delivered piecemeal as received and that all schedules be cancelled for the rest of the day except for communication with Ivigtut (where Governor Brun is staying) and Julianehaab. I promised to let the Governor know as soon as the message was received and decoded.

Shortly after one the first two sections of the telegram (the Department's no. 31, referred to above) were delivered. As soon as they were decoded I informed the Governor of their general nature and about 5:30, as soon as the entire telegram had been received and decoded, I went to see him again and went over the substance of the telegram with him in detail. He appeared to appreciate the position of the United States but was much more agitated and concerned than I have ever seen him. I wrote out for him an outline of the Department's summary of the proposed agreement and left him about 6:30. About 8 I returned and found that he had drafted a reply to the Danish Minister which closed with a phrase to the effect that he con-

curred only under protest. I remarked that he has stated earlier that he appreciated the position of the United States and did not blame the Government of that country for taking the necessary steps to defend the western hemisphere, including Greenland. It therefore appeared that he was not protesting the action of the United States but rather the circumstances which forced that action. He agreed and during the conversation which ensued I attempted to reassure him regarding his doubts as to his authority to concur in the proposed agreement. Shortly after 8:30 he finally decided to concur "under extreme force of circumstances".

I then helped him to code his reply and to code a message to Brun giving the latter a bare outline of the proposed agreement. The message to Brun was despatched about 10:30 and that to the Danish Minister about 11 o'clock, Julianehaab radio having been able to arrange a special schedule with New York at midnight (9 p. m. E. S. T.). In order to make sure that the messages were delivered as promptly as possible I also arranged to have them, as well as my 41, April 5, 10 p. m.,<sup>11</sup> despatched via the U. S. C. G. C.<sup>12</sup> *Cayuga* and to have the *Cayuga* receive Governor Brun's reply from Ivigtut and relay it on to Washington. It was afterwards learned that Julianehaab radio was unable to get any of the messages through to New York due to atmospheric conditions and that the *Cayuga* was unable to get them off until early Sunday morning. It is regretted that it was thus physically impossible to get the replies to Washington by Saturday night as desired.

Respectfully yours,

J. K. PENFIELD

859B.7962/114

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 9, 1941.

Participants: Secretary Hull, the Danish Minister, Mr. Barnes,<sup>13</sup> Mr. Bang-Jensen,<sup>14</sup> and Mr. Berle

The Danish Minister came in at 4:30 p. m., by appointment. He and Secretary Hull signed the text of the agreement regarding landing fields in Greenland, which had previously been agreed upon. At the

<sup>11</sup> Not printed.

<sup>12</sup> United States Coast Guard Cutter.

<sup>13</sup> Charles M. Barnes, Chief of the Treaty Division.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Bang-Jensen of the Danish Legation.



same time, he handed to the Secretary a note in reply to our note of April 7th.<sup>15</sup>

The Minister said that he believed that in executing the agreement he was doing the best thing possible for his King and his country. Realizing the very grave character of the times, he believed that if Greenland were within the American system of hemispheric defense it would best safeguard this colony for Denmark, as and when Denmark should be liberated.

The Secretary expressed his appreciation of the Minister's remarks and said that he was deeply appreciative of the Danish Minister's position in the whole matter.

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859B.7962/50: Telegram

*The Consul at Godthaab (Penfield) to the Secretary of State*

GODTHAAB, April 12, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received 4:10 p. m.]

46. Department's 34, April 10, 1 [6] p. m.<sup>16</sup>

1. The instructions contained in section 5 of the Department's telegram under reference have been carried out.

2. Both Governors were understandably greatly disturbed and resentful over the ultimatum-like manner in which the agreement was presented to them. Svane's resentment seems to be directed entirely against the Danish Minister whose statement that immediate agreement was the only alternative to British occupation he suspects is an exaggeration. Brun at Ivigtut without the background I have been able to give Svane seems to consider the Department as inexcusably lacking in regard for the Governors.

3. Neither Governor appears to find serious fault with the substance of the agreement. Brun, as the one most responsible for the Governors' request last June that American forces be landed at Ivigtut,<sup>17</sup> has always considered some arrangement similar to that now concluded as inevitable and desirable. Svane considers such an agreement much less undesirable than any other possible form of foreign influence in Greenland but would prefer to avoid concluding the agreement until necessary to forestall occupation or other foreign intervention, a con-

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<sup>15</sup> For text of agreement and notes exchanged, see Department of State Executive Agreement Series No. 204, or 55 Stat. (pt. 2) 1245.

<sup>16</sup> Not printed; in section 5 the Department gave instruction that copies of notes exchanged in the agreement signed April 9 be made available to the Governor of North Greenland and the Governor of South Greenland (859B.7962/49b).

<sup>17</sup> See telegram No. 34, June 13, 4 p. m., from the Consul at Godthaab, *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 369.

tingency which he apparently would be prepared to admit as inevitable only when faced with the *fait accompli*.

PENFIELD

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859B.7962/51 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, April 12, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received April 13—11:46 a. m.]

111. Minister of Foreign Affairs handed me the following note at 5:30 p. m.:

“Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen, April 12th, 1941. Mr. Mahlon F. Perkins, Chargé d’Affaires of the United States of America:

Pursuant to a report received from the Royal Danish Minister at Washington the Government of the United States of America has offered to take over the responsibility of the defense of Greenland and to enter into an agreement to this effect with the Danish Minister. On the part of the Government of the United States of America, it was—according to the said report—for military reasons demanded that the proposed agreement be not submitted to the Danish Government before being signed. The Minister has then, on his own account, signed the proposed agreement.

The Royal Danish Government hereby begs to enter a definite protest against the Government of the United States of America in a question as to the exercise of Denmark’s sovereign rights over Greenland, initiating negotiations and concluding an agreement with the Danish Ministry [*Minister*] at Washington without his being warranted to act on behalf of the Danish Government either *ex officio* or pursuant to special authorization from his Government. The Royal Danish Government moreover must in the meantime protest against the Government of the United States of America realizing the plans mentioned in the agreement as to the establishment of military bases in Greenland and the execution of other measures.

As the said agreement as mentioned above is signed by Mr. Kauffmann without his being authorized to do so—it goes without saying that—it will not be binding on Denmark in point of international law.

As Mr. Kauffmann thus far decidedly exceeded his powers; and, as his behaviour, most emphatically, must be disapproved of, His Majesty the King has today to recall him from his post as Danish Minister at Washington and to instruct him to depute the management of the Legation to Mr. E. Blechingberg, Counselor of Legation, as Chargé d’Affaires and without delay to proceed to Copenhagen.

In asking you to be good enough to acquaint your Government with the contents of the above I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you, Monsieur Minister Chargé d’Affaires, the assurance of my high consideration. Signed Eric Scavenius”

PERKINS

859B.7962/123

*The Danish Minister (Kauffmann) to the Secretary of State*

J. No. 3. M. 1½

WASHINGTON, April 13, 1941.

SIR: Point four in the preamble to the agreement relating to the defense of Greenland signed by you and by me on the ninth instant reads:

“Although the sovereignty of Denmark over Greenland is fully recognized, the present circumstances for the time being prevent the Government in Denmark from exercising its powers in respect of Greenland . . .”<sup>17a</sup>

With this situation in mind and in accordance with our understanding I informed the Government in Denmark of the agreement only when it was made public at noon on April 10th.

I did this in a telegraphic message to the Foreign Office in Copenhagen that was delivered after some delay on April 11th.

I indicated that I had signed the agreement

“. . .<sup>17a</sup> acting on behalf of His Majesty the King of Denmark in His capacity as sovereign of Greenland, whose authorities in Greenland have concurred herein, . . .”<sup>17a</sup>

and explained the reasons for my action, adding

“Under the circumstances, there was, to me, no doubt but that I must, in the interests of Denmark and Greenland, take this unusual step. The Government in Denmark will not, as long as Denmark is occupied, be able to obtain full information as to the background and necessity for this action. I, therefore, request that judgment of my decision be withheld until Denmark again is free, and the Danish Government and public can come to know the situation that made the step necessary. I earnestly beg His Majesty the King and the Danish Government to be assured that I have acted in the way which I felt to be right, after careful consideration and according to my best belief and the dictates of my conscience, fulfilling my allegiance to His Majesty the King.”

I thereupon received from the Foreign Office in Copenhagen at 4:30 P. M. Saturday, April 12, 1941, a telegram, the English translation of which reads as follows:

“The Government strongly disapproves the fact that you, without authorization from here, and contrary to the constitution, have concluded an agreement with the Government of the United States regarding the defense of Greenland. You are, therefore, by Royal Decree of April 12, 1941 recalled from your post as Denmark’s Minister to Washington. The Legation will temporarily be in charge of Mr. Blechingberg, Counselor of Legation, as Chargé d’Affaires. You are requested immediately to notify the President of the above, and to

<sup>17a</sup> Omission indicated in the original note.

add that letters of recall will be forwarded later. You are requested to return at once to Copenhagen. Acknowledge receipt by telegram."

From Press reports I have furthermore learned that the Government in Denmark yesterday also declared the agreement of April 9, 1941 relating to the defense of Greenland to be considered as void, but this Legation has hitherto received no official communication from Copenhagen to that effect.

On April 10, 1940 the day after the occupation of Denmark by German military forces, I issued a public statement declaring, that I would work for one thing, the reestablishment of a free and independent Denmark. Since that time as before my conduct has been dictated solely by what I have believed to be to the true interest of my King and my country. My work would have been impossible without the sympathetic understanding and cooperative attitude of the American Government for which I am deeply grateful.

My conduct in the situation that has arisen now will be dictated by the same convictions. I believe the action taken in Copenhagen with regard to my recall and in respect to the agreement of the 9th instant to have been taken under duress. Consequently I consider it to be invalid both from the point of view of Danish and of generally recognized common law.

I believe it to be my duty towards my King and my country to carry on the work that was entrusted to me when I was appointed Danish Minister to Washington by a free Danish Government and to let myself be guided by the same principles as hitherto. This attitude of mine has the full support of all the other members of the Danish Foreign service stationed in the United States.

I have the honor, Mr. Secretary, to ask you please to bring this to the knowledge of the President.

The earnest hope for a speedy liberation of Denmark, expressed by President Roosevelt when the agreement relating to the defense of Greenland was made public three days ago will have brought encouragement to all Danes. I beg leave to ask you, Sir, to convey to the President the gratitude of my countrymen.

I avail myself [etc.]

HENRIK KAUFFMANN

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859B.7962/52: Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, April 13, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received April 14—1:35 a. m.]

112. After handing me the note transmitted in the Legation's No. 111, April 12, 8 p. m., the Foreign Minister commented to the following effect. Minister Kauffmann had telegraphed that his procedure

was very unusual, that he could not now explain all the reasons but would do so after the war. Foreign Minister emphasized that Kauffmann had, of course, no authority to sign such an agreement, that in these times of general distrust his action had created a painful situation as regards the King, and that it would have been much easier for the Danish Government if the United States had taken this action unilaterally without bringing in Kauffmann.

I of course made no comment upon his observations but replied that I would be pleased to transmit the note.

From a private source I have learned that the German Minister made a call of 3 hours' duration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday afternoon prior to my being called there by the Foreign Minister.

PERKINS

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859B.7962/57 : Telegram

*The Consul at Godthaab (Penfield) to the Secretary of State*

GODTHAAB, April 13, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received April 14—1:50 p. m.]

47. My 46, April 12.

1. Without prior mention to me Svane yesterday sent a telegram to the King of Denmark and published the text in the *Daily Radio News*. The telegram was a slightly shortened version of Svane's telegram to the Danish Minister referred to in my telegram No. 41, April 5.<sup>18</sup> When I mentioned the matter to him this morning Svane explained that he regards all matters touching the King as clothed with a special sanctity which does not permit of discussion with others, that he feels he has now fulfilled his duty to the letter of the law, and that he expects to cooperate fully with the United States on a basis of complete trust and confidence. Whatever his faults Svane is not insincere and I believe that his statements as outlined above can be given full credence.

2. It was unfortunate that the first news of the agreement received here consisted of incomplete foreign radio reports and this fact was responsible for many exaggerated rumors and for some ill feeling among local residents who consider that the Governor has not kept them properly informed. At my suggestion Svane is publishing in the *Radio News* tomorrow a full translation of the Department's statement<sup>19</sup> regarding the agreement together with a statement of his own

<sup>18</sup> Not printed.

<sup>19</sup> See Department of State *Bulletin*, April 12, 1941, p. 443.

setting forth his opinion that the agreement represents the best possible arrangement for Greenland under the present circumstances and calling on the population to do their best to make its operation a success.

PENFIELD

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859B.7962/123a

*The Secretary of State to the Danish Minister (Kauffmann)*

WASHINGTON, April 14, 1941.

SIR: Acknowledgment is made of your note of April 13, 1941 advising that the Government in Denmark purports to have recalled you from your post as Minister of Denmark. Cognizance has likewise been taken of your statement that you consider this action to have been taken under duress and to be invalid both from the point of view of Danish and of generally recognized common law, in view of the existing occupation of Denmark by German military forces.

My Government considers it to be the fact that the Government in Denmark in this respect is acting under duress, and in consequence I have the honor to advise that it continues to recognize you as the duly authorized Minister of Denmark in Washington. It renews its hope for the speedy liberation of Denmark.

Accept [etc.]

CORDELL HULL

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859B.7962/62: Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, April 16, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received April 16—9:44 a. m.]

119. Legation's telegram No. 114, April 13, 1 p. m.,<sup>20</sup> last paragraph. I now feel able to state with a feeling of certainty that throughout all classes of the Danish people American action in regard to Greenland has created extreme satisfaction. It is regarded not only as an insurance of Danish sovereign rights therein but as making possible some contribution on the part of Denmark to forces opposed to aggression.

Reliable source informs me that consideration is being given to the passage of a law imposing penalties upon Danish diplomatic officers who fail to act in conformity with instructions.

PERKINS

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<sup>20</sup> Not printed.

859B.7962/64 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, April 16, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received April 16—5:20 p. m.]

124. Legation's No. 111, April 12, 8 p. m. I have just been called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and been handed the following note by the Under Secretary:<sup>20a</sup>

"Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen, April 16th, 1941. Mr. Mahlon F. Perkins, Chargé d'Affaires of the United States of America. Monsieur Le Chargé d'Affaires: With reference to my note of the 12th instant concerning the action taken by the Danish Minister in Washington as regards the defense of Greenland, I have the honor to enclose a letter of recall signed on the 12th instant by His Majesty the King of Denmark, by which letter Mr. Kauffmann is recalled from his post as Danish Minister in Washington.

In view of the existing extraordinary circumstances I beg you to be good enough to forward the letter of recall to the President of the United States of America and preliminarily communicate the contents of the said letter by cable to the President.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you, Monsieur Le Chargé d'Affaires, the assurances of my high consideration. Signed Eric Scavenius."

I propose telegraphing to the Department the "contents of the said letter" tomorrow.

PERKINS

859B.7962/68 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, April 17, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received April 17—10:05 a. m.]

127. Following is the accompanying English translation of the original French text of "a letter of recall" referred to in the Foreign Minister's note of April 16th, the text of which was transmitted in the Legation's No. 124, April 16, 6 p. m.:

"Sir, My Very Dear and Great Friend:

"In view of the recent events I have deemed it expedient to bring to an end the honorable mission in the character of my Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary with you with which is charged Mr. Henrik Louis Hans de Kauffmann, Knight Commander of my most distinguished order of Danebrog and decorated with the Cross of Honor of the same order.

"As I am most anxious to cultivate and further fasten the relations of friendship which exist so happily between the Kingdom of Den-

<sup>20a</sup> O. C. Mohr.

mark and the United States, I will in the near future take care that Mr. de Kauffmann be replaced.

"In the meantime, I avail myself with great pleasure of the present opportunity to renew to you the assurances of esteem and friendship with which I am, sir, my very dear and great friend, Your sincere friend (signed) Christian, R., Amalienborg, the 12th of April 1941. Countersigned: Erik Scavenius. To the President of the United States of America."

PERKINS

859B.7962/81 : Telegram

*The Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs (Scavenius) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, April 17, 1941—8:32 p. m.

[Received April 17.]

MR. MINISTER: The Danish Government having recalled Mr. Kauffmann from his post as Danish Minister at Washington and having handed over the royal letter of recall to the American Chargé d'Affaires at Copenhagen with the request of forwarding to you, I hereby have the honour officially to inform you that Mr. Blechingberg, Counsellor of the Danish Legation at Washington, has been instructed to carry on the affairs of the Legation as Chargé d'Affaires and in this capacity to take care of Danish interests in USA until Mr. Kauffmann can be replaced. I should be most grateful to you for any courtesy you might extend to Mr. Blechingberg in order to facilitate the task with which he has thus been charged.

I avail myself [etc.]

ERIK SCAVENIUS

859B.7962/81 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Denmark (Perkins)*

WASHINGTON, April 18, 1941—5 p. m.

60. You will please formally request appointment with Foreign Minister and read him the following message from me as reply to a telegram I have received from him direct:<sup>21</sup>

"Mr. Minister: The Government and people of the United States have for many years maintained close ties of friendship with the Kingdom of Denmark. There has never been an element of doubt, I trust, that the policy of this Government has ever been motivated by anything but the most sympathetic regard for the mutual interests of the Danish and American peoples and I am convinced that the many Americans in this country of Danish descent have followed the relations between the two countries with the utmost satisfaction. I trust no incident will arise that may cause a change of sentiment.

<sup>21</sup> *Supra.*



The Danish Minister to this country and the members of the Royal Legation have always been honored as the representatives of a friendly power and this consideration has been extended to Mr. de Kauffmann since he assumed his official duties here about 2 years ago. We shall continue to show this same consideration to Mr. de Kauffmann, Mr. Blechingberg and all members of the Royal Danish Mission now in Washington.

This Government will continue to recognize Mr. de Kauffmann in his official capacity until such time as the Royal Danish Government may be able to reconsider his status as freely as did the Danish Government seek his *agrément* as Minister to this country in 1939.

Please accept etc., etc."

If requested you may leave a copy of this telegram with the Foreign Office.

HULL

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859B.7962/79 : Telegram

*The Consul at Godthaab (Penfield) to the Secretary of State*

GODTHAAB, April 19, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received April 20—5 p. m.]

53. 1. In general conversations with Cumming<sup>22</sup> and myself during the past 2 days Svane has exhibited a very cooperative attitude and a realistic understanding of the situation in Greenland. Although he is not yet happy regarding the handling of Greenland interests in the United States he has decided that both he and Brun should remain in Godthaab indefinitely.

2. Brun has been unavoidably detained in Ivigtut due to lack of transportation but is now en route and is expected to arrive here tomorrow or Monday. As soon as possible after his arrival Cumming and I expect to leave on the *Northland* for Ivigtut and Julianehaab. Cumming expects to return to the United States and I to Godthaab as soon thereafter as possible dependent upon the requirements of the survey party and the arrival of the *Modoc* to relieve the *Northland*.

3. As of possible interest to the Department a translation of the Governor's statement referred to in paragraph 2 of my 47, April 13, which appeared in the radio *Avisen* of April 15 follows:

"Different circumstances now prevail because of the agreement of April 9, 1941, and it must be assumed that this agreement represents the only possible way to preserve Denmark sovereignty and to assure the continuation of the Danish administration. We have every reason to believe that the Danish administrative and cultural work along the lines followed for 220 years will not be broken off but will be fully respected and supported from the American side as has been the case

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<sup>22</sup> Hugh S. Cumming, Jr., of the Division of European Affairs, temporarily in Greenland.

during the past year. So we hereby urgently request the whole population, Danish and Greenlanders, men and women, to exhibit a correct and worthy manner towards our guests. The people and Government servants shall continue to obey only the Danish authorities but all shall willingly assist and cooperate in the carrying out of the agreement with only one point in view, that of Greenland's return to Denmark intact and unharmed. Signed Brun, Svane."

PENFIELD

859B.7962/81 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Denmark (Perkins)*

WASHINGTON, April 19, 1941—9 p. m.

62. You are requested to arrange an appointment with the private secretary to His Majesty the King at the earliest possible moment and leave with him for King Christian a copy of the following message from the President:

"Great and Good Friend:

I have received by cable the text of your letter regarding the status of Mr. Henrik Louis Hans de Kauffmann, Your Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Government of the United States of America. I reciprocate most profoundly and sincerely Your Majesty's wishes for the continued strengthening of the friendly relations which have always existed between the United States and the Kingdom of Denmark and between the peoples of our two countries. It was with especially high regard for Your Majesty that this Government gave its *agrément* to Mr. de Kauffmann in August, 1939 and he has enjoyed the full confidence and cooperation of this Government in the distinguished duties in which he was invested by you.

Mr. de Kauffmann was nominated at a time when the complete freedom of the Danish Government had been in no way infringed and he remains in the view of the Government of the United States the representative of the Royal Danish Government in this country. The Government of the United States will continue to treat with him as Your Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.

In accordance with this policy the Government of the United States dealt with Mr. de Kauffmann regarding the situation of Greenland which had become most urgent due to flights of German bombing planes over the territory of Greenland and the fact that, in the light of recent history, there could be no assurance that foreign forces might not occupy Greenland suddenly and without warning.

Your Majesty will no doubt recognize the fact that while the sovereignty of Denmark over Greenland has been recognized by the United States Government under the fundamental principle that Greenland although entirely in the Western Hemisphere has been for many centuries under actual colonization by Denmark and Norway, no change of sovereignty to another European nation can be agreed to. The Government of the United States, as Your Majesty will no doubt recall, has publicly stated its position in this sense on a number

of occasions in the past. It is incumbent upon the Government of the United States to assure itself that Greenland will not be occupied by any non-American nation other than Denmark, and in consequence this Government has found itself forced by an actual threat to Danish sovereignty in Greenland to take steps which are tantamount to holding Greenland in trust for Denmark until such time as the Royal Danish Government ceases to be subjected to duress on the part of an occupying nation and full Danish control over Greenland may be restored. No legitimate interests will be affected adversely by the action of the U. S. in Greenland.

I avail myself of this occasion to renew to Your Majesty the assurances of esteem and friendship. Your good friend,  
(Signed) Franklin D. Roosevelt, President,  
United States of America."

Subsequently you will forward a copy to the Foreign Secretary with a formal covering note stating it is done under instructions from me.

HULL

859B.7962/83 : Telegram

*The Consul at Godthaab (Penfield) to the Secretary of State*

GODTHAAB, April 20, 1941—10 p. m.

[Received April 22—5 a. m.]

57. From Cumming.

"1. Due to atmospheric conditions the Department's telegram of April 17<sup>23</sup> was only received this afternoon.

2. As indicated in the Consulate's telegram No. 53, April 19, 4 p. m., Svane's attitude now leaves nothing to be desired and I believe that he intends wholeheartedly to cooperate with us in attaining the objective of the agreement, always provided, however, that we locate our military establishments as far as practicable from the settlements and rigorously enforce disciplinary measures to prevent undue contact between our personnel and the native population. Brun is expected tomorrow morning and I have no reason to believe that following a full exchange of views his attitude will differ from Svane's.

3. Such conversations as I have had with local Danes indicate that they also are sympathetic with the objectives of the agreement. The initial resentment of Brun, and local residents whose opinions are worth considering appears to have been variously due to their belief that the agreement was too suddenly presented to them; to the feeling that Greenland should have been consulted with respect to details; to what some individuals feel was an impropriety on Kauffmann's part in signing the agreement in the name of the King 'who is now [apparent omission]; to regret that the United States had chosen as

<sup>23</sup> Not printed.

the date of signature the anniversary of the invasion of Denmark by Germany; and to the probably instinctive reaction of persons not currently in intimate touch with world affairs. This initial resentment has to a large degree been dispelled since Penfield and I have had an opportunity to explain fully the course of events leading up to the agreement, and discreetly the substance of paragraph 1 of the Department's telegram under reference and its April 16<sup>24</sup> to the Consulate regarding the unofficial reaction in Denmark.

4. In my opinion however the underlying and most important reasons for apprehension on the part of thoughtful Danes here is the fact that the agreement ends for an indefinite period Greenland's exclusion from the outside world which has been the cornerstone of Danish policy toward the native population. While the pertinent portions of articles 5 and 9 have been pointed out to Svane, and individuals here generally appreciate that Germany and not the United States is responsible for the chain of events leading up to the present situation, local qualms over the effect upon the native population of exposure to contact with large number of military personnel can only be resolved by time. The United States will be judged here by the decorum and restraint shown by our forces in their relations with the natives. If their conduct is what we expect of our military personnel, few apprehensions need be entertained over the smooth operation of the agreement in Greenland.

5. Penfield concurs in the foregoing and in my suggestion that the Department impress upon the Army, Navy and Coast Guard the importance of making adequate provision for the welfare and recreation of personnel sent to Greenland in order to minimize the possibility that inactivity in their free time may result in unfortunate incidents between them and the native populations."

PENFIELD

859B.7962/98

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 22, 1941.

The Danish Minister came in to see me at his request.

He said that following the attempt made by the Government in Denmark to recall him, the Counselor, Mr. Blechingberg, had finally determined that he must obey the orders of Copenhagen. He would, therefore, try to present himself as Chargé d'Affaires although he knew he would not be received as such. Under these circumstances

<sup>24</sup>Telegram No. 37, April 16, 8 p. m., not printed; it repeated substance of telegram No. 119, April 16, 11 a. m., from the Chargé in Denmark, p. 51, and reported favorable press and public reaction in the United States (859B.7962/78).

there was nothing to do but to inform the State Department that Mr. Blechingberg was no longer Counselor of the Danish Legation. He presented me with a note to that effect.

He likewise said that under the regulations of the Danish diplomatic service the officials of the Legation and of the Consulates were obliged to follow his instructions which, of course, in this case Mr. Blechingberg was not doing.

I said that we would, of course, recognize the fact that under these circumstances Mr. Blechingberg not only was not Chargé but that he had ceased to be Counselor of the Legation.

I told the Minister what we knew about the general reaction to the Greenland Agreement in Denmark. I told him that there had been an order of custodianship issued in respect of his property there. I asked whether he had any close relatives in Denmark.

The Minister said he had not; only some cousins. Even the property referred to consisted of some securities. He was, therefore, not under any great pressure from that side.

He said that he was having the Danish consuls in the United States meet with him some time this week.

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859B.7962/88 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Godthaab (Penfield)*

WASHINGTON, April 25, 1941—1 p. m.

44. The Department learns from a most reliable source that a person who has had casual conversations with at least 35 members of the Danish Rigsdag has heard no complaint against our action with respect to Greenland. On the contrary the action has been applauded, it being the view of the members mentioned that the moment had arrived for us to take time by the forelock. We have been assured that the opinion of these members is not sectional but can be regarded as representative of the opinion of Denmark.

You may in your discretion communicate the foregoing information to Svane and Brun.

HULL

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859B.7962/93 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, April 26, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received 10:04 p. m.]

146. The following message from King Christian for the President was handed to me in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 8 o'clock this evening.

“Dear and Great Friend, I acknowledge receipt of the message which you have been good enough to instruct the Chargé d’Affaires of the United States of America at Copenhagen to transmit to me through my private secretary. I highly appreciate the friendly feelings expressed therein to me and to the entire Danish people. I furthermore appreciate the respect of Denmark’s sovereignty over Greenland with which you mention the provisional measures which your Government has deemed it proper to take as regards Greenland territory, but I am anxious to let you know that the news about these unjustified measures against the execution of which protests have been lodged with your Chargé d’Affaires at Copenhagen have caused me deep disappointment and grief.

I have instructed my Minister for Foreign Affairs to further develop to your Secretary of State the points which your message occasions me to emphasize, viz.: that my former Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Mr. Henrik Kauffmann by arbitrarily signing the agreement of the 9th of April 1941 on the defense of Greenland has exceeded his authority as accredited Minister and acted against the Danish constitution, for which reason he has no more my confidence, that the said agreement is invalid in point of Danish constitutional as well as international law, that the conclusion of such an agreement also under normal conditions would have been unthinkable in this country, the more so because thereby would be created the possibility of occupation of Greenland territory by a foreign power in connection with expectations as to the development of the war, that Mr. Kauffmann after his dismissal from the public service is a private person without authority whatever to represent Denmark, and that it would not chime in with our mutual wishes for maintaining all ties that may promote Dano-American interests, if the Government of the United States continues to recognize him as Denmark’s official representative, as this would be tantamount to rendering diplomatic contact between Denmark and the United States of America at Washington impossible and thus a very important tie would be broken.

In view of our mutual wishes for the continued happy development of the friendly relations which have always existed and still exist between the Danish and the American peoples, who have so many deep rooted interbearings, I have desired openly and sincerely to send you this message.

I avail myself of this occasion to renew to you the assurance of esteem and friendship.

Your good friend.

Signed Christian, R.

[Counter] signed Erik Scavenius.

Amalienborg, Copenhagen, the 26 of April 1941.

To the President of the United States of America.”

Text of note from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary of State, handed me at the same time, will follow.<sup>25</sup>

PERKINS

<sup>25</sup> See *infra*.

859B.7962/94 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, April 27, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received 11:50 a. m.]

147. Legation's 146, April 26, 9 p. m.

[“] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen, the 26th of April 1941 to Mr. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, of the United States of America, Washington. Mr. Minister: In acknowledging receipt of the message which you have been good enough to send me through the Chargé d’Affaires of the United States of America at Copenhagen, I wish first to assure you that the Danish Government and the Danish people on their part also are animated by friendly feelings towards the American Government and the great American people and that as you will be aware it always has been and still is incumbent upon the Danish Government to carry on a policy which will serve the mutual interests of the Danish and the American peoples. It is my sincere hope in the present difficult situation that events will develop so that the good and friendly relations between Denmark and the United States will not be permanently prejudiced.

His Majesty the King has instructed me to develop to you the position of the Danish Government to the present situation.

In 1939 Mr. Henrik Kauffmann was accredited with the President of the United States of America as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for Denmark and it goes without saying that in this capacity he was only warranted to act on the basis of and in conformity with the general authorization or special instructions given him by the Danish Government. By signing on his own account against the will and knowledge of His Majesty, the King, the Cabinet and the Danish Rigsdag an agreement of the 9th of April, 1941 on the defense of Greenland, he has exceeded his authority as accredited Minister and acted against the constitution as such an agreement, according to Danish constitutional law, can only be made with Royal full powers and with the consent of the Rigsdag. As Mr. Kauffmann refused to comply with the order of recall, the Danish Government therefore to its great grief had at once to dismiss him and to take extraordinary measures against him.

In his message to His Majesty the King, the President of the United States refers to the fact that Denmark at present is an occupied country and from this fact conclusions are drawn with regard to the status of Mr. Kauffmann just as this fact seems to be decisive for the Government of the United States when judging the mode of action of Mr. Kauffmann. The Royal Danish Government cannot recognize these conclusions and considerations.

The action of Mr. Kauffmann can never—even from the point of view taken by the Government of the United States—be justified for it is clear that the Danish Crown Government and Rigsdag, even if the country had not been occupied by foreign troops, under no circumstances would or could have concluded or sanctioned an agreement as that at issue the less so because thereby the possibility is created of an occupation of Greenland territory by a foreign power in connection with expectations as to the development of the war. Such a step would simply have been an unfriendly act towards a third power and would have been at direct variance with Denmark's traditional policy. Mr. Kauffmann cannot have doubted that the occupation of Denmark would not justify an arbitrary act which under normal conditions he would never have been authorized to perform. From real as well as from formal points of view, the Danish Government has therefore been obliged to consider the agreement as invalid in point of Danish constitutional as well as international law and to protest against it to the American Chargé d'Affaires at Copenhagen.

As to the status of Mr. Kauffmann, the occupation of Denmark is of no relevance, for notwithstanding the occupation His Majesty the King, in accordance with the Danish constitution, appoints and dismisses his envoys as well as his other Crown officers. In 1939 Mr. Kauffmann was appointed Minister at Washington by His Majesty the King and is now, in conformity with the Danish constitution, recalled and dismissed from the public service by the King, as he has not any more the confidence of His Majesty and the Danish Government. He is now a private person and has no longer any authority to act as Danish Minister. It would not harmonize with the mutual wishes of the Danish and the American Governments for maintaining all ties which may serve Dano-American interests if Mr. Kauffmann was still considered as Danish Minister by the Government of the United States. This would be tantamount to rendering diplomatic contact at Washington impossible and a very important tie would be broken. It is a fiction as Minister to recognize a person who has no country and no head state behind him. The consequence of maintaining the view hitherto taken by the Government of the United States would be that the possibilities of diplomatic intercourse between the United States of America would be inferior to those existing between two countries whose diplomatic relations are interrupted.

In referring to the above, I beg that the Government of the United States take up for renewed consideration the question of Denmark's official representation at Washington and to express the hope that the American Government will find means for a solution with due consideration to the points of view of the Danish Government.

I hereby repeat my request to you to recognize Mr. E. Blechingberg as Denmark's Chargé d'Affaires at Washington. Should you, however,



find it more expedient that this post be filled by another officer, I will be prepared to offer suggestions in this respect.

Please accept Mr. Minister the renewed assurance of my highest consideration.

Signed Erik Scavenius."

PERKINS

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859B.7962/93 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Denmark (Perkins)*

WASHINGTON, May 5, 1941—7 p. m.

69. You are requested to arrange an appointment with the Private Secretary to the King as soon as possible and leave with him for King Christian a copy of the following message from the President:

"Great and Good Friend:

The Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the United States of America at Copenhagen has transmitted to me by cable the text of Your Majesty's communication of the 26th of April, 1941<sup>25a</sup> regarding your Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Government of the United States of America, Mr. Henrik Louis Hans de Kauffmann, and the recently concluded agreement relating to the defense of Greenland.

"I am greatly distressed that Your Majesty has found it necessary to characterize as unjustified the measures which the Government of the United States of America deems it essential to take no less in the interests of Your Majesty's sovereignty over Greenland than for the protection of the Western Hemisphere. I trust that I am not misinformed as to the true feeling of deep friendship and of common ideals which the people of Denmark have for the United States of America, or that they have any doubt that the Government of the United States will not live up to its undertakings with respect to Your Majesty's sovereignty over Greenland.

"I have noted with regret Your Majesty's statement to the effect that it is now inexpedient to deal with the Government of the United States of America through Mr. de Kauffmann even though this Government recognizes him as Minister of Denmark in Washington. I am confident, however, that Your Majesty's Government will find it possible to maintain completely friendly relations with the Government and people of the United States through the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the United States in Copenhagen.

"The Secretary of State at my direction is replying directly to the communication which you instructed your Minister of Foreign Affairs to send him enlarging upon the foregoing matter.

"I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your Majesty the assurance of esteem and friendship.

Your Good Friend,

Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
President of the United States of America."

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<sup>25a</sup> See telegram No. 146, April 26, 9 p.m., from the Chargé in Denmark, p. 58.

Subsequently you should forward a copy of the foregoing communication to the Minister of Foreign Affairs with a formal covering note stating that it is done under instructions from me.

HULL

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859B.7962/94 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Denmark (Perkins)*

WASHINGTON, May 6, 1941—11 a. m.

70. You will please formally request an appointment with the Foreign Minister and read him the following message from me as a reply to his communication of April 26, text of which you transmitted in your telegram no. 147, April 27, 9 a. m. :

“Mr. Minister :

I have received, through the American Chargé d’Affaires ad interim in Copenhagen, the communication which you addressed to me under date of the 26th of April, 1941 enlarging upon the points made by His Majesty, King Christian X, in a communication to the President of the United States of America with respect to the authority of the Minister of Denmark in Washington, Mr. Henrik de Kauffmann.

The President has replied to His Majesty’s communication indicating continued respect for fundamental Danish interests and a sympathetic understanding of the difficult position in which Denmark now finds itself by reason of its occupation by German military forces and the resulting restriction of its freedom of action.

Because of the close ties of friendship and blood between the people of Denmark and the United States of America, my Government is confident that in their hearts the people of Denmark fully understand my Government’s action, which would not, of course, have been taken if Denmark had not been invaded, and that when they are once again free to express their true feelings they will give public approval of the measures which have been taken and which are so clearly necessary for the protection of Danish sovereignty over Greenland and of the Western Hemisphere against unprovoked aggression such as Denmark itself so recently and unhappily experienced.

In view of the foregoing considerations I am sure that you will understand my Government’s decision not to withdraw recognition of Mr. de Kauffmann as the Minister of Denmark in Washington. The President has, however, invited His Majesty’s attention to the fact that if the Danish Government deems it inexpedient for the time being to communicate with the Government of the United States of America through Mr. de Kauffmann, the friendly relations between the United States and Denmark can be satisfactorily maintained through the Chargé d’Affaires ad interim of the United States in Copenhagen.

Please Accept, Sir, et cetera, et cetera.”

If requested you may leave a copy of this telegram with the Foreign Office.

HULL

859B.7962/140 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, May 17, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 8:03 p. m.]

176. The following note in reply to the Department's telegram No. 70, May 6, 11 a. m., was handed to me in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 4 p. m. today by Under Secretary Mohr:

"Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen, May 17, 1941. Mr. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State of the United States of America. Mr. Minister: I acknowledge receipt of your communication of the 6th of May which the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the United States of America in this city handed over to me, simultaneously with his delivering to the private secretary of His Majesty the King, President Roosevelt's message to His Majesty, dated the 5th of May.

The Royal Danish Government has noted with satisfaction the renewed expressions on the part of the Government of the United States of sympathy towards Denmark and continued respect for fundamental Danish interests, especially for Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland but it is unable to admit the necessity or legality of the measures taken by the American Government as regards Greenland. Especially the Danish Government is still unable to understand the motives which brought the Government of the United States to wish to see these measures anchored in an agreement with Mr. Kauffmann as to which I have previously expressed the views of the Danish Government.

As regards the opinion of the Danish people on this matter, the Danish Government who comprises representatives of all the great political factions, thus having close connections with all parts of the population, feels convinced that the public opinion on this case is covered by the comments which have appeared in the Danish press that unanimously regretted the measures taken by the Government of the United States with respect to the occupation of Greenland and condemned Mr. Kauffmann's cooperation herein.

The Danish Government should like to maintain friendly relations with the Government of the United States through the American Chargé d'Affaires ad interim at Copenhagen, but from practical reasons as well as from reasons of principle this connection will, of course, be quite unsatisfactory for the safeguarding of Danish interests in the United States. To this a diplomatic organ at Washington is required. I have with satisfaction noted that the Government of the United States has acceded to the views taken by the Danish Government in as far as it realizes that Mr. Kauffmann cannot be taken into consideration in that connection. If the Government of the United States should not see its way to accept my suggestion that Mr. Blechingberg be recognized as Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, and should not either wish to enter upon the idea of sending another career officer to the States in this capacity—questions to which no stand is taken in your above-mentioned communication—Denmark will be obliged to entrust the government of another neutral state having a diplomatic representative in Washington with the safeguarding of the Danish interests in the United States of America.

I should appreciate to receive a communication from you as to your attitude to my suggestion with regard to Mr. Blechingberg or to another Danish career officer as Chargé d'Affaires ad interim so as to enable me to take the necessary measures.

Please accept, Mr. Minister, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Signed Erik Scavenius."

PERKINS

859E.7962/154 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Denmark (Perkins)*

WASHINGTON, June 3, 1941— 6 p. m.

82. Your 192, May 29, 5 p. m.<sup>26</sup> You will please formally request an appointment with the Foreign Minister and read him the following message from me as a reply to his communication of May 17, 1941, text of which you transmitted to the Department in your telegram No. 176, May 17, 7 p. m.:

"Mr. Minister :

Your communication of May 17, 1941 delivered to the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the United States of America in Copenhagen has been transmitted to me. I beg to refer to a note delivered on April 18<sup>26a</sup> to the Royal Danish Government stating that the Government of the United States would continue to recognize Mr. de Kauffmann as Minister of Denmark at Washington for an indicated period of time. It would be clear to Your Excellency that, during this period, the Government of the United States would find it out of the question to recognize any other person, or any other Danish diplomatic officer, or any third state, as having capacity to represent Danish interests in the United States.

Note has been taken of your statement that communication with this Government through the American Chargé d'Affaires ad interim in Copenhagen would provide an unsatisfactory means of safeguarding Danish interests in the United States. It is to be observed that this channel of communication would appear already to have served satisfactorily for the presentation of your views in various matters, including the matter now under reference. The necessary effect of further restrictions on the existing recognized connections could only be opposite to that which, I believe you will agree, is desirable for the protection of the interests both of the people of Denmark and the people of the United States.

During the present interval, and until more propitious circumstances again prevail, I express the hope that the Government of Denmark will find it possible to maintain the friendly contact between Denmark and the United States of America through existing diplomatic channels, even under the pressure of the present troublous times. I trust

<sup>26</sup> Not printed.

<sup>26a</sup> See telegram No. 60, April 18, 5 p. m., to the Chargé in Denmark, p. 53.

you will agree that considerations in favor of so doing transcend in importance any technical inadequacies that may be deemed to exist temporarily in the official relations between the two countries.

Please accept, Sir, et cetera, et cetera."

You may leave the text of this telegram with the Foreign Office in the form of a note from your Government.

HULL

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701.5911/388½

*Memorandum by Mr. Hugh S. Cumming, Jr., of the Division of European Affairs*

[Extract]

[WASHINGTON,] June 24, 1941.

Mr. Blechingberg telephoned me this morning and said that he had at last received instructions from the Foreign Office in Copenhagen to leave the United States as soon as possible and to take Mr. Möller and Mr. Tscherning with him. After consulting Mr. Atherton<sup>27</sup> I telephoned Mr. Blechingberg and asked him to call on me at the State Department this afternoon.

Mr. Blechingberg read me a telegram which he had received from the Foreign Office. In substance it said that in view of existing circumstances the Foreign Office desired him and the two former Danish consular officers to leave the United States as quickly as possible and directed him to inform the Foreign Office of the route chosen by him and the pertinent dates.

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125.0059/63 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, June 27, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received June 27—12:30 p. m.]

232. Following is text of note referred to in the Legation's 231, June 27, 2 p. m.<sup>28</sup>

"The Danish Government have desired and tried to arrive at an understanding with the Government of the United States of America regarding the mutual representation of the two countries. Despite urgent representations on the part of the Danish Government the Government of the United States have however refused to recognize the representatives in the United States of America delegated by the Danish Government. A telegram now received from Mr. E. Blechingberg shows that pressure has been brought to bear on Mr. Blechingberg

<sup>27</sup> Ray Atherton, Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs.

<sup>28</sup> Not printed.

and the two Danish consular officers, Helmuth Moeller and A. T. Tscherning, both by the American authorities and the American press in order to induce them to leave the United States. This pressure seems even to be of an economic nature as the American authorities have refused to pay funds cabled from this country to the Danish officers concerned unless they receive orders to leave the states.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs much regret that in these circumstances they have not been in a position to adopt any other course than to instruct Messrs. Blechingberg, Helmuth Moeller and Tscherning to leave the United States of America. Instructions to that effect have been cabled to Mr. Blechingberg.

In view of this situation the Danish Government have been compelled to consider the position of the American diplomatic and consular representations in Denmark.

At the same time the development of the war has led the European countries into an increasingly closer collaboration in order to meet the severe economic pressure of the blockade. Also this consideration has induced the Danish Government to take measures with respect to the American consular representatives in this country.

With reference to the above the Ministry for Foreign Affairs regret to have to ask the Legation of the United States of America to take the necessary steps for the American consular officers in this country who are citizens of the United States to leave Denmark before the 15th of July next.<sup>29</sup> Copenhagen, June 26, 1941."

PERKINS

859B.01B11/6

*The Danish Minister (Kauffmann) to the Secretary of State*

The Minister of Denmark presents his compliments to the Honorable the Secretary of State and has the honor to inform the Secretary that, for some time, the coordination of the work of the Legation and of the representatives of the Greenland authorities in this country, has been the subject of his attention.

This has been the case especially since Monsieur de Kauffmann is recognized by the Secretary of State as having the responsibility for the control and expenditure of all Danish Government funds and central bank funds in the United States.

To the end that he may more effectively discharge his responsibilities for the direct supervision of all Danish Government agencies in the United States, the Danish Minister contemplates to attach the members of the Greenland Delegation in New York to the Danish Consulate General in that city.

Monsieur de Kauffmann would appreciate very much to learn the views of the American Government in regard to this measure contemplated by him.

WASHINGTON, October 22, 1941.

<sup>29</sup> The Consulate General at Copenhagen closed as of July 9, 1941.

859B.01B11/6

*The Secretary of State to the Danish Minister (Kauffmann)*

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to the Honorable the Minister of Denmark and has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of his note dated October 22, 1941 in which Mr. Kauffmann requests the views of the Government of the United States with respect to his proposal that in order that he may more effectively discharge his responsibilities for the direct supervision of all Danish Government agencies in the United States, he attach the members of the Greenland Delegation in New York to the Danish Consulate General in that city.

In reply Mr. Kauffmann is informed that his contemplated action is agreeable to the Government of the United States and, furthermore, that in Mr. Hull's opinion the evolution of relations between Denmark, the Danish Colony of Greenland, and the United States makes it advisable that a clear statement of these relations be made at this time. Reference is had particularly to the very broad obligations assumed by the Government of the United States towards the Kingdom of Denmark in the Agreement Relating to the Defense of Greenland signed on April 9, 1941, and related exchange of notes, and especially to the assurances included in that Agreement and made simultaneously in a statement by the President of the United States that the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Denmark over and its rights in and to the Colony of Greenland would continue to be recognized and scrupulously respected by the Government of the United States.

From these obligations and assurances, which have been welcome no less in Denmark than in Greenland, it follows that the responsibilities of the United States with respect to Greenland run directly to Denmark, even though by reason of the occupation of the country by German forces, the Government of Denmark is unhappily not at present in a position freely to act in Greenland or elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere. The duly accredited and recognized representative in the United States of His Majesty the King of Denmark and the Royal Danish Government is the Minister of Denmark at Washington, who was appointed prior to the occupation of his country by German forces. In consequence, the Government of the United States feels that it must look to him as the spokesman for all Danish interests, including Greenland, and that it is obligated to consult with him whenever those interests are involved.

Note has been taken of the fact that the Colony of Greenland did not have autonomous powers within the framework of the Danish constitutional system, but that its internal administration and external relationships were in all respects determined and directed by the Government of Denmark. It follows that were the United States to enter into relations with the Colony or the Colonial officials other than

through the duly accredited and recognized representative of the Danish Government, it would, in effect, be contributing to a separation of Greenland from its historic and constitutional relationship with Denmark; and such action would therefore tend to be in violation of the obligations assumed by the United States to respect Danish sovereignty over Greenland and to assist Greenland in the maintenance of its status.

The dependence of the Colony of Greenland upon the Government of Denmark appears to extend not merely to matters of political significance, but likewise to economic and financial matters. This plainly establishes the principle which must be applied to the control over Greenland assets and expenditures, most of which revolve around the sale of cryolite and the use of the funds thus obtained for the purchase of supplies, the administration of Greenland, and the discharge of Danish obligations to the owners of the cryolite mine and to the miners. The Minister of Denmark at Washington is recognized by the Secretary of State as having the responsibility for the control and expenditure of all Danish Government funds and Central Bank funds in the United States. Similarly the various licensing orders issued by the Secretary of the Treasury have been drawn with a view to fixing the responsibility for control and expenditure of Greenland funds upon the Minister of Denmark as the recognized representative in the United States of Danish interests, including Greenland.

Note has also been taken of the fact that contracts for the disposal of cryolite have in the past been made under the direction of the Danish Government. It would thus appear that at present the Danish Minister in Washington exercises the functions of the Danish Crown and Government in that regard.

The Secretary of State has accordingly determined that all matters regarding finance, supplies, and the sale of Greenland products in the United States will, as a matter of policy be taken up with the Danish Legation in Washington. The Danish Minister has proposed that he attach the members of the Greenland Delegation in New York to the Danish Consulate General in New York, to the end that he may more effectively discharge his responsibilities for the direct supervision of all Danish Government agencies in the United States. As indicated above, Mr. Hull agrees to this step for the purpose of better safeguarding the position and interests of the Kingdom of Denmark, including the Colony of Greenland. American consular officers in Greenland will, of course, continue to transact with the Danish authorities in Greenland such official business as is customarily transacted between a consular officer and the local officials within his consular district.

WASHINGTON, October 25, 1941.



859B.01/388

*The Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the American Legation in Denmark*<sup>80</sup>

P. J. I. A. Journal Nr. 84 B. 2. a.

NOTE VERBALE

The American Chargé d'Affaires in Copenhagen has been good enough to leave with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs a copy of the note<sup>80a</sup> which the State Department in Washington recently transmitted to the former Danish Minister there, M. Kauffmann, concerning his status and authority particularly with regard to Greenland.

The Royal Danish Government has taken notice of this document with the greatest anxiety as it appears to indicate that M. Kauffmann has now obtained recognition in relation to the United States of America as an organ competing with the lawful Danish Government having been invested with all the Danish Government's authority with regard to Greenland and Danish property in the United States of America and in Greenland.

This is the regrettable result of a development in which M. Kauffmann himself appears to have been the impelling force; for according to the information available here there is nothing to indicate that the Government of the United States of America would itself have taken the initiative to bring about the status which M. Kauffmann has gradually succeeded in obtaining, if he himself on April the 9th, 1940,<sup>80b</sup> had loyally followed the lawful Danish Government like Denmark's other Ministers in foreign countries.

M. Kauffmann has achieved this status after an usurpation in explanation of which he merely states that the Danish Government is acting under duress as a result of the occupation and that it is therefore incompetent. In this respect, however, he has evidently acted as early as on April 9th, 1940, in the expectation of developments in Denmark under the occupation of an entirely different nature to those which actually ensued. His attitude is based on illogical reasoning; Denmark is certainly under the occupation of German troops, but this does not prevent the lawful Danish Government, which is composed of representatives of all the great political parties from directing all affairs in the country. In all essential respects Danish social life is continued normally, the powers of State—legislative, judi-

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<sup>80</sup> Transmitted to the Department by the Swiss Legation in Washington in charge of Danish interests, as an enclosure to a Swiss note dated July 31, 1942.

<sup>80a</sup> *Supra*.

<sup>80b</sup> The date of the occupation of Norway and Denmark by Germany; for correspondence, see *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. I, pp. 136 ff.

ciary and executive—carrying on their functions independently and without interference from the occupying power.

M. Kauffmann was Denmark's Minister in Washington and had no function beyond that. A diplomatic agent cannot be or become anything different or more than what his Government has entrusted him to be, and neither under international Law nor under Danish constitutional Law can he acquire any independent political authority without a special mandate. The Danish people is represented by its King, Government and Parliament, and how can the authority of these lawful instances with any justification be transferred to a chance diplomatic agent by a mere act of usurpation?

To the extent to which M. Kauffmann is in a position to act on the basis of his being recognized by the Government of the United States of America the anomalous situation is now in fact established that there are so to speak two Danish "Governments", one being the lawful Government appointed by the King, recognized by the people, and domiciled in Denmark, at which foreign powers (including the United States of America) maintain legations, the other being the "Kauffmann usurper Government" which on the basis of certain ideas of duress and *negotiorum gestio* has obtained the authority which the lawful Government in Copenhagen would normally be able to exercise through its (law-abiding) Minister in Washington.

It should be remembered that the position of Denmark is quite different to that of States whose Governments after the failure of their resistance against German military power have left their country and established themselves abroad. In Denmark the King and Government remained in the country on April the 9th, 1940, and resolved by constitutional means "to direct the affairs of the country in view of the occupation which has taken place". From the outset the King and Government have thus had and still have the direction of all the affairs of the country, and the conditions, as far as Denmark is concerned, for establishing anything analogous with the exile Governments of the aforesaid countries are therefore entirely missing.

M. Kauffmann has undoubtedly himself felt the weakness of having no mandate from the people whose interests he claims to defend. He has therefore endeavoured to obtain the adherence of Danes living abroad, but even if this adherence may be felt as a moral support by M. Kauffmann personally it is evident that it is of no significance from the point of view of constitutional Law; for how can the attribution to M. Kauffmann of Government authority, the exercise of which presupposes all the elements which according to universally recognized opinion enters into the conception of a State, be based on the mere presence of a strictly limited number of partisans or ad-

herents? These adherents are, moreover, largely persons who have acquired another nationality and who are not only under a formal obligation to their new country, but may also be presumed to share the sympathies prevalent there.

The fact that M. Kauffmann has felt the weakness of acting without any mandate from the King of Denmark appears clearly from the surreptitious inclusion, on his initiative, in the preamble of the so-called Greenland Agreement of April 9th, 1941, of a passage to the effect that he acted "on behalf of His Majesty the King of Denmark in His quality of Sovereign over Greenland". This passage was inserted by M. Kauffmann not only without the existence of any trace of authorization, but even directly against his better knowledge of being guilty of an abuse of the King's name. By this action it became clear that M. Kauffmann from the occupation of Denmark on April the 9th, 1940, had adopted an attitude directly contrary to the policy laid down by the King and Government.

M. Kauffmann having no other authority than that which he had received from the State Department, it was a fiction to speak of "negotiations" in connection with the conclusion of the Greenland Agreement. Article 10 in particular of the Agreement concerning its duration has evidently been drafted in such a way that the Government of the United States of America will be in a position unilaterally to decide, and therefore indefinitely postpone, the date of an eventual conference for the amendment or termination of the Agreement.

The Agreement having thus been concluded without the participation of the Danish Government it has been a reassurance to this Government to receive—directly irrespective of the Agreement—the promise of the American Government that Greenland will be restored, but the fact that Denmark has to see its policy and its interests, in so far as the United States of America and Greenland are concerned, placed in the hands of a man whose only title is based on his own act of usurpation, fills the Danish Government with profound anxiety as to future developments.

The Danish Government fails to understand that the American Government, in spite of all that has taken place, not only does not refuse its recognition of M. Kauffmann but even considerably extends that recognition.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs requests the American Chargé d'Affaires in Copenhagen to communicate the above to the State Department in Washington.

COPENHAGEN, December 12, 1941.

## SEIZURE AND REQUISITION BY THE UNITED STATES OF DANISH SHIPS LYING IN AMERICAN PORTS

859.85/606

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 18, 1941.

The Danish Minister <sup>81</sup> came in to see me, at his request.

His purpose was merely to say that he was leaving town for a week, commencing Saturday,<sup>82</sup> and had dropped in to exchange views.

He said he had received an instruction from Copenhagen renewing the insistence that Danish ships and captains should not sail; further, asking him to notify the American Government, and likewise the Philippine Government, that no one outside of Denmark was authorized to charter or otherwise dispose of the Danish ships.

The Minister considered that this was strictly a German order, forced upon the Danish Government. He was not transmitting it officially, but merely telling me about it. He added that no good purpose could be served by saying nothing, since the Danish Government undoubtedly could hand an exactly similar notification to Perkins <sup>83</sup> in Copenhagen. He added that the German pressure on Denmark was obviously growing, and that camouflage of an independent Danish Government was wearing somewhat thin.

He further said that he was not clear how far Admiral Land <sup>84</sup> was getting in his attempts to charter the Danish ships. He himself would be willing to give his benediction to the transaction and to take the consequences, which might be grave personally, provided he could feel sure that the arrangement made was a practicable one. So far he was not clear that that was true, since the British were still declining to recognize the transaction in any way.

I was noncommittal on this subject.

<sup>81</sup> Henrik de Kauffmann.

<sup>82</sup> February 22.

<sup>83</sup> Mahlon F. Perkins, American Chargé in Denmark.

<sup>84</sup> Rear Adm. Emory S. Land, Chairman of the United States Maritime Commission.

859.85/609

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State  
(Long)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 31, 1941.

The Danish Minister came in at his own request. He took up the question of the Danish boats being taken over.<sup>35</sup> He reminded me of a recent conversation he had with me during the course of which he remarked that he thought the best way out would be the expropriation of the ships by the American Government.

Today he said that he was not unhappy that it had happened; that he was only primarily concerned about the welfare of the seamen and the captains; that these men were not saboteurs; that they were devoted to their ships; that they had been on runs to England on these same Danish ships before Denmark was invaded; that several thousands of them were serving on ships now running to England; and that he hoped that these facts would be taken into consideration by the authorities in control of the men.

I told him that I did not know the details of arrangements, but I was sure the American Government felt and would manifest a sympathetic understanding of the difference in the situation between the Danes on the one hand and the Germans and the Italians on the other. Not only have the Danes not committed sabotage, but we felt that they were entitled to a preferential treatment.

B[RECKINRIDGE] L[ONG]

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<sup>35</sup> During the night of March 29-30, 1941, the Coast Guard took control of 35 of the 41 Danish vessels in American ports, not interfering with those which had been actively trading or with one Danish Government-owned ship. There was no evidence of sabotage on the Danish vessels, and in their case the seizure was purely "preventive" and taken in anticipation of possible damage by other persons as well as by the crews. See Hackworth, *Digest of International Law*, vol. VII, p. 519. For correspondence regarding the taking over of German and Italian ships the same night, see *Foreign Relations*, 1941, vol. I, pp. 451 ff.

859.85/588

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Legal Adviser (Hackworth)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 1, 1941.

Participants: The Danish Minister  
Mr. Long, Mr. Hackworth and Mr. Saugstad<sup>36</sup>  
Judge Townsend<sup>37</sup> and Mr. Shoemaker,<sup>38</sup> Department  
of Justice  
Captain Chalker,<sup>39</sup> Coast Guard (Treasury Department)  
Captain Schuirmann,<sup>40</sup> Navy Department

It was agreed at the meeting at the Treasury Department on March 31 that a conference should be arranged with the Danish Minister as soon as possible to discuss the situation with respect to the crews on the Danish ships of which protective control had been taken by the Coast Guard on Sunday, March 30. Accordingly, a conference was arranged for 10:30 this morning.

The Danish Minister stated for a background that approximately a third of the Danish ships are now tied up in the Baltic ports, that more than a third are operating with the British Government, and that the remaining vessels are in neutral ports—36 in ports of the United States. He stated that there are little more than skeleton crews on the vessels at the present time, many of the original members having shipped on other vessels. He was of the opinion that the captains of the ships had retained the pick of the crews, keeping the number down as far as possible to reduce the costs to the owners while the ships are tied up; that they are all trustworthy and that no one of them would harm his ship under any circumstances, not even under threats from the government in occupation of Denmark.

Captain Chalker stated that instead of a thousand members, as originally estimated by the Coast Guard, there are but 470 officers and men on board the ships. Mr. Gaston, of the Treasury Department, had expressed the view by telephone that not more than 5 or 6 men should be retained on board to assist the Coast Guard in the operation of machinery, etc. The Minister was of the opinion that skilled labor was an important factor in the upkeep of the ships and was fearful that if too few people were kept aboard damage to the ships might

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<sup>36</sup> Jesse Edwin Saugstad, Assistant Chief of the Division of International Communications.

<sup>37</sup> Newman A. Townsend.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas B. Shoemaker.

<sup>39</sup> Capt. L. T. Chalker.

<sup>40</sup> Capt. Roscoe E. Schuirmann.

result. Judge Townsend expressed the view that if as many as 10 could be retained there would be fewer people to be cared for by the immigration authorities. Captain Chalker thought that it might be possible to retain as many as 10 if they were people in whom the Coast Guard could have complete confidence, but that it would be desirable that the number be determined by the requirements of each individual ship; that the Coast Guard would not undertake to operate the vessels but would desire to have on board a sufficient number of Danish engineers to handle the machinery when necessary. The largest number now on board any ship is 24.

The Minister thought that consultation with the Danish Consul in New York would be desirable and gave assurances that the Consul and the captains of the vessels would be most cooperative in passing upon the trustworthiness of members of the crews who might be left aboard ships. He didn't think that the captains would find many who would not be satisfactory since they had already tried to get rid of people whom they did not like.

On the question as to whether the Danish Government or the ship-owners would be willing to bear the expense of members of the crews who are removed from the vessels and in the custody of the immigration authorities, the Minister stated that it would be impossible for his Government to undertake the obligation and that it would also be difficult for the shipowners to do so in view of the fact that they have been under a heavy expense for a considerable period of time on account of the ships. He said that while the crews remained aboard ship the owners would of course look after them, but that they would consider that their obligation ceased when they were taken charge of by the immigration authorities. He thought that most of them would be able to ship on other vessels in the course of time.

There was some discussion as to possible operation of the vessels. The Minister was of the opinion that the only practical method would be requisition by the United States. He did not think that the German Government would stand for their operation under the Danish flag.

Captain Schuirmann raised a question regarding the four ships in the Philippines of which the Navy Department has taken charge. The Minister stated that he thought it would be dangerous for them to leave the Islands in a group, and said that there has been some discussion by the Maritime Commission of the possibility of sending one vessel to the United States as an experiment, but he was of the opinion that if one vessel should make the trip without interference the German Government would undoubtedly cause instructions to be sent to the masters of the others of such character as would render

it almost impossible for them to sail. Captain Schuirmann said that there is no immigration service in the Philippine Islands to take charge of members of the crews. He thought that perhaps the Navy Department could arrange to feed and shelter them and that they might be allowed to go at large unless the Philippine Government should object. Mr. Hackworth suggested that the matter should be taken up with the American High Commissioner.

It was understood that Captain Chalker would discuss with Mr. Gaston and other people in the Treasury Department the situation with respect to the number of people to be kept on board vessels under control of the Coast Guard and that the information would be communicated to the Minister through the Department of State.

G[REEN] H. H[ACKWORTH]

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859.85/560a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Denmark (Perkins)*

WASHINGTON, April 1, 1941—7 p. m.

51. As you are aware, a number of foreign vessels, including some of German and Italian nationality, have for many months sought refuge in the ports of the United States and have enjoyed the hospitality and protection of this Government.

On Saturday, March 29, the United States Coast Guard received reliable information to the effect that the crews of these vessels had been instructed to sabotage and disable these ships. In an effort to prevent such action, the Coast Guard immediately placed guards on the vessels. These guards found that in many cases extensive machinery sabotage had already taken place. It was therefore decided to assume protective control over the vessels under U. S. C., Title 50, Section 191 made effective by Presidential Proclamation and Rules and Regulations, June 27, 1940,<sup>41</sup> and to place their crews under custody in order to avoid further damage to the ships as well as possible injury to the ports and harbors of the United States.

In order to avoid possible damage to Danish vessels lying in United States ports, it was decided to take these vessels also under protective control and to place guards on board. In taking this action, the United States government authorities met with full cooperation on the part of Danish officers and crews. The status of officers and crews of these vessels is being studied. They are being accorded special courtesies and are not subjected to association with the Ger-

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<sup>41</sup> 54 Stat. (pt. 2) 2711.



man and Italian crews. It is desired to create as little disturbance with regard to the status of these vessels as possible.

The emergency of the matter was so great that it was not possible for the Department to give any advance notice.

In your discretion you are authorized to communicate as much of the foregoing to the Danish authorities as you deem appropriate.

HULL

859.85/553 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, April 2, 1941—noon.

[Received April 2—9:32 a. m.]

101. Legation's telegram No. 99, April 1, 4 p. m.<sup>42</sup> After a conference between Danish officials concerned and shipowners, telegraphic instructions were sent by the latter to their agents in the United States to refrain or withdraw from any negotiations regarding operation of the Danish vessels. It is to be assumed that Danish officials were acting under German pressure.

Danish private reaction toward American measures is believed to be favorable.

PERKINS

859.85/676

*The Danish Minister (Kauffmann) to the Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, May 22, 1941.

SIR: Danish ships on the high seas and in ports the world over were placed in a very unfortunate and embarrassing situation on April 9th last year when Denmark, suddenly and without warning, was occupied by German military forces.<sup>43</sup>

Because of the fact that Denmark had been completely occupied by forces at war with Great Britain and France, and as there was no Danish Government outside of Denmark able to exercise its functions, the British and French Governments, immediately after the occupation, declared, as you will recall, that Danish ships would no longer be treated as neutral, but were technically "enemy" ships, subject to seizure and prize court proceedings, by which they could be transferred to British or French flag and registry.

In line with this policy, Danish ships in Allied ports or on the high seas, altogether more than one-third of the total Danish tonnage,

<sup>42</sup> Not printed.

<sup>43</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. I, pp. 136 ff.

were seized and transferred to the British or French flag. Of the Danish ships in neutral countries, representing approximately one-quarter of the total Danish tonnage, the majority remained in port in order to avoid such seizure and transfer.

A few days after the German invasion of Denmark, a Danish Shipping Committee was formed in New York. Discussions were begun with representatives of the British and French Governments, in the hope of arriving at an understanding that would make it possible for Danish ships to go to sea again.

In view of the situation in Denmark, these discussions were begun and conducted without consulting Copenhagen. They were unsuccessful. This was primarily because no agreement could be reached on the flag issue. The Shipping Committee maintained that it had no authority to agree to a transfer to foreign flag and registry; the Allied Governments considered a transfer of the ships to their registries absolutely essential in order to safeguard the ships against legal actions that the owners of the vessels or the Danish authorities might be forced to take under German duress.

While some Danish ships, against orders from Copenhagen, have left neutral ports, accepting the terms offered by the British and French Governments, the majority of the Danish ships in neutral countries remained where they were. Most of the captains and agents abroad considered it beyond their authority voluntarily to accept seizure by a belligerent, even though the seizure was described as being of a technical nature only, and restitution to the owners after the war was promised.

Later on, from time to time, new efforts were made to solve the problem of Danish ships lying idle in neutral ports, but no positive results were ever reached. One of the reasons for this, was repeated orders from Copenhagen, undoubtedly due to German pressure, that the ships must remain in neutral ports for the duration of the war. As time went on, these orders became not only more explicit and emphatic, but wider in scope. Lately, all Danish ships in United States ports have received telegrams from the owners in Denmark instructing the crews to leave the ships immediately if they were to sail, and under no circumstances to sign on other ships.

Furthermore, it has been indicated from various sources that pressure is at present brought to bear on the government in Denmark by the German authorities, to have a law passed curtailing the freedom of Danish seamen to sign on ships under foreign flag.

In view of the fact that the obstacles against using ships flying the Danish flag have shown themselves to be insurmountable, I have held the opinion for several months that Danish ships would not be permanently allowed to remain in American ports at a time when the

shortage of ships is steadily increasing, but that Danish ships, sooner or later, would have to face requisitioning by government action. This opinion I repeatedly expressed in reports to Copenhagen.

When the Danish ships in United States ports were taken into custody on March 30th last, and when news of the proposed American legislation authorizing requisitioning of foreign ships became known, I received instructions from the Foreign Office in Copenhagen to lodge, on behalf of the Danish Government, an emphatic protest against any measures to be taken by the American Government aiming, contrary to the rules of international law, to requisition Danish ships either for title or for use.

Although aware of the fact that it could be made a matter of discussion whether the planned requisitioning was in conformity with international law, and that such requisitioning in previous cases had been challenged, both diplomatically and by some of the most highly recognized legal authorities, I was of the opinion that a protest of the kind intended by Copenhagen would not serve its purpose under present circumstances. I felt that it was more in line with true Danish interests to regard the planned requisition as the inevitable and sole means of solving an otherwise insolvable problem created by circumstances beyond the control of the Danish and American Governments, and to strive for the protection of Danish interests on that basis. I considered this line of thought to be the more appropriate, both from the point of view of the Danish interests in general, and from the point of view of the more specific interests of the Danish shipowners and the Danish crews.

My views in this respect, which I made known to Copenhagen, and which made it impossible for me to associate myself with the protest formulated by the Government in Denmark, were greatly strengthened by the repeated assurances given me by various officers of the American Government, that any Danish shipowner whose ship might be requisitioned would receive just and adequate compensation.

I have noted with great satisfaction that this fundamental principle, as I understand it, has found explicit expression, both in the resolution regarding requisitioning of foreign-flag vessels in American ports adopted unanimously by the Inter-American Financial and Economic Advisory Committee on April 26th, 1941,<sup>44</sup> and in the bill before Congress (H. R. 4466), authorizing the acquisition by the United States of idle ships in United States ports.<sup>45</sup> And while it is obviously my duty, as representative of my country, to reserve the rights of my nationals in regard to the application of said principle in the in-

<sup>44</sup> For text of resolution, see Department of State *Bulletin*, May 3, 1941, p. 531. For correspondence pertaining to requisitioning of foreign flag vessels, see vol. VI.

<sup>45</sup> Introduced April 22, 1941, *Congressional Record*, vol. 87, pt. 3, p. 3251.

dividual cases that may arise, I beg leave to assure you once more, Mr. Secretary, of my earnest desire to cooperate most fully and frankly with the American authorities in order to settle, as quickly and as harmoniously as possible, the various questions necessarily arising in connection with the impending transfer of Danish ships in United States ports to the American flag.

In my opinion, a requisition for use will serve the purpose of the planned requisitioning just as satisfactorily as a requisition for title. As I have had the honor to point out on numerous occasions, Danish shipowners consider it to be of the greatest importance that Danish ships in United States ports be requisitioned, not for title, but only for use, and that the ships be returned to the Danish owners as soon as the present emergency is over, adequate insurance cover to be given to enable owners to replace any tonnage lost.

Danish shipping has in past years been an important source for providing Denmark with foreign exchange, especially the dollar balances necessary to serve the various dollar loans, and to pay for our imports from the United States, vastly exceeding our exports to this country. Over and above the disruption of the economic life in Denmark and the other losses caused by the German occupation, the German debt to the National Bank of Denmark, after one year of occupation, has reached an amount corresponding to nearly one-third of the total national income of Denmark in a normal year. Denmark, not provided with raw materials or rich natural resources, undoubtedly will be a very poor country after the war, both from a financial and a broader economic point of view. This economic disaster means little to us Danes compared with the present loss of our freedom; however, the task of reconstruction after the war will be an arduous one, and one of the most pressing problems unquestionably will be the difficulty of obtaining the foreign exchange necessary to meet our foreign debt and to pay for the imports vital to the welfare of the people and the economic reconstruction of the country.

It is, therefore, of paramount importance not only to Danish shipowners, but to the Danish community in general, that the earning power of Danish shipping be kept alive during the war and that the ships be returned to their owners as soon as the emergency is over.

I trust that the American Government will share these views, and that the long and never broken friendship between Denmark and the United States, and the understanding your Government and the American people have shown my country in its present plight, will find expression also on this occasion. I am confident that the various important questions arising from the requisitioning of the ships can be settled, not by recourse to litigation, but by friendly discussions on the basis of the principles of justice.

I avail myself [etc.]

HENRIK KAUFFMANN

859.85/703 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, July 26, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received 9:25 a. m.]

278. Legation's No. 611, December 31, [1940] noon.<sup>46</sup> I have received the following note dated July 24 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs:<sup>47</sup>

"As you will remember I had the honor during our conversation on December 30th last to stress to you the concern which the Danish Government as well as the Danish shipowners felt as a consequence of the continued rumors to the effect that the American Government intended to take over the Danish ships lying in American harbors. I expressed on that occasion *i[n]ter* *a[li]a* the expectation that the American Government would refrain from taking—with regard to the Danish ships—any steps contrary to international law.

It being, however, reported several times in the press during the following months that the compulsory taking over of the ships was contemplated, the Danish Minister in Washington, in accordance with my instructions, emphasized repeatedly to your Government the standpoint of the Danish Government and the Danish shipowners which standpoint can be summed up as follows.

According to Danish law, shipowners are prohibited from selling or chartering their ships abroad without the consent of the Danish Government. Such consent to the sale or chartering of the ships lying in the United States cannot be expected. The owners do not want to sell or to charter their ships but wish them to remain laid up in American harbors. The Danish Government take it for granted that the American Government will not disregard this perfectly clear Danish standpoint. The Danish Government must in advance protest most emphatically against any step whatsoever on the part of the American Government which contrary to international law aims at taking over the Danish ships whether as property or for temporary use.

On April 11th last, Mr. Kauffmann informed the State Department of the Danish standpoint in the form here recapitulated.

Nevertheless, from reports in the press it seems that a number of Danish ships in the United States have been requisitioned in accordance with a special act.<sup>48</sup> The United States Government have not so far informed the Danish Government of any such step. In view of the constant rumors, however, I feel obliged to ask you to request the United States Government to inform the Danish Government of any measures which may have given occasion to the above-mentioned press reports.

I avail myself [etc.]"

PERKINS

<sup>46</sup> Not printed.

<sup>47</sup> Eric Scavenius.

<sup>48</sup> Approved June 6, 1941; 55 Stat. 242.

859.85/703 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Denmark (Perkins)*

WASHINGTON, August 15, 1941—7 p. m.

139. Your 278, July 26. All immobilized Danish vessels in American and Philippine Island ports have been requisitioned.

The act authorizing such acquisition of foreign merchant vessels provides that just compensation shall be determined and made to the owners.

There is no question that this Government's right to do this exists under international law.

HULL

859.85/748 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Denmark (Perkins) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, September 11, 1941—noon.

[Received September 11—10:45 a. m.]

331. I have received the following note dated September 10th from the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

"It is with the deepest concern that I have learnt from your note of 18th ultimo that the Danish vessels lying in American and Philippine Island ports have been requisitioned. A step such as that now taken by the Government of the United States which is likely to endanger the said vessels and to deprive the Danish community of some of the assets most necessary for its economic recovery when the present war situation is over must naturally cause great anxiety to the Danish Government.

I cannot agree with the statement made in your above-mentioned note to the effect that the right of the American Government to requisition the ships exists under international law. On the contrary the Danish Government must decidedly consider it at variance with international law that a neutral power as the United States should requisition on her territory ships belonging to citizens of a friendly nation, ships which have at the express instruction of their Government repaired to American and Philippine ports in the expectation of obtaining there the protection due to them by virtue of the neutrality of the United States.

In view of the above the Danish Government must protest most emphatically against encroachment which has been made on Danish property through the requisitioning of the ships and insist on the immediate restitution of the ships to their lawful owners.

I have the honor to ask you to inform your Government of the contents of this note, and beg you receive, Monsieur Chargé d'Affaires, the assurance of my high consideration."

PERKINS

859.85/758

*The Danish Legation to the Department of State*

J. No. 60.M.8/10

In his note to the Secretary of State of May 22, 1941, the Danish Minister declared that he did not intend to lodge a protest against the expected requisition of Danish ships as he was instructed to do by Copenhagen, but that he regarded the requisition as the inevitable and sole means of solving an otherwise insolvable problem created by circumstances beyond the control of the Danish and American Governments and that it was his earnest desire to cooperate most fully and frankly with the American authorities in order to settle, as quickly and as harmoniously as possible, the various questions necessarily arising in connection with the impending transfer of Danish ships in United States ports to the American flag.

In line with these statements, and in conformity with the wishes of the American Government, every effort has been made since then by the Legation, by the various Danish Consulates in the United States, and the representatives of Danish shipowners in this country, to induce Danish crews to continue to serve on the requisitioned Danish ships. This has been done in spite of the fact that these efforts were rendered much more difficult when it became known that most of the ships, against previous expectations, were to sail, not under the United States flag, but the Panama flag, and in spite of the fact that most of the questions relating to the Danish crews were settled only after much delay and often in a way hardly satisfactory from the Danish point of view. The difficulties encountered have mainly centered around the following points:

*The Flag*—It has been very difficult to explain to the Danish sailors the necessity of transferring the Danish ships to the Panama Flag instead of the United States Flag. This is not only a question of pride, but the sailors feel that they would be more safe on a ship under the United States Flag. It has been argued that the S/S *Sessa* might not have been sunk,<sup>49</sup> had the flag been the Stars and Stripes.

When the Maritime Commission recently decided to transfer some of the ships to the United States Flag, great resentment was caused among the Danish sailors when it was disclosed that the Maritime Commission would only employ American sailors on these ships. This resentment was increased by the fact that three of the ships to be transferred to the United States Flag, were moved from the Philippine Islands by the Danish crew on the very strong advice of the Danish Legation given at the request of the Maritime Commission. The Cap-

<sup>49</sup> S. S. *Sessa*, under Panamanian flag, torpedoed near Iceland on August 17, 1941, presumably by the Germans.

tain of one of the ships has now informed the Legation that the Commission's action in replacing the Danish crew is contrary to the promises and guarantees given the crews in Manila prior to the voyage of the ships.

Another ship, the *African Reefer* has recently arrived from Madeira. The crew, exposing their families in Denmark to reprisals, took the initiative to undertake this risky voyage on the ship in order that the American Government would be in position to requisition the ship. They have now been advised that an American crew will probably take the ship over. This naturally has created great bitterness and disappointment among the sailors.

*Wages*—The sailors find it difficult to understand why they are to receive lower wages than American sailors considering that they are just as capable.

It is a fact that some of the wages now offered, especially to the officers, are lower than the corresponding Danish wages before the occupation of Denmark.

A number of the sailors agreed to undertake voyages, especially to Iceland and Greenland, although the Maritime Commission was unable to inform them of the definite conditions with regard to wages, etc. They got the impression that the temporary wages would probably be increased when they returned and that the increase would be retroactive. When they returned they found that the wages, instead of having been increased, had been decreased.

*Protection of Ships*—Some of the sailors feel that the ships should in some way be armed and that the crew should be provided with revolvers. The requisitioned ship, M/S *Norden* returned recently from a voyage to Lisbon. On the voyage a life-boat with twenty-one armed German sailors from a scuttled German ship was encountered.

*Names of Ships*—So far as the Legation is informed, the names of most of the requisitioned ships have not yet been changed in spite of the fact that the chairman of the Maritime Commission stated that would be done in his letter to the Danish captains, partly published in the press, which letter, incidentally, most captains never received.

*Back Wages, etc.*—Considerable disappointment has been caused because the back wages, (that is, wages due to the Danish sailors for the time previous to the requisitioning of the ships), which wages the Maritime Commission long ago promised to pay, in many, if not in most cases, have not yet been paid. In some cases the sailors have not even received the wages for the time from the requisitioning of the ships to the allocation to American Companies.

*Circular Letter*—The circular letter to the Danish sailors was only sent out after a delay of more than two months. The letter does not deal with all the questions which previously have been raised by the



Danish sailors. Although the sailors, for instance, were led to believe that the circular letter would contain a promise that a sailor could stay thirty days in an American port, if he wished to change from one ship to another, the question of the right of the sailors to stay for a short time in American ports has not been dealt with in the circular letter. Furthermore, the circular letter has given rise to a number of new questions which so far have not been answered.

It is extremely difficult for the Danish Minister, with any hope of success, to continue his endeavour to induce the Danish crews to serve on the requisitioned Danish ships, unless the various problems are met in a manner more satisfactory to the crews than hitherto has been the case.

WASHINGTON, September 12, 1941.

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859.86/18

*The Department of State to the Danish Legation*

MEMORANDUM

The Danish Minister's memorandum of September 12, 1941 with regard to difficulties experienced by Danish seamen in the requisition of Danish vessels by the United States Government was referred to the United States Maritime Commission for its attention. There is quoted below an excerpt from a communication of the Chairman of the Commission dealing with the various points raised in the memorandum under acknowledgement.

*"The Flag*—While the Danish Legation may have found it difficult to explain to Danish seamen the necessity for the transfer of Danish vessels requisitioned by the United States to the Panamanian flag, circumstances, nevertheless, made such a decision by our Government necessary.

"As to the vessels transferred to American registry, the many difficulties which originally confronted the Commission have now been overcome, and a final understanding has been reached with the unions concerned, resulting in allowing Danish officers and seamen to remain with their vessels. This is true in the case of the vessels moved from the Philippine Islands to the mainland, notwithstanding the statement to the Danish Legation by the captain of one of these vessels.

"I refrain from commenting upon the question of safety on ex-Danish vessels flying the American flag and from making any reference to the sinking of the *Sessa*.

*"Wages*—American seamen sailing on Panamanian flag freighters receive the same pay and work under the same conditions as Danish seamen on Panamanian flag freighters. A wage scale for vessels under Panamanian flag owned by the United States has been approved by the Commission, which is being paid on these vessels regardless of the nationality of their crews.

"If the wage of Danish officers, received prior to the occupation of Denmark, is based on the Kroner's former value, there may be a few masters of the larger vessels who receive less pay now. But, while the Danish Kroner today has little or no value at all, except possibly, for that which the United States declares, there should, therefore, be no question as to the amount paid not being both adequate and justifiable. Many foreign officers and seamen sailing seized former Italian vessels seem quite satisfied with the wages and conditions which are the same as are paid to Danish seamen under the Panamanian flag.

*"Protection of Ships*—It is true that no small arms were provided for the MV *Norden* on a recent voyage to Lisbon. As you know, however, naval guns are being installed on all of the ex-Danish vessels traveling on routes where such protection is deemed necessary, and these installations will be completed as speedily as possible.

*"Names of Ships*—Most, if not all, ex-Danish vessels have had their names changed as well as all other marks of identification removed. Those which still remain under their former name will not leave a United States port until such change is accomplished.

*"Back Wages, etc.*—In every case where a Danish officer or seaman has signed foreign articles signifying his willingness to remain in our employ, either on the vessel on which he served at the time of taking of his vessel or any other ex-Danish vessel, he has received his accrued wages. Also, those who, in the future sign foreign articles, will receive their back pay immediately after signing.

"In checking our records with respect to wages due Danish seamen for the period their vessel was in the hands of the Commission we find that every master, officer and seaman has received his full pay for the entire period, and those who are serving on vessels which have not been turned over to a charterer, are receiving their full pay from the Commission's office in the District in which they may be, every fifteen days.

*"Circular Letter*—Because of the many uncertainties of the status of these Danish seamen, the necessity of compliance with the Requisition Act of June 6, 1941,<sup>50</sup> and the delay in obtaining the interpretation with regard to the Just Provisions and many other matters, the mailing of the Statement to these seamen was delayed unavoidably.

"The statement with a covering letter over my signature was mailed to the Master of each vessel on August 19, 1941. As none has been returned, we assume they have been delivered. In addition to the above, numerous copies were sent to the Danish Legation, former owners, agents and Commission offices for distribution. Every ex-Danish vessel with which we have been in contact advises that a copy of the statement was received. It was not only extremely difficult, but practically impossible, to embody answers to every question anticipated.

"I hope that this clarifies the points raised by the Danish Minister."

WASHINGTON, October 21, 1941.

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<sup>50</sup> 55 Stat. 242.

## FINLAND

**RELATIONS BETWEEN FINLAND AND THE SOVIET UNION, AND THE  
ATTEMPTS OF THE UNITED STATES TO PERSUADE FINLAND NOT  
TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WAR AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION IN  
ASSOCIATION WITH GERMANY**

(See Volume I, pages 1-116.)

## FRANCE

### CONCERN OF THE UNITED STATES OVER FRANCO-GERMAN COLLABORATION AND THE MATTER OF FURNISHING FOOD AND MEDICAL RELIEF TO UNOCCUPIED FRANCE<sup>1</sup>

851.48/114 : Telegram

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

LONDON, January 3, 1941—10 p. m.

[Received 10:55 p. m.]

25. Department's 3977, December 31, 1 p. m.<sup>2</sup> Following for the President from the Former Naval Person.<sup>3</sup>

"1. I have received your message of December 31st on the subject of the supply of milk and vitamin concentrates for children in unoccupied France and we have been greatly impressed by your arguments in favor of this proposal. The anxiety which we have always felt about this project is that it would lead to similar demands on behalf of our German occupied allies. We are indeed sure to be hard pressed by these unhappy people and it is therefore important that we should maintain the distinction which you draw so clearly between German occupied territories and those not in actual occupation. I feel sure that I can count upon your help to maintain this distinction for otherwise the whole fabric of our blockade would be fatally undermined and I need not stress to you what this would mean in terms of final victory.

2. We are prepared to agree at once to the despatch of the first ship to Seville, Barcelona and Marseille as you propose, subject to the following arrangements as regards safeguards which seem to us to meet the case.

(1) Relief goods [shipments] to be confined to medical supplies in the strict sense (excluding cod and halibut liver oils), vitamin concentrates, dried or tinned milk and children's clothing.

(2) Distribution to be effected solely by the American Red Cross either direct from their own depots or under strict supervision to children's hospitals and clinics.

(3) Assurances to be secured from the Vichy Government that the press shall be allowed to publish periodical accounts of the

<sup>1</sup> For previous correspondence on consideration by the United States of food and medical relief for unoccupied France, see *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, pp. 537 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

<sup>3</sup> Code name for Winston S. Churchill, British Prime Minister.

relief work undertaken, such accounts to include reference to the cooperation of His Majesty's Government in allowing passage through the blockade.

(4) Further shipments to be stopped if there should be any evidence that these conditions are not being fulfilled.

3. There is one point over which you can help us greatly. In any announcement of the scheme which is made in America we should like our part in the transaction to be presented in as favorable a light as possible. While it would be made clear that this step had been taken on your initiative, we would like it stated that the relief goods are available only by good will of His Majesty's Government. The impression which we should like to see created is that of Anglo-American cooperation for humanitarian ends."

JOHNSON

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851.48/122a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, January 6, 1941—8 p. m.

10. As you will recall, this Government has been in consultation with the British Government with regard to the problem of providing relief to the children in the unoccupied regions of France and the following proposal has been agreed upon by both Governments. You should treat the matter as confidential until agreement can be reached between the Governments concerned. The Red Cross has asked, if it is possible to do so confidentially, that its representative, Allen, be informed of the proposal and the conditions imposed.

Subject to the following conditions the American Red Cross is prepared to dispatch a shipment of relief goods to Marseille which will be permitted to pass the British blockade :

(1) These relief goods for France to be confined to medical supplies in the strict sense (excluding cod and halibut liver oils), vitamin concentrates, dried or tinned milk, and children's clothing.

(2) Distribution to be effected solely by the American Red Cross either direct from their own depots or under strict supervision to children's hospitals and clinics.

(3) Assurances to be given by the French Government that its press will be permitted to give favorable publicity in periodic accounts of the relief work undertaken, such accounts to indicate that the work was initiated by the American Government for humanitarian ends and will be carried on with the cooperation of the British Government in allowing passage through the blockade.

(4) Further shipments will not be permitted if there should be any evidence that these conditions are not being fulfilled.

Please ascertain whether these conditions are acceptable to the French Government. In so doing you should also indicate that this Government feels that the British Government should be given due credit for the humanitarian attitude it has adopted and that in view of its attitude and action in permitting such shipment anti-British propaganda in both the French press and radio should be stopped.

For your information and such use as you may care to make of it during your discussions with the highest French authorities the following represents a brief outline of this Government's position regarding the present stage of French-American relations: This Government recognizes the unfortunate situation of France as a captive state whose conduct must necessarily be directed toward the protection of its own self interests as a people and a nation. This Government recognizes to the fullest extent the duty of the French Government to conform to the Armistice terms<sup>4</sup> along with other functions and requirements of a captive nation; but this Government maintains that in so doing the French Government has no justification to render the slightest military aid to Germany and that the French Government has no right in its acts and utterances to go beyond and outside the explicit provisions of the Armistice Agreement for the purpose of making itself a partisan of Germany as between Germany and non-belligerent countries such as the United States. So long as this Government is satisfied that the French Government is confining its action to the explicit requirements of the Armistice Agreement, there are numerous ways in which this Government might be of aid to France in solving the difficulties which lie ahead of it. Specifically, this Government has already initiated discussions with the British which have resulted in the agreement outlined above to provide milk and medical supplies for children in unoccupied France. There are other ways in which this Government could be helpful at the present time, such as the use of the gold and assets of the French Government for the purpose of providing facilities for the economic development of the French West Indies and the trade, through these possessions, with North Africa and unoccupied France.

To reach a satisfactory solution of most if not all of these problems will require British cooperation. This Government sincerely hopes, therefore, that the French Government will take no action, such as endeavoring to breach the British blockade, particularly in connection with the reported arrangements being made for food shipments from South America, which would prejudice the successful conclusion of the requisite agreements.

HULL

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<sup>4</sup> For text of the Franco-German Armistice Agreement, signed June 22, 1940, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. ix, p. 671.

851.48/119 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, January 9, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received January 9—3:38 p. m.]

31. Department's telegram 10, January 6, 6 [8] p. m. Marshal Petain <sup>5</sup> and Foreign Minister Flandin assure me this afternoon that the conditions governing the shipment of relief goods are acceptable to the French Government.

I shall telegraph in detail tomorrow concerning the interview.

LEAHY

851.48/165

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

[WASHINGTON,] January 10, 1941.

The French Ambassador <sup>6</sup> called to see me this morning at his request.

The Ambassador reverted, as he does in every conversation I have with him, to the urgent need of the Vichy Government that food supplies be sent from the United States and from South America to unoccupied France. He stated that the misery and distress in unoccupied France was increasing hourly and that in a very short time the population in unoccupied France would be bereft of all cereal supplies, as well as of all meat, et cetera. I said to the Ambassador that since we had discussed this question so often and in view of the announcement made by the American Red Cross only forty-eight hours ago, he could hardly be in any doubt that the American people and their Government desired to do everything within their power to relieve the distress of the civilian population in unoccupied France, providing relief measures did not interfere with nor jeopardize the successful maintenance of the British blockade of Germany and the countries under her occupation. I said to the Ambassador that the problem was rendered infinitely more difficult from the point of view of the American Government by reason of the reports which had been circulating the past few days and which had now appeared in the press stating that because of the serious food shortage in Paris, food supplies were being sent from unoccupied France to Paris. In other words, I said, the

<sup>5</sup> Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, French Chief of State.

<sup>6</sup> Gaston Henry-Haye.

French Government was asking us to send food supplies to unoccupied France at the very time that unoccupied France was apparently depriving itself of food supplies in order to send them to occupied France and thereby relieve the obligation of the German Government to furnish food supplies to the civilian population under their military control. I asked the Ambassador what possible justification there could be, in view of our publicly announced and well known policy to render every assistance to Great Britain, for our sending food supplies to unoccupied France which would either merely replace food supplies sent to German-controlled France or which might even be used for transshipment to German-occupied France.

The Ambassador launched into a violent tirade against the lies which were being printed in the press on this subject and asserted that it seemed to him a very sinister coincidence that stories of this character were only published immediately after the announcement that milk and medicines were being sent by the American Red Cross for distribution to the children in unoccupied France. He said he had already telegraphed to his Government for full information on this point and he said he felt already that he could assure me positively that the reports published were completely unfounded. I stated that I would await with interest the official word which he would receive on this matter.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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851.48/123 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, January 11, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received January 12—10:40 a. m.]

39. My telegram 31, January 9, 5 p. m. I called on Marshal Petain on the afternoon of January 9. He arranged to have Flandin present and as the Marshal seemed somewhat fatigued the Foreign Minister did most of the talking.

I read to him a paraphrase of the conditions concerning the Red Cross relief shipment and he read aloud a French translation I had prepared for him. I then explained what I felt to be the viewpoint of our Government with respect to Franco-American relations along the lines of the Department's telegram 689, November 6, 6 p. m.<sup>7</sup> When I had finished, Flandin with the Marshal's approval, set forth at some length the very serious situation in which the Government now finds itself owing to critical foodstuffs deficiencies. Negotiations, he said, are beginning at Madrid between Sir Samuel

<sup>7</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 482.



Hoare<sup>8</sup> and Ambassador Pietri.<sup>9</sup> They will deal solely with economic questions.

He said that since the Armistice Agreement provisions in principle prohibit such negotiations, the Germans have been informed of them at Wiesbaden. (He emphasized that German "authorization" had not been requested.) It is in connection with these talks that the French so urgently need our help in persuading the British to adopt a "reasonable attitude". He said, as he had previously, (Embassy's telegram 1201, December 31, 9 a. m.<sup>10</sup>) that unless 6 million quintals of wheat and 2 million quintals of corn are received during the period between March 31 and the next crop, there will be a complete absence of these products. There is also an urgent need for meat; in the industrial suburbs of Paris the workmen have not had one gram for the last 2 weeks. The Germans, he said, are now conducting an active campaign in their controlled Paris press—and this is confirmed to me from other sources—blaming the food shortage entirely on the Vichy Government. While they have been careful so far not to attack the Marshal's person, their attempt to undermine his Government is subtle and deliberate.

The Germans are, he said, utilizing the danger of starvation and human misery to bring pressure on and threaten the independence of the French Government. In view of the large stocks which the Germans have seized in the countries they have occupied—"including considerable amounts from occupied France"—they will, he said, eat well enough themselves this winter. There is a real danger when the situation becomes sufficiently acute that they will step in with their own winter help organization and distribute certain quantities of foodstuffs to the French population; this he feels they are in a position to do at least on a small scale. This, said Flandin, would result in swinging opinion so strongly against the Marshal's Government and against the British that the Germans could set up their own Government, possibly occupy the entire country and bring about the further incidents against the British which they so ardently desire. In other words, under such circumstances an effort to force the British blockade, he implied, would be decidedly popular in France. The food problem is an economic one at present; it may soon become political. He admitted, in reply to my inquiry, that the German press campaign has so far not met with much success—and this is also confirmed to me from other sources—but he feels that the danger for the future is real and both he and the Marshal were patently worried.

<sup>8</sup> British Ambassador in Spain.

<sup>9</sup> François Pietri, French Ambassador in Spain.

<sup>10</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 556.

The French, he said, want our help in three respects: First and foremost in persuading the British to allow the foodstuffs so vitally needed to pass the blockade. I inquired whether he had reference to the occupied zone as well as the unoccupied zone and he replied emphatically in the affirmative.

In reply to my further inquiry he said that he felt confident that the Germans would give "assurances" that foodstuffs brought into the occupied territory would be distributed solely to the French population although he did not himself seem to place entire confidence in those assurances. The Marshal remarked at this point that the Germans have already taken 500,000 head of cattle and 1,000,000 pigs and that they are continuing to take livestock in the occupied territory.

The second point on which the French require assistance, said Flandin, is in the unblocking of French assets in the United States. He spoke of a proposal which has apparently been made to ship gold from Martinique to the United States in return for the release of French dollar assets for foodstuff purchases and he did not seem to anticipate great difficulties on this score.

The third point is the question of transportation. He spoke of the number of ships which the French have tied up in our ports and the desire to utilize some of these for transport purposes. The Marshal stated that in addition to the aforesaid foodstuffs the unoccupied zone is in dire need of lubricating oils and unless supplies of these are permitted to be imported the French railways will soon be unable to function, thereby materially aggravating the present difficulties of distribution. Flandin then turned to the second question of future interest, namely the provisioning of North Africa.

He said that the food situation of metropolitan France, quite aside from any other point of view, would be considerably worse if the North African crop of 1941 cannot be harvested. Owing to lack of horses in North Africa that crop must be made as in the past by tractors and the supply of fuel oil for these tractors has run extremely short. He also spoke of the need in Morocco for sugar and tea which constitute principal articles of the native diet, but I imagine the North African needs are being fully covered by Murphy.<sup>11</sup>

The Marshal expressed his deep appreciation of the President's message and said that I had brought him the first ray of hope in some time.

He said that he had given assurances in the past that the French would never initiate any military or naval action against the British and he wished to reiterate those assurances in the most solemn man-

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<sup>11</sup> Robert D. Murphy, Counselor of Embassy in France, on special assignment in North Africa.

ner. He added, however, that France would defend her colonial territories against all comers. The help he said that he is asking now in this question of food supplies—and which help we alone can give—is to enable France to maintain the independence which she still enjoys and to prevent her from being forced to go further than the terms of the Armistice provide.

I asked Flandin to give me an informal memorandum explaining in some detail just what are the needs and this he promised to do. I have delayed this telegram in the expectation of receiving it but since its preparation has not yet been completed I feel it advisable to transmit this message without further delay. He likewise discussed the urgent question of arms for the defense of Indochina which I shall report by special telegram.

The Marshal who throughout this interview seemed tired and discouraged, in reply to an inquiry as to recent developments, emphasized the German press campaign against him and his Government in the occupied territory. He referred especially and with feeling to the attacks of Déat<sup>12</sup> in *L'Oeuvre*.

I made it quite clear that I had little reason to hope that foodstuffs would be forthcoming for the occupied territory and while this was obviously disappointing they indicated that supplies for the unoccupied area would go a long way to help.

It would seem to me that there is a simple choice of sufficiently strengthening the Marshal's hand at this critical juncture to enable him to carry on with the independence which his Government still retains, or of refusing this help with several unpredictable possible results: Following the Darlan school of thought, an effort may be made by this Government to force the British blockade with possible further engagements between the French and British Fleets; or the Germans, taking advantage of the serious social conditions which will result from a breadless France, may set up their own subservient regime that may be able to go farther along the road of assistance to Germany's war efforts than the Marshal would ever consider.

It is my opinion that the provisioning of wheat and corn for the suffering people of unoccupied France is necessary if we are to retain the good will of the French. It should be so distributed by the American Red Cross as to ensure no assistance to aggressor nations.

It is my opinion that the provisioning of lubricating oil for the railways of unoccupied France and fuel for the agricultural machinery in North Africa is essential to the profound and critical food shortages both in European France and French North Africa.

LEAHY

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<sup>12</sup> Marcel Déat, editor of the French newspaper *L'Oeuvre*, under German control.

851.48/127 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, January 13, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 9 p. m.]

44. My telegram No. 39, January 11, 4 p. m. I have received Flandin's memorandum 16 pages in length, the last 6 of which concern the Far East and are being reported in a separate telegram.

After a brief mention of the opening of the Madrid negotiations with the British and the seriousness of the present situation the memorandum states that the shortage in wheat "reaches 10,500,000 quintals and this in spite of the reductions in rations, obligatory mixing with substitutes, et cetera. It is particularly serious in the unoccupied zone which customarily has been supplied by excess production in the regions north of the Loire". This year, states the memorandum, these regions "have no exportable surplus, the crops having been lost in great part as a result of war conditions at the time of the harvest". The memorandum continues:

"If we can not import from abroad for the needs solely of the unoccupied zone 6,000,000 quintals of wheat, supplies will not last until the next crop and the civil population is in danger of being without bread for 2 months; certain regions will even be short by the 15th of March. Furthermore, the shortage in cattle, food supplies, exceeds 20,000,000 quintals and presents particularly delicate problems for the maintenance of our live stock. The importation of 2,000,000 quintals of foreign corn is the minimum to permit the feeding of cattle in the unoccupied zone if disastrous consequences of underfeeding are to be avoided."

The French Government has instructed the Ambassador at Madrid to discuss with the British the following five points:

"(1) Free passage of 8,000,000 quintals of grain to be purchased by the French Government in the United States which are indispensable to cover the between-crop period; (2) trade in foodstuffs between the French possessions in Africa and the unoccupied zone; (3) trade in foodstuffs imported into the free zone from all French overseas possessions including Syria; (4) exchange of supplies (*ravitaillement*) between metropolitan France and its possessions or between those territories themselves; (5) the importation into the free zone of foodstuffs or products other than foodstuffs originating in foreign countries overseas, as well as that of products other than foodstuffs originating in our possessions."

The French Government, the memorandum continues, "has requested that the importation of 8,000,000 quintals of grain from the

United States be authorized immediately and if necessary without waiting for the conclusion of the general Franco-British negotiation on free passage through the blockade. It has indicated that it is ready to examine, under the aegis of American representatives in France, a system of control of a nature to give to the British Government sure guarantees of the consumption in the free zone of the grains imported."

With reference to the second and third points quoted above the French Government states that the regulations at present in existence seem to it to offer guarantees to the British Government that products imported from North Africa and other possessions including Syria shall remain exclusively at the disposition of French consumers. It is ready in any case to furnish quarterly statements to the British Government with respect to the utilization of the consumption of foodstuffs thus imported.

With respect to the fourth point the French Government has indicated that it is ready to put into effect a system of guarantees similar to those Great Britain has with the Danubian countries of Europe. (I am now orally informed by the Foreign Office that in answer to a British inquiry at Madrid similar guarantees will be given if desired with reference to the second and third points.)

The memorandum then emphasizes the importance which the French Government attaches to the Madrid negotiations and urges our friendly help with the British authorities. It states that the failure of the negotiations "would present for France the most pressing problems which could not fail to have the gravest political consequences. The fact should not escape Great Britain herself that, in aggravating our difficulties of supplies, she runs the risk of playing the game of her own enemies (. . .<sup>18</sup>) from the political point of view one cannot escape the fact that an increase in the difficulties of supplying France is calculated to weaken the position of the Government and to create difficulties of an internal order which play the game of the occupying power. The granting of the right of free passage presents furthermore a special interest for the maintenance of the cohesion of the French Empire to which the Government of the United States attaches—as it has stressed on several occasions to our Ambassador—an essential interest. In depriving our colonies of their relations with the metropolis and foreign countries, or their relations with each other, the economic depression which would result would be likely to create a state of trouble which would furnish the enemies of Great Britain with pretexts for intervention."

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<sup>18</sup> Omission indicated in the original telegram.

The second section of the memorandum which covers negotiations with us refers to instructions sent to Henry-Haye on January 8 concerning the mechanics of purchasing the aforesaid grains in the American market and their transportation. With respect to the latter point it states that, "The French Government is anxious to obtain the liberation of the 14 ships at present blocked in American harbors." The French Government has asked us, according to the memorandum, for authorization to purchase the supplies and fuels "indispensable to the economy of our possessions, notably Morocco and French Equatorial Africa, where the economic and political situations are particularly disturbing to the French Government." These purchases it states would be paid through the unblocking of French assets in the United States and transfers of gold from Martinique with respect to which the memorandum states: "Following several exchanges of views between our Ambassador and Mr. Morgenthau<sup>14</sup> and Mr. Sumner Welles, the American administration has declared itself ready to examine these proposals and has already given a favorable opinion in principle." There is likewise envisaged, states the memorandum, "with respect to purchases in the United States, partial payment through shipments of products from French Colonies especially interesting to the American market (cacao and peanuts from French Equatorial Africa, rubber from Indochina, graphite and minerals from Madagascar, et cetera)".

The memorandum concludes with a statement that "this last means of payment can be examined when commercial negotiations between Indochina and the United States with respect to which the French Government has just made some proposals to the Washington Government are undertaken".

The Department will have noted that in spite of the expressed desire of the Marshal and Flandin that food imports for the occupied territory likewise be authorized, the unlikelihood of obtaining agreement thereto is apparently realized and consequently the memorandum deals solely with the necessities of the unoccupied zone and the colonies.

The Madrid conversations, I am told, have opened in an encouraging atmosphere from the French point of view. The British are being informed that the S. S. *Mendoza* will sail January 14 from Buenos Aires with a cargo of meat and wheat for Marseille and hope is being expressed that since the shipment is solely for the unoccupied zone no effort will be made to stop the vessel.

LEAHY

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<sup>14</sup> Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury.

851.48/134a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, January 13, 1941—3 p. m.

32. The American press has recently carried reports from France to the effect that in view of serious food shortages in occupied France food supplies are being sent from unoccupied territory, particularly to Paris.

Please telegraph any information you may be able to obtain concerning the authenticity of such reports.

HULL

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851.48/136 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, January 15, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received January 16—4 a. m.]

58. Department's 32, January 13, 3 p. m. The Foreign Office frankly states that there have been recent small meat shipments not only from the southern occupied zone around Bordeaux but from unoccupied France to the Paris area. This is due in part to the fact that Paris has been without meat for some time. (In addition to German requisitions for their armed forces, owing to heavier taxation in the Paris area livestock owners prefer to sell in smaller districts than to ship there.) It is, however, normal that Paris should at this time of the year receive meat supplies from the Correze, Cantal, etc. The French Government insists (first) that only "normal" quantities have been shipped and (second) that it cannot renounce its obligation to feed the people of the occupied territory.

The situation at Paris it is stated was quite serious. A telegram in this sense, a copy of which was shown the Embassy, was transmitted to Ambassador Henry-Haye. (Apparently he had received inquiries from our Red Cross.) It is the Embassy's understanding that discussions are now going on with the Germans which would involve the shipment of 13,500 tons of wheat per year from the free zone to the occupied zone, and a shipment of 12,500 tons of meat from the occupied zone to the free zone. So far this has not been definitely concluded and the figure should be considered confidential. The French authorities point out that it is impossible to cut the country completely by an artificial demarcation line and extremely difficult even to ascertain the country's needs by different areas; railway statistics are the only means available to cover even approximately such an artificial division.

In general, the northern occupied area supplies the unoccupied zone with potatoes, sugar, wheat, wine, milk and beef whereas the unoccu-

ried zone furnishes the other with fruits, spring vegetables, macaroni, et cetera, mutton, oils, fats and other African products largely processed at Marseille. While the French will give full guarantees that no foodstuffs imported from abroad will be shipped to the occupied territory and that foodstuffs produced in the unoccupied area will be shipped to the occupied territory only in fixed quantities and only in return for equivalent products, they do not feel that they can completely shut off all food shipments from unoccupied to occupied France.

LEAHY

851.48/127: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, January 15, 1941—9 p. m.

46. Your 39, January 11, 4 p. m., and 44, January 13, 1 p. m. The Department is giving very careful study to the position of the French Government as outlined in your telegrams under reference and to your recommendations and suggestions as well as to the French memorandum.

While fully aware of the importance of strengthening the Marshal's hand at this critical juncture and of avoiding any action which might tend to weaken the resistance of the Vichy Government to the pressure and threats to its independence now being exercised on that Government by Germany, there are nevertheless certain considerations which necessarily affect and control the policy of this Government.

(1) In seeking the permission of the British Government for the passage of the Red Cross relief shipments through the British Contraband Control, a definite assurance that it is logical and expedient to make a distinction between occupied and unoccupied territories was given to the British Government, to whom it was explained that this Government had not the slightest intention of undertaking any policy that would weaken or militate against the efficacy of the British blockade.

(2) As I have stated in regard to the Hoover<sup>15</sup> proposal to feed certain of the occupied territories, many people in this country are inquiring "as to the reasons why such a proposal and the agitation in favor of it are so tender to the Germans, who have deliberately taken food from these areas, and at the same time beat the British over the head when at least 90 percent of their battle is ours." This Government considers that it is, in the first instance, Germany's responsibility to feed those in territories now occupied by German forces and it is difficult to see how any scheme can be devised for others to feed them without aiding Germany directly and indirectly.

<sup>15</sup> Herbert Hoover, former President of the United States, head of the European Food Distribution Commission.



(3) This Government is already giving favorable consideration to credit facilities for trade to North Africa and likewise to French colonial possessions but must consider that the matter of the passage of supplies for France through the British blockade remains a question to be resolved directly between the British and French Governments. In view of the sentiment in this country and its declared policy of aid to Great Britain, this Government cannot undertake to do more than offer to facilitate direct exchanges of views between the two Governments directly interested.

Within the limits of this policy the Department will follow with close interest the discussions at Madrid, referred to in the French memorandum, and will be glad to have all possible information regarding them.

Please repeat your 44, to Madrid for the confidential information of the Ambassador.

HULL

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851.5018/81

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] January 18, 1941.

The French Ambassador called at his request. He spoke very earnestly and strongly about the urgency of obtaining food for both occupied and unoccupied France through the aid of this country. I reminded him that the United States retains to the fullest extent its ancient friendship for France and her people and is watching every opportunity to be helpful to that country in its misfortune, and that this it shall continue to do. I said that it must be made clear, however, that we feel deeply that the future welfare of France like that of our own country makes it all important for Great Britain to successfully resist the Hitler onslaught, and that that objective will be given preference to all of the aid and cooperation that we undertake to render our friends both in England and in France. I added that it was greatly surprising to me that some of our American friends have been urging Great Britain continuously to lift her blockade so that foodstuffs of relief organizations, such, for example, as the one ex-President Hoover is connected with, can go into German-occupied countries; that at the same time there has not been heard one whisper by these food relief leaders about facing Germany and reminding her that she has robbed the people of their foodstuffs and caused them to go out into the world seeking to replace that which has been stolen from them; that, under the law of nations and of humanity, any government which has by force taken foodstuffs from a conquered people should furnish such people enough foodstuffs for their sus-

tenance; that Germany is ignoring this duty and responsibility entirely. A stern demand, therefore, should be made of her not only by the peoples who have been made destitute, but by peaceful countries, to meet her responsibility and to disgorge enough of her stolen foodstuffs to the countries from which they were taken thus enabling the peoples of those countries to live; that, in brief, a real issue should be made and a showdown demanded. The Ambassador did not attempt to dispute what I said, but nodded his head as though he did not feel justified in taking issue with it.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

740.0011 E W 1939/79083

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to President Roosevelt*<sup>15a</sup>

VICHY, January 25, 1941.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We arrived in Vichy at midnight 5-6 January after an exceedingly long cold journey by train and motor car from Madrid during which there was one thirty-six hour stretch without sleep and without any sensible heat except that which could be applied internally. The temperature throughout this part of France during our first ten days varied between -12 and -20 Centigrade, and the poorly clothed, undernourished people have suffered acutely.

On 8 January at noon in the Pavillon Sévigné I presented my credentials to the Chief of State in a ceremony of some formality that included a sailor guard of honor provided in special recognition of my naval rank. Our First Secretary, Mr. Matthews,<sup>15b</sup> and I had a fifteen minute conversation with the Marshal, who was accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Flandin. The Marshal, who was very alert and interested, carried the entire conversation to the exclusion of M. Flandin, who did not say a word. The Marshal expressed high appreciation of your courtesy to him and of your friendship for France. He gave me a definite impression of vigor and strength of character, and of personal appreciation of the friendly attitude of America.

The next day, 9 January at 4 p. m., accompanied by Mr. Matthews, I presented to the Marshal in the presence of M. Flandin, the State Department's stipulations in the matter of shipment by our Red Cross of milk, medicine and clothing for destitute French children, and obtained from him a complete agreement to all the conditions imposed.

<sup>15a</sup> Copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.

<sup>15b</sup> H. Freeman Matthews.

This late afternoon conference, which lasted more than an hour, was conducted almost exclusively by M. Flandin, the Marshal very different from our forenoon conference of the preceding day, giving every appearance of a tired, discouraged old man.

Foreign Minister Flandin discussed at length a very serious condition in which the Marshal's Government finds itself because of present and prospective critical deficiencies in the food supply. He said, and the Marshal agreed, that the Germans in occupied France are conducting an active press campaign which holds the Vichy Government responsible for the existing food shortage, and which may bring about the fall of the Government and the extension of German control to the present unoccupied area. I am inclined to doubt that the Germans will take such action.

Marshal Pétain stated that his only hope for the coming months is that the good offices of the United States will succeed in easing blockade restrictions on the import of essential foodstuffs to France, and in assistance by the American Red Cross.

My stay in France to date has been too short to permit of acquiring accurate information as to the actual need for foodstuffs but it is plainly apparent now that many people here in the unoccupied area are in acute distress from cold and undernourishment.

It would be patently advantageous to the cultivation of friendly relations with the French people and to the stiffening of the Marshal's resistance to German demands if the American Red Cross should deliver in unoccupied France essential foods, clothing and medicine, where they are most needed, with the one and only condition that the Red Cross will exercise such supervision over the distribution as will insure that none of the supplies will either directly or indirectly be of any assistance to the aggressors.

Such single condition is essential and would be cheerfully accepted. Any additional conditions would adversely affect public reaction to our effort and public confidence in our good intentions.

I have made satisfactory contacts with the Marshal and with his inner Cabinet of three—Admiral Darlan, General Huntziger,<sup>15c</sup> and M. Flandin, and I am now developing contacts with the other members of the Government (Cabinet members) who just at this time seem to have little influence on matters of general policy.

They have all been exceedingly polite and agreeable to me.

I have already received the following very definite first impressions:

Marshal Pétain is remarkably capable for a man of his age but the burden of work which he has assumed is beyond his physical capacity.

He does not appear to have complete confidence in any of his Cabinet.

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<sup>15c</sup> Gen. Charles Léon Huntziger, French Secretary of State for War.

He has an intense dislike for M. Laval<sup>16</sup> who is trying to displace him as actual head of the Government and relegate him to the position of a symbol.

He is very sensitive to German pressure, particularly when it is applied to the war prisoners, to the food supply, and to the authority of his Vichy Government.

He will make every effort to live up to the terms of the Armistice and to not go beyond those terms.

He will not under any conditions abandon continental France and move his Government to Africa.

He and his Cabinet are so impressed by the failure of France to even delay the German Army that they believe that an English victory is impossible.

I am, of course, making every effort to point out the probability of a British victory.

It is highly desirable that England should accomplish some kind of a success against German forces in the near future. The capture of Tobrouk and the Greek success in Albania have had some effect but from the French point of view the "invincible" German Army was not involved in either of these campaigns.

The French people all appear to desire a British victory. Many officials of the Government also appear to hope for but not to expect a British victory.

They are therefore in a frame of mind to make almost any compromise with Berlin.

I am afraid that under German pressure the Marshal will take M. Laval back into his Government although he believes Laval to be dishonest and unpatriotic. "A bad Frenchman".

I have been trying to stiffen his backbone in this matter by saying that Laval's return to power will be only the beginning of a series of concessions to be demanded by the Germans with exactly the same pressure methods to be used to force compliance with future demands.

General Huntziger impresses me as the strongest character in the Cabinet. I am told that Germany does not like him.

Admiral Darlan is very friendly with me and we "talk shop" easily.

He despises the British Naval Command, loves his own Navy, and insists that his ships will be scuttled if orders are received from any authority to turn them over to anybody. He is considered by many to be the most likely successor to the Marshal, should the latter drop out. Darlan is not pro-German but like all the others he thinks the Germans will win.

M. Flandin is a compromiser and he leans pretty far over to the German side. He gives one the impression of being honest and patriotic, but not a strong character.

<sup>16</sup> Pierre Laval, former Vice President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

None of the officials with whom I have made contact have any regard whatever for the pre-war form of Government.

All of them, including the Marshal, seem to incline to something like the Fascist Government of Italy without its expansionist policy.

Many of them seem to be afraid of Communist (Red) activity in France at the first opportunity.

All of this, Mr. President, is first impressions, after a very short time in contact with the Vichy Government, and therefore likely to change.

I will endeavor to keep you informed by letter from time to time of the rapidly changing situation as it appears from this point of view.

Most respectfully,

WILLIAM D. LEAHY

P. S. M. Flandin at lunch today indicated that he would like at some time in the near future to speak about the possibility of the President inaugurating discussions looking toward peace negotiations. He received no encouragement from me, but he may open up the subject later and I will keep you fully informed.

W. D. L.

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740.0011 European War 1939/8015 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, January 29, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received January 30—2: 46 p. m.]

127. For the President and Secretary of State. I called on Marshal Petain at 5:30 this afternoon and saw him alone. I stated that I had come because the President had asked me to keep in as close touch with the Marshal as was convenient to the latter. The Marshal expressed his appreciation of this attitude and said that he, too, desired to maintain close contact with me. He then said that the times were extremely difficult: "We are caught in a vise between the Germans and the British, and the Germans are pushing us more and more to the British side". He understands that a letter will be sent him by Mr. Hitler within the next 2 days in which he would take the view that the dismissal of Monsieur Laval<sup>17</sup> was a personal affront. "He will try to make me take back Monsieur Laval. I have no intention of letting him succeed. The Germans are becoming more difficult for us each day. I understand they will probably make some demands. What the nature of these demands is, I do not know, but I have no intention of yielding to them. They may want me to change part or all of my Ministry. When I have received Mr. Hitler's letter, then I

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Laval was replaced by Pierre Etienne Flandin as Vice President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs, December 14, 1940.

can tell my people what the Germans demand; before that, I do not wish to speak. I shall have to warn my people that hard days are ahead; that they must prepare for sacrifices and resistance."

I remarked that I thought the Marshal had done much to restore France and that I am hopeful for the future. The Marshal replied that he had been able to accomplish much in the internal field but in the external he was powerless—the Germans were masters.

I said I was hopeful of accomplishing something for France in her hour of need in the matter of food supplies. Many rumors are circulating, I said. The rumors even talked of the total occupation of France, of an attack on North Africa and similar possibilities.

The Marshal replied that he did not know what the Germans would demand, but he doubted that they would occupy the entire country for the more they extend themselves the more they weaken themselves. However, they might occupy all of France and in such case he added: "I shall not move". He said: "They may ask for bases in the Mediterranean or North Africa. I shall not cede them". I expressed the opinion that he was wise in this policy; that the history of Hitler had shown that granting one demand was only the prelude to further and greater demands; that this was the German policy. The Marshal expressed his full agreement and added that he believed his government is solid behind him in determination to resist the German demands. I entertain some doubt as to the solidity of the entire Vichy Government in this matter.

What the Germans next plan, the Marshal does not know. They have troops, he said, all over Rumania. Do they plan a move on Turkey? He does not know. They also have, he said, troops in Sicily and an attack on Tunis is always possible.

He talked with much bitterness of the Paris press campaign against his Government and spoke of the Frenchmen who wrote for those papers. "They have sold themselves to the Germans and are paid by them. I hope that when the war is over they themselves will receive their just deserts." Tomorrow, he said in the *Nouveaux Temps* in Paris will appear an article by Luchaire<sup>18</sup> attacking several members of his Government with the object of pressing him to get rid of them. "That", he said, "is pure blackmail".

He spoke of the severe food problem: "We would have enough to feed ourselves but the Germans are stealing everything in the occupied zone. If America can send foodstuffs", he said, "they must come to Marseilles which with Toulon are the only two ports France has left".

In conclusion he said it was a bitter thing to be defeated. Always before he had been on the victor's side and he could assure me it was

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<sup>18</sup> Jean Luchaire, French journalist.

quite a different feeling. He added with a smile, however, "since I am always young I can bear it".

He again pressed [*expressed*] his appreciation for my visit and said that at a time like this, one values one's friends. The Marshal seemed particularly alert and vigorous and well aware of the gravity of the dilemma facing him.

The Marshal needs support in taking a strong stand against German demands and I therefore urgently recommend that without delay and before it becomes necessary for him to make a decision on the contents of the expected German letter, it be announced in Washington that the American Red Cross will begin in the near future to provide and distribute food to the destitute people of unoccupied France.

In this connection, and considering existing blockade restrictions on Red Cross shipments, it would appear to me to be definitely advantageous to the British cause to stiffen the Marshal's determination to refuse further concessions to Germany.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/8107 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, February 4, 1941—8 p. m.

112. Your 153 bis, February 3, 9 p. m.<sup>19</sup> The President desires you to call as soon as possible upon Marshal Pétain and communicate to him orally, without leaving any copy, the following personal message from the President:

"I wish to send you in the moments of great difficulty which you are confronting a personal message of sympathy and of understanding. I am following with the closest attention all of the information which Ambassador Leahy is sending me with regard to developments in the present situation and I earnestly hope that the outcome may be favorable to the continuation of the free and independent France for which you have fought with such steadfast courage and determination.

From every indication reaching me, the situation is becoming more hopeful both in Europe and in the Far East for the liberation of those peoples who have suffered aggression.

I am further hopeful that the prompt distribution of the supplies now being sent to unoccupied France through the American Red Cross for the relief of the children of France may be accomplished in such a manner and so successfully as to make it possible for further additional shipments from the United States to be promptly made.

I am also hopeful that a satisfactory agreement can promptly be reached for the furnishing of additional supplies from the United States for French North Africa. As you will understand, however, it is essential in order that such an agreement can be satisfactorily

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<sup>19</sup> Not printed.

concluded for Mr. Murphy, the Counselor of the Embassy at Vichy, to be permitted to return to North Africa. I trust that this arrangement can soon be made and that a commercial agreement satisfactory to both of our countries may soon be consummated.

Please accept the assurance of my highest personal regard."

We have very much in mind the considerations advanced in the last paragraph of your telegram under reference.<sup>20</sup> It would seem highly desirable for you to transmit the above message from the President to Marshal Pétain in the strictest confidence and, if possible, without the presence of any other member of the Government.

Please report by telegram as quickly as possible the results of your interview.

HULL

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851.48/208

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] February 5, 1941.

The Ambassador <sup>21</sup> called at his request. On my own initiative I took up the French food situation, as it related to unoccupied France, and likewise the question of some relief for North Africa which is being requested. I said to the Ambassador that to one at this distance there is evidently something very serious lacking in British-French relations; that there is nothing being done and virtually nothing being said that is calculated to keep the British and French on speaking terms, much less to draw them closer together, and that in my judgment it is all-important that this phase be given further attention without delay; that it might contemplate having some one person in the confidence of both countries representing the French and a similar person representing the British situation to find some way to keep in daily contact with their Governments and then to have daily communications or conferences both as to present and prospective conditions, developments, objectives and plans. I referred to the extreme care and delicacy with which British and French relations must be conducted at this stage as the matter is not to be bungled and relations made worse between the two countries. I said I was speaking from my observations concerning the situation at Vichy and in Africa and I pointed out the very great injury done to General Weygand's <sup>22</sup> position and that of the French in Africa when a radio station in Boston or London broadcasts to the French people that General

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<sup>20</sup> The Ambassador in France advised that if the United States was going to give any encouragement to Marshal Pétain to resist collaboration with Germany, tangible help must be given France immediately.

<sup>21</sup> Viscount Halifax, the British Ambassador.

<sup>22</sup> Gen. Maxime Weygand, French Delegate General in North Africa.



Weygand is coming steadily across in the British direction; that this immediately comes to the attention of Germany and Weygand's position is correspondingly endangered and complicated. I referred to the efforts of the Canadian representative at Vichy to do something to aid the British and French situation. I said that this Government is straining every possible effort to preserve and promote increasingly desirable relations between Great Britain and France, as well as between ourselves and France; that we approach the French always by stating that the President is increasingly confident that the British will successfully resist Hitler; that this country is doing what it can to aid French children in unoccupied France and is giving constant attention to the question of relief needs in unoccupied France and of certain needs of French Africa; that we are hoping for an opportunity at a reasonably early stage to extend relief to unoccupied France. By these and other acts and utterances we are striving to preserve good relations on all sides and at the same time to give some hope and encouragement to Marshal Petain in his extremely difficult situation.

I then spoke bluntly and with earnestness to the effect that in my judgment the British Government should have some flexibility toward the relief situation in unoccupied France and be a little more flexible in its other relations with the French Government; that as the matter stands numerous disagreeable incidents are occurring to keep Great Britain and France alienated and which deny the slightest hope or encouragement to Marshal Petain in his most crucial trial; that this does not seem practicable to me by any means. I said I must be candid. The Ambassador took notes on the matter and indicated no opposition at the moment.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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740.0011 European War 1939/8163 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, February 6, 1941—2 p. m.  
[Received February 7—8: 30 a. m.]

164. Department's 112, February 4, 8 p. m. I saw Marshal Pétain at noon today and delivered to him orally the President's message. He expressed his appreciation for the comforting assurances contained therein. He stated that he had just learned this morning (through a telegram from Henry-Haye following his conversation with the Under Secretary<sup>23</sup>) of the difficulties with respect to Murphy's return to North Africa. The Marshal stated that he has no objection to

<sup>23</sup> See memorandum by the Under Secretary of State, February 4, p. 217.

Murphy's return to North Africa. Flandin came in during the conversation and stated that the French Government had not intended "to refuse" Murphy authorization to return to North Africa but had desired to point out that such a visit, in view of the present delicate situation and in view of German pressure to send German commissions to North Africa, would be inopportune.

The French Government, however, is quite happy to change its decision and has no objection to further conversations between Murphy and General Weygand at Algiers. He did hope, however, that we would appreciate the inadvisability of having Murphy return to Dakar; it had been his visit there which had aroused the principal comment and interest on the part of the Germans.

Flandin had with him Henry-Haye's telegram from which he read excerpts indicating, with respect to the provisioning of metropolitan France, anxiety on our part over reports that the greater portion of foodstuffs arriving at Marseilles was going to occupied France. (Department's telegram 891, December 27, 5 p. m. and Embassy's reply 5, January 2, 6 p. m.<sup>24</sup>)

The Marshal said that there is an agreement with the Germans whereby 25% of the peanut oil derived from peanuts imported from Senegal is transmitted to the occupied zone for the consumption of the French civil population which would otherwise be completely without oil. There is, however, an equivalent counterpart in shipments of other products, notably wheat from the occupied to the unoccupied zone. (Flandin promised the figures this afternoon. Please see Embassy's No. 58, January 15, 8 p. m.) If the Germans should cut off suddenly these shipments of wheat, the unoccupied zone would be without bread by the 15th of March. In fact for a period of 4 days last week the town of Montpellier had been completely lacking in bread. The estimates of the needed 6 million quintals of wheat imports for the unoccupied zone are based on receipt of certain quantities here from the occupied territory. If these are not forthcoming the 6 million quintal estimate will have to be revised upward. Of course, he went on to say, the French could "take reprisals" and refuse to send peanut oil, spring vegetables and fruit to the occupied zone. However, this is a reprisal which would strike solely the French civil population of the occupied zone. The Germans, said the Marshal, are using the line of demarcation as a bit in the horse's mouth which they curb at will by cutting off telephone communications, transit of the line and all traffic between the two zones. He hoped we would understand the situation with which he is faced.

I asked the Marshal whether, in view of the grave difficulties which are now confronting his Government, there was anything which he

<sup>24</sup> Neither printed.

felt free to talk over. He replied that Admiral Darlan had gone back this morning to Paris. After his return to Vichy, probably tomorrow, if there are developments he will send for me. He added: "There is nothing I wish to hide from you, especially as concerns our difficulties." (Had Flandin not been present he would perhaps have talked more freely.)

In conclusion, he again thanked the President for his message and both he and Flandin spoke of the encouragement given them by Henry-Haye's report that Lord Halifax had assured the Under Secretary that the British Government had agreed in principle to the supplying of North Africa.

The Marshal seemed tired and nervous, but alert.

LEAHY

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851.48/379

*The French Ambassador (Henry-Haye) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

The Ambassador of France considers it necessary to set forth once more and as completely as possible the position taken by his Government on the subject of furnishing supplies to continental France. The French food situation, which threatens to become disastrous if decisions are not taken very promptly, constrains him again to draw the whole attention of the American Government to this problem.

The causes of the present situation are too well known for it to serve any purpose to review them at length: the considerable increase in the consumption of products in France, which results from the presence of the army of occupation, from the necessity of feeding three million alien refugees in the unoccupied zone, and from the levies effected in the occupied zone by the German authority, has coincided with a marked decrease in the supply of these products. In fact, it was not possible to proceed normally with the harvest, livestock has been decimated, industrial production is disorganized. In addition, the inadequacy of fuels, gasoline or coal has hindered the regular course of transportation, in such way that foodstuffs remain unused in the producing regions at a time when the consuming regions are suffering the most agonizing want.

However, it is hardly important to stop and seek the causes; only the consequences of this situation should today retain the attention of the French Government and of governments which are friends of France. According to the latest reports received from Vichy, the overlapping period between the two harvests will require the importation of 6 million quintals of wheat and two million quintals of corn.

If within the next six weeks we have not been able to organize the first shipments of cereals and their distribution, there will be a complete lack of bread and animal feeds in France.

A plan to this effect has already been orally submitted to the Department of State by representatives of this Embassy. It embraces in essence:

1) The purchase in the United States or in a country of the American continent of the quantities of cereals indicated above and of the gasoline necessary for their distribution through the use of a part of the assets of the French Government now blocked in this country.

2) The transportation of these goods on French vessels now immobilized in American or French ports, such transportation to be effected under the protection of British navicerts or with the tacit authorization of Great Britain.

3) The distribution of these products in France through the intermediary of neutral organizations, preferably American, so as to guarantee their consumption by those for whom they are actually intended. Such distribution would at first be limited to the free zone.

In submitting such a proposal to the Government of the United States, the French Government is firmly convinced that putting it into effect would entail no hindrance or assistance to the action of either of the belligerents. It knows the arguments which have often enough been adduced in the contrary sense. It has studied them with care and believes that it can reply to them.

First of all, the fear has been expressed that goods intended for the populations of the occupied countries may be the object of a levy by the occupying power. This would indeed be the case if the distribution of the products imported should escape a genuine neutral control, and it is such control that France wishes to see established. This Embassy is willing to discuss with the Department of State all practical modalities thereof. If the precautions taken should not give entire satisfaction, if after a first trial—the consequences of which would in no way be a matter of concern for British interests—it should be proved that all or part of the shipments authorized had been diverted, the French Government would then be willing to give up its request.

But some persons, while admitting that the products imported may actually be consumed by those for whom they are intended, fear that a result will be that Germany will be in a position to levy supplementary and equivalent amounts of similar products from French resources. This reasoning is quite accurate if these similar products still exist in the country in adequate amounts. Now, we no longer have any important stock of wheat, corn, oil and fats. It would thus be very difficult for Germany to increase its levies on our national reserves of these products.

Thus, the mechanism suggested, now limited to cereals, would have the sole consequence of feeding France without increasing the supplies

of the occupying power. It must furthermore be noted that the latter already has important stocks of these products, so that the English sea control, applied uniformly to all products and particularly to food products, has the result of reducing the peoples of Europe to famine, with the sole exception of Germany.

Finally, the opinion has been expressed that a consequence of the British blockade should be, by creating want in the conquered countries, to lead them to revolt against the occupying power. So cruel a calculation seems to proceed from a psychological, or even a physiological, error; for one can ask oneself how men whose physical condition condemns them to inactivity could dream of revolting.

In brief, the French Government, without requesting that any impairment be done to the actual principle of the blockade, is convinced that certain arrangements could usefully be put into force. It considers that a first trial should be made immediately by the dispatch of two French vessels which are now in the port of New York and which might be the *Léopold L. D.* and *L'Île de Ré*, each of 6,700 tons, loaded with a cargo of 10,000 tons of wheat and 3,400 tons of corn. It accordingly requests that the exchange value of these products, or \$400,000, be unblocked from the assets which it has in the United States. It further wishes that measures of neutral control be initiated, assuring the correct distribution of these products in the free zone.

The fate of the French race is concerned; and the ascertaining of whether, after the war, regardless of the issue thereof, it will be to the interest of nations to have this element of equilibrium which our nation has always constituted in Europe weakened for long years, if not destroyed, to the benefit of other continental races.

The Ambassador of France does not doubt that these political arguments, joined to the humanitarian considerations which have always inspired the American tradition, will move the Government of the United States to study this problem with sympathy and diligence, and to take the action necessary for its solution.

Mr. Henry-Haye is happy to take this occasion to renew [etc.]

WASHINGTON, February 19, 1941.

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851.5018/86: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, February 23, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received February 24—10:25 a. m.]

218. Embassy's 169, February 7, 3 p. m.,<sup>25</sup> and previous correspondence concerning the question of food supplies for unoccupied France. A note and accompanying memorandum, totalling 15 pages,

<sup>25</sup> Not printed.

was delivered to the Embassy last night by the Foreign Office with a request that it be telegraphed in full summary to the Department.

The introductory paragraphs of the note stress the Ministry's desire to give our Government the most accurate data concerning the wheat situation in the unoccupied zone at the beginning of February, statistics concerning which are contained in this latest memorandum. The Ministry then reviews the beginning of negotiations between the French and British at Madrid and their interruption owing to the desire of the British Government to "transfer the place of discussion elsewhere." It goes on to say that the French Government informed Sir Samuel Hoare that under the circumstances it "would be disposed to continue the negotiation with the (American) Federal Government through the Embassy of the United States at Vichy if, as the French Government hoped, the Department of State would agree to intervene with the authorities of the British blockade in favor of the French requests.["] In order to facilitate and simplify the conversations these requests have been limited to the free passage of American grain destined exclusively for the unoccupied zone. Furthermore, in order to avoid in the mind of the British Government any suspicion that grain imported from America into the free zone could serve to build up in that zone stocks which might permit replacement traffic to the profit of the occupying power, the French Government is willing to limit for the month of March the importation of grain to a maximum of 400,000 quintals. The utilization made in the free zone of this first tonnage will be controlled by American agents who can thus make certain of the exclusively French destination in the free zone of shipments of grain from America.

The negotiations in Madrid being thus suspended Monsieur Henry-Haye had on February 19 an exchange of views with Mr. Sumner Welles <sup>25a</sup> concerning the free passage of American grain for the unoccupied zone. Mr. Sumner Welles clearly indicated to the French Ambassador that a distinction is made by the Federal Government between the occupied zone and the unoccupied zone and that negotiations are in progress between the Washington Government and the British authorities on the basis of the requests presented by the French Government for grain.

Monsieur Henry-Haye has transmitted to the Under Secretary of State a memorandum recalling the extent of French needs and the very alarming situation with respect to wheat supplies in the unoccupied zone.

The Ambassador has suggested the immediate shipment to Marseille, pending the conclusion of the agreement, of two ships loaded with grains. The ships in question would be the *Leopold L. D.* and the

<sup>25a</sup> Memorandum of conversation not printed.

*Ile de Re* and at present available at New York. These two ships would be loaded with 10,000 tons of wheat and 3,400 tons of corn, the distribution of which in the unoccupied zone would be carried out under American control.

Mr. Sumner Welles indicated to the French Ambassador that he was going to submit this request to President Roosevelt and to Lord Halifax in order that a prompt decision may be reached with respect to this operation which would constitute a "first test" and that if successful it would serve to facilitate subsequent imports. Mr. Sumner Welles indicated to M. Henry-Haye that he would support the request without reservation with Lord Halifax.

"The French Government has the honor to inform the Embassy of the United States that the suggestion of M. Henry-Haye has its agreement and that in view of the vital interest which it attaches to the successful outcome of this suggestion, it would be very appreciative if the Embassy would support it near the Federal Government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs", the note concludes, "strongly hopes that the Federal Government will find it possible to adopt, with respect to the free passage of the aforesaid two ships, the same attitude that it has been willing to take with respect to the free passage of the French tankers loaded with supplies for Morocco, that is to say, that it will make known to the British Government 'the interest which the American Government attaches to the arrival of these shipments at their destination'."

The accompanying memorandum contains a very detailed statement designed to show that the irreducible minimum of American wheat imports necessary to carry the unoccupied zone over to the next crop is 4,900,000 quintals.

[Here follows detailed statement on wheat supplies and needs.]

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/2269: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, February 26, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received February 27—10:30 a. m.]

240. Embassy's telegram 222, February 24, 1 p. m.<sup>26</sup> I have just received a Foreign Office note signed personally by Admiral Darlan<sup>26a</sup> which reads as follows in translation:

"The Government of the United States is not incognizant of the very great difficulties in the matter of supplies which the French Government must face.

<sup>26</sup> For extract of this telegram, see p. 225.

<sup>26a</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan succeeded Pierre Etienne Flandin as French Minister for Foreign Affairs on February 9, 1941.

France, not prepared to live on her own resources, has need, in order to exist, of her Empire.

Therefore, immediately after the armistice she requested and obtained from the Germans the authorization to resume maritime traffic on a reduced scale with her principal colonies. In spite of extreme difficulties this traffic at present exceeds 100,000 tons of imports into France per week, which is of capital importance.

But this traffic is in danger of being suspended as a result of the hostile attitude of Great Britain with respect to France's merchant vessels. On the pretext that anything which may enter France may contribute to supplying the enemy, and utilizing this pretext to seize our unarmed vessels without risk, the British Government exercises an increasingly severe restriction on the maritime trade of France. The following figures, held secret until the present, are proof thereof:

Without speaking of the 81 French merchant ships (totalling 400,000 tons) which confidently took refuge in England in June 1940 and which Great Britain has seized, the British Navy has captured the following number of ships: 3 in September 1940, 4 in October 1940, 3 in December 1940, 6 in January 1941, and 7 in February 1941.

Thus, since the Armistice, Great Britain has taken from France without any valid reason more than 100 merchant ships, of which a number, furthermore, were empty or carried only inoffensive demobilized men.

If the English Admiralty continues to capture French merchant vessels, the loss of tonnage which would result therefrom for France will cause grave consequences of a political and economic nature. On the other hand, the naval authorities will be constrained considerably to reduce the traffic between the Empire and metropolitan France to the detriment of their supply. On the other hand these restrictions could not fail to produce in France and in North Africa on public opinion as yet ill-informed of this situation, a feeling which could lead to serious political consequences.

Anxious, however, to avoid the consequences on this opinion and loath to undertake measures of reprisal, the French Government would like to see these difficulties settled by conciliatory means. In this spirit it ventures again to have recourse to the good offices of the American Government to ask it to consider whether it can intervene with the British Government in order that this series of seizures, which the French Government considers illegal and unjustified, may not be brought to an end.

The last seizures of which French ships have been the object reveal, in effect, procedure contrary to international custom. Thus the *Sontay* and the *P. L. Dreyfus*, captured near Capetown, had received from the British cruiser which forced them to stop written assurance that they would be released after search. But in spite of this written assurance, the two ships were seized, General Smuts<sup>27</sup> having refused to ratify the decision of the captain of the cruiser. It should be noted that the two ships in question were going to Dakar and that consequently their capture could not be justified by the pretext that they could serve to supply Germany.

<sup>27</sup> Gen. Jan Christian Smuts, Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs of the Union of South Africa.



It is evident that such incidents if they are repeated can only compel the French Admiralty to resort to extreme measures which the French Government is most anxious to avoid."

LEAHY

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851.5018/88 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 1, 1941—1 p. m.  
[Received March 2—10:16 p. m.]

253. Embassy's telegram No. 218, February 23, 7 p. m. The Foreign Office showed this morning a copy of a telegram sent yesterday to Henry-Haye. It instructed him to ask the Department to send to unoccupied France immediately by clipper one or two American "agents qualified in questions pertaining to wheat to make contact with the French Administration" with a view to drawing up bases of control over the hoped-for wheat shipments to the unoccupied zone. The Ambassador was instructed to point out that for several years the French have had a system of control of all wheat and flour movements from the grower down to the baker. The French are agreeable to issuing "certificates of a special color" for American wheat and are open to any other suggestions which our Government may care to offer.<sup>28</sup> The French Government is likewise offering to pay the expenditures of the aforesaid agents.

Ambassador Henry-Haye is also instructed to state that the bread ration is being reduced a further 20 percent in the free zone and that no pastry is to be permitted in any part of France. Furthermore, the percentage of substitute grains in bread is to be increased from 10 percent to 20 percent.

The French point out in their telegram that the wheat situation is becoming "more and more critical" and that it is of "imperious necessity" that the first two shiploads mentioned in the aforesaid telegram be permitted to depart at a very early date.

I should like to add that the bread ration has been reduced by 20 percent effective this date and that I am personally convinced that the French are genuinely disturbed at the existing wheat shortage in the unoccupied zone and that the reasons for sending a quantity of wheat to this zone, as set forth in my several previous telegrams, are as valid today as ever.

LEAHY

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<sup>28</sup> In telegram No. 258, March 2, 10 a. m., the Ambassador in France transmitted a statement from the French Foreign Office outlining in detail the methods of controlling American wheat (851.5018/89).

851.48/292

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] March 7, 1941.

The British Ambassador, accompanied by the Australian Minister,<sup>29</sup> called at his request.

I brought up the question of relief to unoccupied France and covered the entire situation, pro and con. I remarked with emphasis that, unless the British allowed a little flexibility in this matter, the French would become further inflamed against them and against us as well, and we could not be responsible for keeping the French fleet out of German hands; that we have been working day and night with respect to the fleet situation and other vital phases, including that of discouraging actual fighting between the French and the British.

I then said that the French were making most earnest representations in the matter, and that there may be an early explosion. Hence I felt it due the British that they should know this. I said that Lazarus, in a state of great hunger, felt extremely grateful to the rich man when he was permitted to pick up a few crumbs that fell from his table, and that this was human nature today.

The Ambassador agreed to give the matter further attention and let me hear from him soon.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

851.48/290

*The British Prime Minister (Churchill) to President Roosevelt*<sup>30</sup>

Admiral Darlan's declaration and threat<sup>31</sup> make me wonder whether it would not be best for you to intervene as a friend of both sides and try to bring about a working agreement. We do not wish to push things to extremes, and we naturally should be most reluctant in a thing like this to act against your judgment after you have weighed all the pros and cons. We fear very much prolongation of the war and its miseries which would result from breakdown of blockade of Germany and there are immense difficulties in preventing Germany from profiting directly or indirectly from anything imported into unoccupied France. Dealing with Darlan is dealing with Germany, for he will not be allowed to agree to anything they

<sup>29</sup> Richard G. Casey.

<sup>30</sup> Copy of this telegram dated March 12 was delivered by the British Ambassador on the following day.

<sup>31</sup> On March 10 Darlan made statement to American correspondents at Vichy that if British interference with food shipments were to persist he would be forced to ask permission to convoy French food ships with the French Navy and fight for their protection.

know about which does not suit their book. Also there is the danger of rationing spreading to occupied France, Belgium, Holland and Norway. Perhaps however you might be able to devise a scheme under which supervision would limit leakage and might also give you a number of agents in favourable positions in unoccupied France and in French Africa. It would be easier for you to talk to Vichy with whom you are in regular diplomatic relations, than for us to negotiate via Madrid or by making speeches on broadcast. Besides this, Darlan has old scores to pay out against us in the dire action we were forced to take against his ships.

Would you therefore consider coming forward on the basis of how shocked you were at the idea of fighting breaking out between France and Great Britain, which would only help the common foe. Then you might be able to procure Vichy assent to a scheme allowing a ration of wheat to go through, month by month to unoccupied France and something for French Africa as long as other things were satisfactory. These other things might form the subject of a secret arrangement of which the Germans will not know, by which German infiltration into Morocco and French African ports would be limited to the bare armistice terms, and by which an increasing number of French warships would gradually be moving from Toulon to Casablanca or Dakar.

I have asked the Foreign Office to telegraph to Lord Halifax all sorts of things we think should be taken care of, so that he can tell you about them, but the two I have mentioned are worth more to us than the disadvantages of a certain amount of leakage of food to the enemy. It would have to be made clear that the relief accorded was limited to stated quantities of food at agreed intervals and did not extend to other goods. For instance, there is a French ship, the *Bangkok*, with 3,000 tons of rubber on board which is certainly not all for teats of babies' bottles, and we have abundant cases of all kinds of valuable munition materials which are going straight through France to Germany or Italy, not entirely without some greasing. Moreover, it would be a great pity if any large number of ships which are all needed for our life and war effort were used up in food carrying. I do not want the people here, who, apart from the heavy bombardment likely to be renewed soon, are having to tighten their belts and restrict their few remaining comforts, to feel that I am not doing my best against the enemy. Nevertheless if it were not unwelcome I would gladly invite you to act as intermediary and make the best plan you can to beat Hitler. We have supreme confidence in you, and would receive with profound respect what you thought best to do.

The bases question<sup>82</sup> has, I think, been tidied up, and I hope to bring an agreed document before the Cabinet tomorrow, Thursday,

<sup>82</sup> See vol. III, pp. 53 ff.

afternoon. Will you let me know when you would like the announcement to be made. Does it matter if it comes on morrow of passing of Lease-Lend Bill? <sup>33</sup>

851.48/324

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] March 15, 1941.

The Ambassador <sup>34</sup> called at his request. He said that a trade and shipping agreement had been made between Great Britain and Sweden and agreed to by Germany. He inquired why some such arrangement could not be made between France and Great Britain. I replied that that was the unfortunate thing about the present relations between Great Britain and France. I said that they could work out many existing questions to their mutual advantage if they would only meet and proceed in a spirit of mutual concession and cooperation. He stated that the Turks were furnishing Germany food and yet Great Britain complained about food being furnished to the French. I replied that I did not know the true facts, but that that was a very different situation in any event.

I stated that it is all-important to the French and the British alike that each country should approach the other in a spirit of moderation and mutual concession to the end that they may be able to work out reasonable and fair adjustments of conflicting acts and interests in their respective shipping situations; that to this end they could well afford to select one outstanding man in each country who has the confidence of both countries and who could function together from day to day for the purpose of promoting understanding and facilitating the solution of many or most questions that may arise from time to time between the two countries. Each would, of course, represent his respective Government and would cooperate with his Government whenever occasion arose for other officials of the Government to participate in the discussion and settlement of questions which might come up.

The Ambassador said he would like to know if the British had agreed to the memorandum <sup>35</sup> of Mr. Murphy and General Weygand in regard to the shipment of goods to French Africa. I replied that the matter was progressing and that I would request my associates to keep him advised as to developments.

<sup>33</sup> Enacted March 11, 1941; 55 Stat. 31.

<sup>34</sup> Gaston Henry-Haye, the French Ambassador.

<sup>35</sup> For text of memorandum of February 26, see telegram No. 249, February 28, 10 a. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 226.

The Ambassador spoke of the food situation in unoccupied France. He was rather mild in broaching this subject and did so in a sort of apologetic tone. I said that the position of this Government, as the Ambassador I thought knew, is that it continues to cherish the ancient friendship it has always entertained for the French people and their welfare; it is most desirous of serving them in every way at all feasible or practical, especially in this time of their great misfortune; that we have been doing this to the very best of our ability thus far; that we intend to continue to do so even should the circumstances become more averse and the difficulties more numerous. We are likewise friendly toward the British, and in addition we are aiding them as best we can in their efforts to defeat the aggressive movements of Hitler and his associates. In doing this, we profoundly believe that we are serving the cause of liberty of all of the conquered countries of Europe, as well as ourselves; that, therefore, our friendship and our aid to Great Britain are in complete harmony with our every desire to cooperate with the French to the fullest practical extent. I said that on the other hand, it is not known here as to just how far certain members of the French Government desire to go beyond the requirements of the armistice terms and the limitations of a country that has been captured for the time being; that this Government, of course, expects the French Government to exercise every relation with Germany within these two limitations just set forth; that the serious question that has arisen is whether certain members of the French Government with great influence are undertaking to go over and above and beyond the functions of a conquered country and the limitations of the armistice upon the theory that they may appease or propitiate Hitler. I said that they can, of course, do this arbitrarily if they see fit; that I desired to repeat what I had said to the Ambassador heretofore, that it is as impossible to appease Hitler as it would be for a squirrel to appease a boa constrictor, and hence this country is striving all the more to aid Great Britain and safeguard the liberties of Great Britain and the Western Hemisphere, and at the same time to win back the liberties of Europe. I said, of course, I feel very deeply that Great Britain will succeed notwithstanding some views of French statesmen to the contrary, and that despite their efforts to cooperate with Hitler, if they are doing so, Great Britain, aided by this country, will restore French liberties along with the preservation of our own and those of Great Britain.

I continued by saying that just before Admiral Darlan made the loud threat against Great Britain some days ago, which was published in every newspaper, and has not been corrected if it were not true, I had made real progress in my discussions with the British in regard to further relief for unoccupied France, but that I had

been seriously handicapped since then. I said the crucial question with my Government just now was whether and how far some of the important members of the French Government have in mind to go in their efforts to appease Hitler by favors such as aid in the war in one way or another; that they can, if that is their idea, move in this direction in the future, but, of course, the French Government will understand that we will be correspondingly handicapped in our efforts to cooperate with France in many vitally important ways, including the matter of food relief, and that we could only do the best we might be able in these very restricting circumstances. We feel very profoundly that the British cause should be supported and that it will succeed; that we shall continue to contribute every possible aid to that end. We are deeply of the opinion that the liberties of Great Britain and this Hemisphere will be preserved and the liberties of France and conquered countries in Europe will be restored contrary to the reported views and attitudes of numerous prominent Frenchmen, who seemed to prefer the kind of rule that Hitler is dispensing to conquered countries rather than to return to the cherished liberties, freedom and popular institutions which France until recently possessed. I said that, unfortunately, many people in this country interpret the Darlan statement to have in mind aid to Hitler primarily rather than aid in the form of relief to the people of France; that I myself am not giving it any particular interpretation, but that, unfortunately, widespread interpretation is being given it.

The Ambassador proceeded to deny that Darlan had made the threat published in the press. I remarked that it was unfortunate that a denial was not made public, if it had in fact been made, for the reason that the threat, which was very ugly in its damaging effects, was published in every paper and broadcast by radio. I continued by saying that it meant everything that the denial be made public. The Ambassador showed no interest in this suggestion.

The Ambassador then recited quite a number of occurrences relating to the course of the French Government where it had not taken exception to objectionable acts by the British when it had ground to do so. These citations were unimportant and unimpressive. He closed by saying that his country was desirous of restoring normal relations with Great Britain. I expressed my gratification and inquired specifically if this was the attitude of his Government, as well as himself, to which he answered in the affirmative.

I remarked that this Government has been striving earnestly to carry forward anew its discussions with the British in regard to food relief for unoccupied France, and that I felt that we again are making progress. I added that it was important in my opinion for the French to indicate a spirit of cooperation in case Great Britain should permit the proposed two boatloads of wheat to go to unoccupied

France, such as assurances of non-infiltration by the Germans into French Africa, the working out by all countries concerned of a rigid supervision of the distribution of the wheat, any reasonable courtesies that could possibly be extended to the British regarding shipments in French boats, and the moving of French naval vessels from continental France to French African ports. The foregoing could well be given consideration as evidence of a new purpose to cooperate more closely with the British in solving all problems and questions at all possible of solution in this friendly and mutually desirable manner.

Two or three other phases came up near the conclusion. One was my statement to him, which was called forth by a remark of his, to the effect that the enemy status of Germany and France toward each other was not changed by the armistice; that France is under no obligation to furnish Germany with supplies, or otherwise to facilitate her operations against Great Britain because it is inconsistent with enemy status; that Germany can only make requisitions for use of her occupying forces to an extent consistent with the needs of the population of occupied France; that this provision of the Hague Convention<sup>36</sup> was intended to prevent a conquering country to make requisitions on the conquered country to the point of depriving the local population of the necessities of existence. The Ambassador proceeded very earnestly to deny that his Government intends to take any steps to assist Germany beyond the limits of the armistice and the functions of a conquered nation.

The Ambassador was less vehement and pugnacious than usual, as though the Lease-Lend Bill had made some impression on him and possibly some of the members of his Government.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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851.48/227 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, March 15, 1941—3 p. m.

229. Your telegram 251, February 28, 8 p. m.<sup>37</sup> giving French food requirements for unoccupied zone.

The French Ambassador came in this morning at his request.<sup>37a</sup> I took occasion to inform him again that we have been giving all our attention to this situation on the basis of your telegram and a similar memorandum presented by him, that we have had several conversations with the British Government on the subject and that the latter was giving all possible consideration to the various aspects of the

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<sup>36</sup> Convention on Laws and Customs of War on Land, article LII, *Foreign Relations*, 1907, pt. 2, p. 1204.

<sup>37</sup> Not printed.

<sup>37a</sup> See *supra*.

proposals. On March 7, I had told the French Ambassador that some real progress in the discussions had already been made. Then de Brinon's<sup>88</sup> statement and Admiral Darlan's interview with the press threatening the use of French naval convoys introduced a new element and came as a surprise to this Government.

I again recalled to the Ambassador our earnest desire to be helpful to France in its present difficulties and our readiness to continue to devote our best efforts toward obtaining some solution. In our approach to the problem we recognized that France, under the armistice, is laboring under certain restrictions with regard to its independence of movement but we must also bear in mind that on the other hand France is not required to take any action which inures to the benefit of the occupying power. Should the French Government take any action against Great Britain, particularly if it were of a military nature, France would lose before the world any claim to having acted within the limits of the obligations imposed by the armistice terms and would place itself in the position of a belligerent acting in concert with Germany.

I pointed out that we will go ahead with our endeavors to be helpful to France but, of course, it must be clear to the French Government that our efforts will be made of no avail if by their acts they make it impossible for us to continue discussions with regard to these problems by interposing indications or threats of drastic military measures.

I can assure you that we have not ceased to discuss with the British the possibilities of sending some shipments of wheat into unoccupied France and we feel that we are justified in believing that a definite amount will be permitted to go forward within a very short time, provided that the present controversial atmosphere can be clarified.

Please seek an early opportunity to see Marshal Pétain and point out to him the difficulties which are being put in the way of our efforts to be helpful in this situation and tell him that we would be very grateful for any action he could take which would help to smooth out the present difficulties.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/9147

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] March 15, 1941.

The British Ambassador called at my request.

I referred again to the very delicate relations between Great Britain and France and the danger of the situation getting out of hand. I

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<sup>88</sup> Fernand de Brinon, Delegate General of the French Government for occupied territories.



said that this Government, as he knows, has devoted much time and effort to keep the French and British situation from drifting into a dangerous stage, and especially to induce the French never to turn over their Navy to Hitler for his military use; that the Darlan threat, whether it was in earnest or a bluff, seemed to be more a move to secure favor with Hitler than to get relief for the people of France. The one supreme purpose of the Laval-Darlan group seemed to be to whipsaw French sentiment around by utilizing the food relief question in a most dastardly way so that this group might get the upper hand at Vichy, and with the support of changed French sentiment turn the Navy over to Hitler, and in many other disastrous ways deliver the best interests of France to Germany, as was contemplated by Laval before he was discovered and thrown out by Marshal Pétain. I added that the Ambassador could readily observe the great concern of this Government and hence its repeated discussions with the British Government about the matter of food relief to unoccupied France under the most rigid supervision; that we had purposely not undertaken to stand for an important *quid pro quo* formula for the reason that Darlan might turn away and charge that the British were more interested in the *pro* than in the *quid* and seek to make large capital of it on the charge of lack of sympathy with and interest in the distressed people of France. This Government seeks to carry both propositions along on parallel lines based on a spirit of cooperation for mutually desirable settlement of various matters pending between the two Governments.

The Ambassador said that it would be agreeable for me to say to the French that real progress is being made with respect to the proposed two shipments of wheat to unoccupied France. He suggested that I should say that, of course, the British would like to see a similar spirit shown by the French Government by joining in a plan for rigid supervision to prevent the Germans from infiltrating into French Africa, and by bringing away from the French continental base their naval vessels and stationing them in French African ports. I said that I would, of course, be only too glad to bring these matters up under our plan of dealing with both French and British questions that are being raised by their respective Ambassadors.

I sought to repeat the attitude of this Government based on the policy that from the standpoint of aiding Great Britain in the war, this Government should keep in close relationship with France, and to this end my Government would collaborate fully with the British, offering its opinion freely relative to any question, such as the French food relief matter, but never carrying the matter to the point of friction or public disagreement. In case of disagreement, this Govern-

ment might, if it thought the matter sufficiently important, continue to keep the British reminded of its views as it has done in the French relief situation. I recalled to the Ambassador that it was only twelve hours after my talk with him to this effect last week that Darlan made his threat, and that it was really unfortunate that we had not been able to announce virtual completion of the consideration of the request for food relief. The Ambassador said that his country had come around to this view very slowly, and I expressed my thorough understanding of the psychology in his country in view of their situation.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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851.48/323

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] March 17, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me this afternoon.

Before the Ambassador took up with me the matter he wished to discuss, I told him that my attention had just been drawn to a statement given out by the French Ambassador after his conversation with the President this morning. I said that I had consulted the President with regard to this statement and that, with the approval of the President, I was giving the following information to the press:

The French Ambassador undoubtedly has reference to a request he has submitted for emergency release of food grains for unoccupied France as cargo for two French ships now in New York. He has been informed that the President was entirely willing that this request should be raised with the American Red Cross which now has it under consideration.

It is, of course, obvious that the American Government must assure itself that the final consumption of all food sent takes place within the area of unoccupied France.

I said to Lord Halifax that this raised a question which I had wished to discuss with him in view of his conversation with Secretary Hull last Saturday<sup>29</sup> and in view of a conversation I had had on the telephone with Secretary Hull this morning. I said that this Government believed it wise as an intermediate step—in order to make it evident to the French people that food supplies could be obtained from the Western Hemisphere and that the American Government was by no means unsympathetic in their present distress—for the American Red Cross to send two cargoes of food grains to unoccupied France, such

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<sup>29</sup> See memorandum by the Secretary of State, March 15, p. 125.

cargoes to be purchased with funds coming from the President's relief fund. I said that this Government had it in mind to inform the French Government that it intended to take this step and to inform the British Government thereof, provided that the four conditions relating to distribution, et cetera, to which the French Government had already agreed, be scrupulously carried out by the French Government, and provided that the French Government would further agree that if these cargoes were sent in the two French steamers now laid up in New York, these steamers would be returned to American ports. At the same time I said this Government had it in mind to make it clear to the French Government that such action on our part was predicated not only on the observance of the conditions mentioned, but also on the taking by the French authorities of steps necessary to prevent further infiltration of Germans into North Africa and on the taking of such further steps as might remove from the mind of this Government the belief that there existed any possibility that French resources—naval, military or material—would be permitted to fall into German hands or that the French Government would undertake any action in the interest of Germany outside of and beyond the conditions of the armistice agreement between France and Germany.

I stated that if these conditions were satisfactorily observed and if assurances concerning the latter points were given to us by the French Government in a form satisfactory to this Government, the Government of the United States hoped that the British Government would see its way to agreeing upon a course of procedure which would make it possible for the French Government to purchase with its own funds such additional food supplies as might be required for the needs of civilian populations in unoccupied France, always, of course, with the understanding that such food supplies from the United States would be sent in "dribbles" and that American supervision as to distribution and control would be made watertight.

I said it would be very desirable if the British Government could let us have a reply as promptly as possible with regard to the dispatch of these two gift cargoes in French bottoms under the conditions above specified. I said that the President believed that this step was wise and in the interest of both Great Britain and the United States as a means of convincing the French people that they would be given sympathetic treatment, provided the authorities gave both the British and American Governments the assurances required.

Lord Halifax stated that he would send a telegram in the sense desired this evening and that he would let me have the reply as soon as it was received.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

851.48/257a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 18, 1941—5 p. m.

900. Referring to a personal message delivered by Lord Halifax on March 13 will you kindly transmit the following reply to a former naval person from the President:

"I have received your message regarding the French food relief situation and I fully appreciate the difficulties of the problem.

"I have talked it over with the Secretary of State and, as a first step, he has told the French Ambassador here and is instructing Leahy to tell Petain at Vichy that we are making every effort to be helpful in this problem, that some real progress has already been made, that we will continue our efforts, but that, of course, any drastic French action or even threats along these lines will make it entirely impossible to find a solution.

"The Secretary will continue to keep your Ambassador fully informed of all developments."

WELLES

740.0011 European War 1939/9167 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 18, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received March 19—5:25 p. m.]

314. Department's 229, March 15, 3 p. m. I called on Marshal Petain this afternoon and explained to him the unfortunate effect, as set forth in the Department's telegram, of the recent statements attributed to De Brinon and Admiral Darlan by the press. The Marshal replied immediately that, while he had permitted Admiral Darlan to announce his intention to convoy ships if British seizures of French ships continued, he had never favored such a policy and had told Admiral Darlan that it was dangerous. He had said that French ships could hardly be convoyed with safety unless they had a place to flee to and unless they had sufficient strength. He is leaving tonight for Thiers, to be gone until Friday, but he will leave a memorandum for Admiral Darlan telling him of Department's views and instructing him to say nothing more about convoying. He went on to say: "Admiral Darlan seems to be getting closer to the Germans and to be playing more with them. I must watch him and I will restrain him as much as possible." The Germans, he said, are accusing him, the Marshal, "of swimming with both currents" but he had told them that he was only trying to float peacefully and keep out of the swamp. He had decided that France must "at least for the

present", he said significantly, keep out of the struggle. He is trying to unify his people behind him on that policy. De Gaulle,<sup>41</sup> Catroux,<sup>42</sup> and Larminat<sup>43</sup> are making it extremely difficult. Catroux has threatened to invade Syria and is stirring up De Gaullist sentiment in that area. French forces there are not as strong as in Algeria and Morocco, although they are capable of defending Syria against an attack by De Gaullist elements if they are not too strong. This furnishes a pretext for German activities in Syria and German pressure on his Government. Similarly, De Gaullist sentiment has been rising in the occupied zone of France where, realizing the Marshal's prestige, the De Gaullist elements, he said, in their propaganda claim that the Marshal is privately allied to De Gaulle. He reiterated what he had said so often before, that De Gaulle "is a traitor to his country, condemned to death", and that the movement is causing great difficulties for him with the ever-suspicious Germans. Churchill, he said, had sent him word privately that he is finding De Gaulle a problem himself. If that is the case, went on the Marshal, why could not they drop the movement which is merely arousing greater German suspicions and threats of forcing further reductions in French forces in Africa. He hoped I could bring this matter to the attention of my Government. I have no doubt whatsoever that the Marshal feels personally very strongly about De Gaulle and that his elimination from the picture would go far in swinging the old soldier more toward the British camp.

I asked the Marshal whether he was aware that we had arranged to send two ships of petroleum to Morocco for North Africa and that one of them was already en route. He said that he had not been so informed and that he was delighted to hear it: without it North Africa could not make its crop. He hoped that we would also send the wheat which is so badly needed in the unoccupied zone here.

I asked whether any additional Germans had been sent to Morocco and he replied that only the 54 were still there. He said that the Germans are, however, endeavoring to send some more, though he is firmly opposing it.

I told him that I was pleased to say that following the arrival of the *Cold Harbor*, the *Exmouth* had sailed from New York yesterday.

I had been informed, I said, that the delay in its departure had been due to the refusal of the Italians and the Germans to grant safe conduct and not, as had been indicated here in the press, to the British. He was interested to learn this as he had not been previously so informed.

<sup>41</sup> Gen. Charles de Gaulle, Leader of the Free French Forces.

<sup>42</sup> Gen. Georges Catroux, Free French Delegate at Cairo.

<sup>43</sup> Gen. René Marie de Larminat.

I said in conclusion that I would like to know whether he had read the President's speech <sup>44</sup> and in view of his indication that he had only seen extracts from it I presented him both an English and a French text. I went on to say that in my opinion the President's address meant clearly one thing: That the defeat of Germany is certain and that I thought therefore it was good news for France.

The Marshal thanked me for the copy and said that the address would certainly cause the Germans to think. Since it meant to them, however, that there is now no possibility of negotiating a peace with England, they would probably be forced to an early attempt at invasion. Whether they could succeed or not he did not know but they must make the attempt or give up their hope of victory. I replied that *even* if they succeed in invading England, the war will go on and that Axis final defeat is now inevitable.

The Marshal was in excellent form, alert, particularly agreeable, and very appreciative of our efforts to help support him by the provision of food for his people in unoccupied France.

LEAHY

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851.48/260 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, March 18, 1941—8 p. m.

238. As a measure of urgent relief and pending clarification of the present discussions relative to the supply of food to unoccupied France, the President has authorized the purchase from funds appropriated by Congress for civil relief and offers to the French Government two shiploads of food grains for transportation and distribution in unoccupied France under the auspices of the American Red Cross. Such distribution would be effected in the same way and under the same conditions as the food for children, the first shipment of which has been sent to France on the S. S. *Cold Harbor*. Second shipment left March 17 on the S. S. *Exmouth*.

If this offer is acceptable to the French Government and it is willing to undertake transportation of these supplies on the two French vessels at present available in New York (your telegram 218, February 23, 7 p. m., Section 4 <sup>44a</sup>), this Government will be glad to recommend to the British Government free passage at an early date of these vessels through the contraband control.

We feel that this offer to forward food grains under the auspices of the American Red Cross would take care of the immediate situation.

WELLES

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<sup>44</sup> Apparently reference is to speech made on March 15, 1941, to White House Correspondents Association; for text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, March 15, 1941, p. 277.

<sup>44a</sup> Paragraph beginning "The Ambassador has suggested", p. 115.

851.48/261: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 20, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received 6 p. m.]

322. Department's telegram 238, March 18, 8 p. m. The Foreign Office has informed the Embassy that the offer in question is acceptable to the French Government and that it is willing to undertake transportation of the grain supplies on the two French vessels in question. The Foreign Office likewise volunteered the statement that it will give assurances that these two ships shall return to the United States.

LEAHY

851.48/327

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] March 24, 1941.

The French Ambassador called to see me this afternoon.

The Ambassador stated that he had now received an official reply to the inquiry I had made of him some days ago as to the attitude which the French Government would take with regard to certain points in which this Government was vitally interested in the event that some arrangement could be worked out with the agreement of the British Government for the purchase by the Vichy Government of food supplies for unoccupied France in the United States. The Ambassador gave me the following official assurances:

1. Complete supervision and control of distribution covering all such food supplies, both in unoccupied France and in North Africa, by American citizens designated by the American Government.

2. Any French ships utilized for the taking of such food supplies from the United States to ports of unoccupied France or of North Africa to be returned immediately to American waters. In this connection the French Government expressed the hope that should French ships now in ports of unoccupied France or of North Africa be utilized for this purpose in addition to the French ships now in United States ports, the Government of the United States would agree that these additional French ships would not be immobilized should they come to United States ports.

3. The French Government gives its positive assurance that under no conditions will it agree to take any action which can be of benefit or assistance, direct or indirect, to the German Government over and above the obligations encumbered upon the French Government as a result of the armistice signed with Germany.

4. The French Government officially informs the Government of the United States that at this moment there are exactly 62 German officials in North Africa including privates and non-commissioned officers. The French Government declares to this Government that it

will firmly oppose as it has in the past any increase by Germany of this number of German officials in North Africa and will under no conditions agree to any increase in the membership of the so-called Armistice Commission.

I told the Ambassador that I was very glad to receive these assurances and that the information he had given me, and the additional questions involved in the purchase of food supplies by France in the United States would be taken up for discussion by me with the British Ambassador in the near future. I said that of course the Ambassador must realize that no final decision could be reached in the matter until we had seen the results of the experiment involved in the sending of the two gift cargoes in French vessels to unoccupied France. I said that both his Government and he would, of course, realize that should the distribution of these gift cargoes be carried out to our entire satisfaction and in accordance with the assurances given in that regard, public opinion in this country and in Great Britain would be far better satisfied to make further experiments than if additional steps in this sense were taken immediately.

The Ambassador again impressed upon me the urgent need for additional food supplies in unoccupied France and how desirable it was that further shipments be arranged for.

I stated that the attitude of this Government in that regard was as I had set forth above.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

851.5018/85 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, March 27, 1941—6 p. m.

270. The American press yesterday published a report from Vichy to the effect that M. Achard<sup>45</sup> had made public the terms of a barter arrangement for the exchange of supplies between the occupied and unoccupied zones of France, by the terms of which the occupied zone would send to the unoccupied zone 800,000 tons wheat, 200,000 tons sugar, 100,000 tons bran and 300,000 tons potatoes. In return the free zone will send 1,390,000 head of live stock, 36,000 tons table oil, 100,000 tons salt, 60,000 tons vegetables and 8,000 tons cheese.

It is presumed that this barter arrangement is the same as outlined in your telegram 169, February 7, 3 p. m. and despatch No. 67, March 3, 1941.<sup>46</sup>

Please confirm and comment whether you think its present announcement has any particular military or political significance, and whether

<sup>45</sup> French Secretary of State for Supplies.

<sup>46</sup> Neither printed.



it should cause any reconsideration by us of the sending of the gift cargoes by the Red Cross.<sup>47</sup>

WELLES

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851.48/441½

*The British Prime Minister (Churchill) to President Roosevelt*<sup>48</sup>

[LONDON, March 29, 1941.]

Since my telegram of March 12th about feeding unoccupied France we have been confronted with the agreement between Darlan and Berlin for the supply of large quantities of foodstuffs to unoccupied France in exchange naturally for a *quid pro quo* to the occupied zone from which the German army of occupation is a heavy gainer. There are also press reports of Vichy trying to negotiate purchases of foodstuffs in Latin-America. If we were to put up with this it would mean that French ships unhampered by the fetters of convoy, would soon be doing a big trade and Germany would secure at least half of the import. This seems to put the matter in a new light.

Parliament and the public will ask me why when we are ourselves suffering a grievous blockade and British rations are reduced week by week the French and Germans should have these advantages thus prolonging the war. Moreover the Belgians, Dutch and Norwegians, whose privations and sufferings are far worse than those of Vichy France, may soon ask that their own ships in our service should carry food to their own countries. We ourselves in Britain need more ships and food more stringently every week in order to carry on the war with its present vigour.

I am therefore instructing the Admiralty to tighten up the blockade of unoccupied France as far as our naval resources and opportunities allow and I hope that you will not think that this is unwise or unreasonable. The two gift-ships will of course be let through as agreed between us. We are cabling in detail through Lord Halifax.

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851.85/209b : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, March 31, 1941—7 p. m.

280. At such time as you see the Marshal in connection with the Department's No. 279, March 31,<sup>49</sup> relating to the status of French vessels, or at another suitable opportunity, you should again emphasize the considerations set forth in the Department's telegrams

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<sup>47</sup> In telegram No. 407, April 7, 7 p. m., Ambassador Leahy stated that the French Foreign Office denied emphatically that any new food barter deal between occupied and unoccupied France had been signed (851.5018/100).

<sup>48</sup> Presumably copy of telegram received from the British Embassy.

<sup>49</sup> *Post*, p. 526.

No. 229, March 15, 3 p. m. and No. 237, March 18, 7 p. m.,<sup>50</sup> reiterating that any evidence that France is limiting its cooperation with the Axis powers to the bare terms of the obligations assumed under the Armistice, would facilitate the efforts of this Government to continue its program of assistance with France. Unfortunately, such recent measures as the continued use of French ships to transport supplies which accrue to the benefit of the Axis powers and are not called for under the provisions of the Armistice terms do not provide such evidence and give rise to doubt that the position of this Government and its desire to be as helpful to France as possible is fully understood. In this connection we have reference to the reported shipment of rubber on board the S. S. *Bangkok* and the delivery to Italy of 5,000 tons of gasoline from Algeria, and the German demands outlined in your telegram No. 366,<sup>51</sup> which are in direct violation of the assurances given by General Weygand relating to the cargo of petroleum products on the *Frimaire*.

The Marshal will appreciate that our program of assistance which has already included the unblocking of funds, the economic understanding as regards North Africa, together with the shipment of petroleum products, and the transport on Red Cross vessels of flour and relief supplies for unoccupied France might have to be curtailed, delayed, or abandoned unless it is clear that the French Government fully appreciates the position of this Government.

The publication of the barter arrangements and Achard's statement referred to in the Department's No. 270, March 27 and your No. 359, March 28,<sup>52</sup> is likewise creating a strong public opposition even to the despatch of the two flour shipments under Red Cross auspices, particularly since the agreement as reported contains no assurances that exports originating in North Africa and unoccupied France and destined for the occupied region are for French consumption nor is there any announced provision made for delivery into unoccupied France of materials which under this agreement must be furnished by the occupied area.

HULL

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851.48/396

*The French Ambassador (Henry-Haye) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

The French Government has the honor to inform the United States Government that the plan for exchanges of foodstuffs between the

<sup>50</sup> For telegram No. 237, see p. 269.

<sup>51</sup> Dated March 30, 11 a. m., p. 280.

<sup>52</sup> Latter not printed.

unoccupied zone and the occupied zone which has been under discussion recently and of which the United States Ambassador at Vichy has been informed first by a personal communication from Mr. Achard, early in February, and then by a note written on the 15th of the same month, is due to the absolute necessity for re-establishing, despite the line of demarcation, the economic unity of France. The French Administration has, in fact, found itself obliged, because of the disparity of agricultural resources in the two zones, to seek some means for equitably distributing the provisions and foodstuffs on hand in France, with a view to assuring identical rations for each French citizen.

This obligation is the imperative result of the complementary character of the two regions. Almost all of the national production of sugar and wheat comes, in fact, from the occupied zone, whereas the essential food resources of the unoccupied zone consist of wines and fruits.

The application of this plan will facilitate on the one hand the free entry into the unoccupied zone of the products of the occupied zone, up to the amount of the shipments made in the opposite direction. On the other hand, it will permit the French Government to control strictly the shipments of products of the unoccupied zone or of North Africa to the occupied zone.

The plan tends, indeed, to establish an exact balance of trade between the two zones. Furthermore, no shipment of commodities to the population of the occupied zone can be made from the unoccupied zone unless the latter receives, in return, an equivalent amount of commodities. It applies, moreover, only to the following articles of food: butter, frozen meat, cattle, calves and pigs, fresh meat, sugar, wheat, bran and refuse of ground grain, yeast, potatoes, fish, cheese, sheep, fowl, eggs, oil, wines, semolina pastes, rice, dried aromatic herbs [*agrumes*],<sup>53</sup> salt, canned fish, fresh vegetables, fresh fruits.

This plan had originally been contemplated for the period from October 1940 to October 1941. Now, since it entered into effect only on February 15 and, consequently, applies to 7½ months only, the figures which have been published ought to be proportionately reduced. Moreover, those figures have, unfortunately, a theoretical character, for the situation of transportation in France, both railway and highway, will permit the accomplishment of only 40 to 50 per cent of the plan drawn up. In particular, the shipments of wheat from the occupied zone to the unoccupied zone up to September 1, next, will not exceed 40,000 tons per month, or a total of 200,000 tons. It was with this figure in mind that the unoccupied zone's wheat shortage

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<sup>53</sup> Brackets appear in the file translation.

has been calculated at 490,000 tons, as was indicated in this Embassy's note of February 22, last.<sup>54</sup>

The French Government will not fail to inform the Government of the United States of the changes which might be made, in the course of the execution of the plan of exchanges. The American control agents can easily have communicated to them, particularly with regard to wheat, all information on actual or possible deliveries from the occupied zone, as well as on the products shipped in return from the free zone.

WASHINGTON, March 31, 1941.

HENRY-HAYE

851.48/396

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

[WASHINGTON,] April 1, 1941.

The French Ambassador called to see me at his request. The Ambassador handed me an *aide-mémoire*<sup>55</sup> dealing with the food question and in particular with the barter arrangement providing for the interchange of products between occupied and unoccupied France. This *aide-mémoire* ends with the statement that "representatives of American control will easily be able to obtain, particularly concerning wheat, full information regarding actual or future deliveries from the occupied zone as well as with regard to compensatory products sent out of unoccupied France."

The Ambassador then went on to say that he had never been informed by his Government of the barter arrangement the nature of which had been communicated to the American Embassy in Vichy on February 14. He had known nothing of it until he saw it announced in the press. Upon requesting his Government for information he had been told to obtain a copy of the communication made to this Government from the State Department. The Ambassador said that he found himself in a very humiliating position in as much as he had been conducting with us conversations for relief in unoccupied France without having the slightest idea of the nature and extent of this barter arrangement.

I replied to the Ambassador that of course we would be glad immediately to make this information available to him, and that I suggested as a preliminary and desirable step that he send representatives of the Embassy this afternoon to confer with Mr. Atherton<sup>56</sup> and such

<sup>54</sup> See telegram No. 218, February 23, 7 p. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 114.

<sup>55</sup> *Supra.*

<sup>56</sup> Ray Atherton, Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs.

officials of the Department as he might designate in order to make every effort to clarify as rapidly as possible the whole situation, not only with regard to the barter arrangement, but also with regard to certain other facts which I desired now to bring to the Ambassador's attention.

I said that it was unnecessary for me to remind the Ambassador of our desire to show every consideration to Marshal Pétain and of our recognition of the situation in which he found himself, and of our desire to pursue our traditional policy of friendship towards the French people in their present distress. I said this was, of course, contingent—and very positively contingent—upon our taking no step which could in any way prove in reality to be detrimental to the interests of Great Britain or prejudicial to the eventual British victory which this Government was committed to further in every practical way within the limits of our present policy. I said that all of our conversations with the Ambassador, including the agreements concerning the despatch of the two gift cargo ships had been based upon these premises, as the Ambassador well recognized.

I then read to the Ambassador certain portions of Admiral Leahy's latest telegram<sup>57</sup> on the subject of the barter arrangement and I said I fully shared Admiral Leahy's expression of surprise that if in reality the French were going to obtain for unoccupied France 800,000 tons of wheat from occupied France at the same time they were so desperately anxious to procure cargoes of wheat from the United States, the explanation given to Admiral Leahy, as reported in his telegram and as reiterated in part in the *aide-mémoire* which the Ambassador had just handed me, did not to my mind answer the questions raised. I said it seemed to me that what was desired and what was really essential in the relations between the French Government and the United States at this stage was the utmost measure of frankness and the most complete clarity in all that related to assistance from the United States.

I said that we were now confronted with two specific questions in addition to the general questions I had mentioned above:

first, the definite charge that a large consignment of rubber was included in one of the four ships intercepted by the British on March 30;

second, that at the very moment when this Government, recognizing the serious situation created by the lack of petroleum in North Africa, had permitted the French steamer *Frimaire* to proceed to North Africa with a cargo of petroleum to be distributed under American supervision and control, the French Government was making arrangements to ship from Algeria 5,000 tons of gasoline to Italy and an Italian tanker had actually proceeded to Algerian ports for that purpose.

I said that I personally had the most complete faith in the honor of Marshal Pétain and in the validity of the assurances that he and

<sup>57</sup> Telegram No. 359, March 28, 7 p. m.; not printed.

General Weygand had given this Government, but that it seemed very clear from the information I had obtained that transactions of the kind I had just mentioned were being carried on without the knowledge of Marshal Pétain nor of General Weygand, and that this Government could not possibly agree to render any further assistance to France unless and until transactions of this character, destined to be of such great assistance to the Axis powers, were completely and finally stopped. I said that not only were assurances in this sense required, but also practical evidence on the part of our agents in unoccupied France and in North Africa that the assurances were carried out in practice.

The Ambassador stated that he was shocked by the news of this gasoline transaction of which he had no knowledge whatever.

The Ambassador stated that he interpreted the *aide-mémoire* on food which he had just handed me as meaning that the French Government would be willing to authorize American representatives to supervise all supplies passing between occupied and unoccupied France and he added that he had again urgently requested his Government to accede to the suggestions made to him by the President in their most recent conversation, that American officials in French North African ports be permitted to inspect the cargoes of all French ships leaving French North African ports for the ports of Metropolitan France in order to be assured that only food supplies were contained therein and that no shipments which would involve assistance to the Axis powers were involved. The Ambassador stated that the President had said to him that if this could be done, he believed that the friction between the French and the British with regard to these shipments would be avoided.

I stated that these were very interesting suggestions which the President had formulated and I would be very glad to hear the final reaction of his Government thereto.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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851.33/129† : Telegram

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

LONDON, April 2, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received April 2—4: 33 p. m.]

1282. Personal for the President from Former Naval Person.

"1. We have entirely authentic secret information that Vichy Government have received 'permission' from Armistice Commission to

transfer battleship *Dunkerque*, with escort protection of the whole *Strasbourg* group, from Oran to Toulon for 'disarmament'. Transfer will begin on 4th April.

2. It seems certain that object of transfer is to effect repairs, and we must of course assume it is being done on German orders.

3. I do not need to point out to you the grave danger to which this exposes us. The menace from German surface raiders is already great enough. The addition of such a vessel to the raiding fleet would set us a hard problem indeed. If any value were to be attached to Admiral Darlan's word, it might be hoped that he would in the last resort order out of French metropolitan ports naval units ready for sea. But if *Dunkerque* is docked and immobilized for repairs, that gives the Germans time to swoop and gain possession of her.

4. I fear this is a sinister confirmation of our worst suspicions of Darlan.

5. You have already, through your Ambassador in Vichy, indicated to the French Government that negotiations for the supply of grain to unoccupied France would be greatly facilitated if French warships in metropolitan ports were gradually transferred to North African Atlantic ports. Here we have Darlan not merely failing to comply with your wishes, but deliberately flying in the face of them.

6. I earnestly hope that you may at once indicate to Marshal Petain that, if Darlan persists in this action, he will be cutting off relief from his country and finally forfeiting American sympathy. We ourselves in this situation could, of course, lend no assistance to the revictualling of France. There may be just a chance that Marshal Petain may deter him from this action, but if not, the matter for us is so vital that we may, even in spite of all the dangerous implications, have to make an effort to intercept and sink this vessel. I should like to hear from you that you would understand the necessity for such a step.

7. It is, of course, of first importance that neither the French or their masters should guess the source of the information or be made aware that we might take the drastic action mentioned in paragraph 6."

WINANT

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851.33/129† : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, April 3, 1941—2 p. m.

290. This Government has learned from a source which it cannot question that the Vichy Government has received "permission" from the Wiesbaden Armistice Commission to transfer the battleship *Dunkerque* under escort from Oran to Toulon allegedly "for disarma-

ment". This Government is further informed that the transfer is to commence on April 4.

It is urgently important that you see Marshal Pétain personally immediately and convey to him in the name of your Government the following views:

The Government of the United States has already made it more than clear to Marshal Pétain that it desired to do what it could to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population in unoccupied France and to cooperate with the French Government in this regard, provided that arrangements could be made which would prevent such aid from being of assistance, direct or indirect, to the German or the Italian Governments. This Government during recent weeks has in many practical ways made this policy on its part evident to the French Government.

It has made clear through you to Marshal Pétain its earnest hope, in the interest of the maintenance of French sovereignty, that the French Government would undertake no action which could possibly be of assistance to Germany over and above the bare limit of the obligations assumed by France under the terms of the armistice, and in that connection, and for that reason, it has likewise expressed its hope that the French Government would gradually transfer its naval units to Atlantic ports in North Africa from the Mediterranean.

You should then report to Marshal Pétain the information received by this Government concerning the transfer to Toulon of these important units of the French fleet as above set forth. You should state that such action on the part of the French Government under whatever pretext is not only completely counter to the hopes expressed by your Government as to the policy which the French Government would pursue, but is also unquestionably destined to be of great potential advantage to Germany.

In conclusion you should say that this Government has great personal confidence in Marshal Pétain and would accept, as it has in the past, without question the personal assurances conveyed to the United States Government by him. The Government of the United States cannot believe that the action which the French Government is contemplating involving the transfer of the French battleship and other naval units to Toulon can have been sanctioned by the Marshal. We feel that the Marshal would understand how such action would inevitably alienate public opinion in the United States. However, you should add that your Government finds it necessary in all frankness to state that if such action were taken, the Government of the United States could no longer consider the continuation of the policy which it has desired to pursue of affording in every practical manner relief to French needs in unoccupied France, or the many further acts of cooperation contemplated. A continuation of such policy could only be



predicated upon clear evidence that the French Government, under the direction of Marshal Pétain, was determined to take no step which could conceivably be of assistance to Germany beyond, as stated above, the bare terms of the armistice agreement itself.

Please report immediately by telegram.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/9562a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, April 3, 1941—5 p. m.

291. This morning's cable (my 290 of April 3, 2 p. m.) has given deep cause for reflection and I wish in the first conversation you may have alone with Marshal Petain you would express to him that since early February there have been developments in French foreign policy which seem to indicate that certain elements of the Government are willing to collaborate much further with Germany than the terms of the armistice demand. While General Huntziger's activities are less obvious to the foreigner the policy of Admiral Darlan with his openly spoken anti-British bias and particularly his personal animosity against the British Navy has caused us to analyze each of his actions in the light of his association with the Maréchal. Our information indicates that the French factories both in occupied and unoccupied France are under urgent orders to produce not only for French military establishments but to a greater extent for German delivery airplanes and/or airplane parts. We understand furthermore that to facilitate this agreement, fully known to Admiral Darlan, executives of French aviation factories have been released from prison.

We understand undertakings for the delivery of French bauxite production to Germany are to be increased.

We understand by agreement of Admiral Darlan there are deliveries due to Italy of some 20,000 tons of gasoline.

The American press has carried generally Admiral Darlan's repeated declarations to convoy French shipping if necessary even should this entail resistance against the British Navy. Our information leads us to believe that the sums being expended on the French Navy far exceed those which are called for either by needs of a peaceful France or the present needs of the French Government.

While there exists every desire in this country to believe the Maréchal in his direction of the French Government has no desire to go beyond the minimum collaboration imposed by the terms of the armistice, we are inclined to doubt that he may be aware of certain acts on the part of his associates in the Government and of the adverse impression which these acts are creating in this country.

You will note that other incidents which might be cited in this connection such as German infiltration into French Morocco and other questions which have formed the subject of recent instructions to you are not touched upon here, but I must re-emphasize this Government can only serve the cause of France and the French people if the French Government keeps within the limitations and obligations of the Armistice terms.

Your telegrams seem to confirm our opinion of the Maréchal and we trust that this will make it possible for you to raise very freely in your discussions with Petain our doubts as to the real purpose of Admiral Darlan's policy and the significance of his actions.

HULL

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851.33/1297 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom  
(Winant)*<sup>59</sup>

WASHINGTON, April 5, 1941—3 p. m.

1149. Your 1282, April 2, 6 p. m. For the Former Naval Person from the President. In the temporary absence of Ambassador Leahy from Vichy our Counselor of Embassy requested an urgent appointment with Marshal Pétain on Friday. The Marshal received him about noon and when he was told that Matthews wished to discuss the *Dunkerque* Marshal Pétain sent for Admiral Darlan.

When the situation, with which the Marshal was obviously not familiar, was explained Darlan, after remarking that this information of course came from the English and complaining that they wanted theirs to be the only fleet in the Mediterranean, admitted that he was bringing the *Dunkerque* to Toulon because he could not "have it repaired at Oran." Darlan then referred to the fact that the Marshal and he had pledged their word of honor that French vessels would not fall into German hands and repeated these assurances. He was emphatic in stating that he could not leave the *Dunkerque* at Oran where it would deteriorate. Darlan denied that the *Dunkerque* was going to be moved right away. He said it would not be ready for 10 or more days. Darlan then made a series of anti-British statements.

At the conclusion of the conversation the Marshal asked Matthews to give him a memorandum of the matter in writing. He said that he would reply likewise in writing. Apparently the Marshal grasps the written word better than he trusts his memory and may, upon closer study of the matter, give the commitment asked by us. Matthews

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<sup>59</sup> This telegram summarizes contents of telegram No. 391, April 4, 2 p. m., from the Ambassador in France, not printed.

believes that in any event the *Dunkerque* will not be moved for at least 10 days.

The proposal to bring the *Dunkerque* to Toulon is not a new one and was reported in January by our Naval Attaché who says that if the ship is brought to Toulon now it could not in his judgment be put in service before the end of August. [Roosevelt.]

HULL

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851.48/400

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] April 7, 1941.

The French Ambassador called at his request and immediately took up the question of hastening the shipment of food supplies to unoccupied France, with special reference to the proposed two gift cargoes of wheat. The Ambassador seemed on the defensive all the way through. He proceeded in a rather lame manner to explain away any serious objections to the barter agreement entered into in October 1940 between Mr. Laval, representing the French Government, and the Hitler Government. The Ambassador sought to emphasize the view that no increase in food supplies to either Germany or France was contemplated by these exchanges; that the French were undertaking to give something of which they had an excess for certain necessities of which they had none; that this entire matter had lain dormant from October to February; that transportation facilities would prevent the carrying out of this exchange except to a partial extent; that this plan of exchange relates to seven and one-half months and not twelve months; that the execution of the plan depends upon available transportation facilities; that as regards wheat the unoccupied zone can only expect 40,000 tons a month from the occupied zone from April first to September first; that this tonnage will reduce to 490,000 tons the deficiency of the unoccupied zone which would otherwise have amounted to 700,000 tons; and that, therefore, it is for the purpose of reducing this deficiency that the two American cargoes are sought, otherwise there will be bread deficiency for more than two months. This was in substance the same statement that came through our own Embassy at Vichy.

I said to the Ambassador that the conduct and attitude of Darlan and his supporters during past months have created the definite understanding in other countries, including my own, that Darlan is more interested in serving Hitler than he is in feeding his own people; that this is in no way an expression of any personal views, but that I am just bringing the matter up to show that despite the most strenuous efforts of this Government from day to day since the French Government left Paris to be cooperative with the French Government and the

French people in every feasible way, it is manifest now that unless some readjustments of the attitude and utterances of the Darlan group, including the French Government, can be brought about the opportunities of my Government to aid France in a steadily expanding way and by an increased number of methods, will be practically destroyed. I stated to the Ambassador that his Government must realize that this Government is consecrating every relevant resource short of war to the success of Great Britain; that this is our one supreme objective and must continue to be so, and that, therefore, this Government itself is very much interested in and concerned with respect to the Darlan pro-Hitler attitude. I said that I am constantly pleading with the British against any act or utterance on their part that might be subject to question on the part of the French in connection with the relations between the two countries, and urging the British to pursue a course of greater moderation; that as a friendly intermediary I am making this sort of plea both to the French and the British from the standpoint of their respective acts of omission or commission that might drive the two countries further apart, to the great embarrassment of the United States. I reminded the Ambassador that just at the time when the two cargoes of foodstuffs were in the act of being agreed to by the British Darlan uttered his eulogy on Germany in connection with relief, his usual bitter denunciation of Britain and his loud threat to convoy, and I again emphasized that, of course, this Government is interested in these efforts to aid Germany when it is exerting itself greatly to aid Britain, and I must again also emphasize the view that unless there is more moderation and breadth of view on the part of the Darlan group and less open and concealed partiality towards Hitler, there will come a speedy end to all our efforts to be helpful to France. I again reminded the Ambassador that France had no right whatever to indulge in favoritism to Hitler but only to keep within the limits of the Armistice terms governing its status as a neutral or captive country, that France only had a right to use her shipping within these same terms and also within the terms of the law of blockade like other neutral countries are doing and are always expected to do; that my country as a supporter of Great Britain in all ways short of war is itself greatly interested in the pursuit of this course by France and that I desired to emphasize this position. The Ambassador had very little to say in reply to this except that the British are in the habit of seizing French ships in the guise of blockade laws and rights and then proceeding to keep them permanently. I replied that, without passing on the facts or merits of this matter or of the French excesses in violating the law of blockade by shipping many things to Germany and using their merchant ships in ways unauthorized, I strongly felt that the French and the British should find means to put an end to the present crimination and re-

crimination, including exchange of shots in connection with the operation of French merchant ships; and that this could only be done in a spirit of mutual concession.

Throughout our conversation I came back more than once to Darlan and his attitude of bitter opposition to Great Britain and his constant attempts to favor Hitler, all of which seemed almost incomprehensible to me. I also continued to emphasize the fact that this attitude injuriously affected the United States as well as Great Britain. The Ambassador made no defense really of Darlan and his conduct. I then added that Darlan must know that any attempt to purchase the favor of Hitler will not only prevent the French Government from getting back within the limits of the armistice terms and of neutrality, but Hitler will demand three prices for each concession that Darlan may ask for from time to time hereafter.

The Ambassador at one point sought to indicate that more and more of the French people were getting around to a favorable view towards Great Britain.

He left with the statement that he would send to me the next morning a memorandum setting forth the offer of the French Government to allow American consular officers to inspect French cargoes destined from French colonies to unoccupied France on the continent. I expressed interest in this phase and said that it would be given attention.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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851.33/1294 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 8, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received April 9—1:56 p. m.]

413. [From Matthews.] Embassy's telegram 396, April 5, 5 p. m.<sup>60</sup> Rochat<sup>60a</sup> asked me to call this morning and handed me the following note with reference to the transfer of the *Dunkerque*. He said that he hoped we would find the note satisfactory since it made it clear that the vessel in question would not be moved without prior agreement with us. The text of the note reads as follows:

“By a memorandum handed to Marshal Pétain on April 4th, the American Chargé d’Affaires called attention to a report according to which the French Government ‘authorized’ by the Wiesbaden Armistice Commission was preparing to transfer the *Dunkerque* from Oran to Toulon, at the very moment when the Government of the United States was expressing its interest in an opposite movement of naval

<sup>60</sup> Not printed.

<sup>60a</sup> Charles Antoine Rochat, Acting Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

forces. 'Should such a transfer take place,' adds the memorandum, 'the Government of the United States could no longer envisage the continuation of the policy which it desired to pursue for the supplying, as far as possible, of its indispensable aid to unoccupied France, to say nothing of the other acts of cooperation envisaged.'

The Marshal's Government loyally admits without any embarrassment that it had in fact intended to have the *Dunkerque* made ready for the transfer to Toulon in the near future. But this measure had been envisaged with full sovereignty, without any foreign pressure whatsoever, and solely for technical reasons.

The Government of the United States is fully aware that the *Dunkerque* was severely damaged in the month of July 1940 as the result of an odious assault in which numerous Frenchmen were killed.

The ship is today in condition to move; but its final repairs require a stay in drydock, which can only be made in Toulon, the only arsenal of either North Africa or the unoccupied zone able to accommodate it. This is the sole reason why the transfer of the *Dunkerque* was envisaged and remains necessary.

Nevertheless, in view of the political significance which the Government of the United States seems disposed to attach to this transfer, the French Government agrees to delay the preparation of the ship until the conclusion of an agreement on this subject. It desires thus to show the Federal Government its will to pursue loyally, for its part, as far as its means will permit, the policy undertaken with a view to assuring the supplying of French Africa and the unoccupied zone.

But by postponing putting into final shape one of its most precious war vessels the French Government is making heavy sacrifice of self-respect and interest which affect its possibilities of defending its empire as well as its means of protecting French maritime traffic.

The French Government thus expects the American Government to use its good offices in London in order to obtain from the British Government the guarantee that as long as the *Dunkerque* will remain in North Africa no further capture will be exercised against our legitimate commercial traffic between the French colonies, French Africa and the unoccupied zone. It is evidence in fact that a country as threatened with famine as France is cannot be asked to renounce the utilization of all its means of defense if the commercial maritime traffic for the protection of which guarantees have been offered continues to be pursued and attacked."

Matthews

LEAHY

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851.48/317a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Morris)* <sup>61</sup>

WASHINGTON, April 12, 1941.

1062. The American Red Cross has chartered from the French Line the S. S. *Ile de Ré* and the M. S. *Leopold L. D.*, under French

<sup>61</sup> The same telegram was sent on the same date to the American Missions in Italy (No. 265), France (No. 314), Greece (No. 143), Yugoslavia (No. 89), and the United Kingdom (No. 1236), with the addition of the following paragraph to United Kingdom message only:

"Likewise inform Netherlands, Belgian, Norwegian, and Polish Governments."

flag and registry, to transport flour and milk concentrates from New York to Marseille for distribution in unoccupied France by the American Red Cross as a gift from the American people. Both vessels are expected to sail from New York about April 16 and the French Ambassador has assured the Red Cross that they will proceed unarmed and without convoy and that the French Government is undertaking to notify the belligerent governments regarding the details of their outward and return voyages.

You will please bring this matter to the attention of the Government to which you are accredited, pointing out this Government's interest in the voyages of these two vessels which are proceeding to France on a humanitarian mission.

Inform the Department by telegraph when notification has been delivered. State cost reply.

HULL

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851.48/410

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

[WASHINGTON,] April 17, 1941.

The French Ambassador called to see me this afternoon at his request. The Ambassador commenced the conversation by bringing up again the question of the urgent need of the French people in unoccupied France for food, saying that the situation was becoming disastrous, supplies had reached a low ebb, and actual starvation would soon exist in unoccupied France. The Ambassador expressed the greatest appreciation for the sending today of two Red Cross ships with flour on board, but stated that these supplies would last only about ten days, and that unless the French Government were able to purchase with its own money food for the relief of distress in France, a tragedy would take place the consequences of which no one could foretell.

I said to the Ambassador that it seemed to me that the time had now come for a completely frank statement on my part to the Ambassador. I said that the Ambassador knew very well that this Government, by direction of the President, had undertaken in the most sympathetic spirit to explore the possibilities of assisting Marshal Pétain in relieving distress in unoccupied France by making it possible for children particularly to have sufficient food to keep them in a reasonable state of health. I said that he and I had discussed on various occasions the ways in which this could be carried out with such assurances given to the United States Government as to place this Government in a position where it could feel satisfied that food

so supplied to the French civilian population would not be utilized directly or indirectly for the benefit of Germany. I said that these explorations and interchanges of views with the French Government had taken place in the same way and in the same spirit as the discussions relating to North Africa had taken place, and that in the latter regard I was glad to believe that arrangements were now reaching a satisfactory conclusion.

I said, however, that at the very time that this Government was making a sincere and earnest effort to find a satisfactory way towards the alleviation of distress on the part of the civilian population in unoccupied France, and at the very time when Marshal Pétain, in whose honor and patriotism and good faith this Government had complete confidence, was assuring us that his Government would under no conditions do anything which could be of assistance to Germany above and beyond what was called for by a strict interpretation of the clauses of the Armistice Agreement, Admiral Darlan had not only made public declarations of hostility towards Great Britain, but had permitted, or directed, certain measures to be taken by the French authorities which were completely counter to the letter and spirit of the assurances given us by Marshal Pétain. I referred specifically to the shipment of rubber which was unquestionably destined for Germany; to the attempted shipment of 5,000 tons of gasoline from Algiers to Tunisia; and the orders given for the *Dunkerque* to return to Toulon from North Africa. I said the Ambassador must realize, and realize very clearly, that this Government could not find it possible to continue the discussions which had been commenced for the purpose of supplying food for the civilian population in unoccupied France at a time when the policy of Admiral Darlan could be interpreted only as a policy of intimate cooperation with Germany, and a policy of assistance to Germany which went far beyond anything called for by the terms of the Armistice Agreement.

I stated that if the French Government by act as well as by word carried out the assurances given this Government by Marshal Pétain, I had every reason to believe that a satisfactory solution could be found.

The Ambassador admitted quite frankly that many acts which he termed "incomprehensible" had taken place. He said, however, that the policy of the French Government could only be that laid down by Marshal Pétain as communicated to us. He said that until Marshal Pétain's government proved that it had departed from this line of conduct, it was not fair for this Government to assume that the "flirtation" between Admiral Darlan and the German authorities indicated that the policy of the French Government was any other than that communicated to us by Marshal Pétain.



I replied that it seemed to me the word "flirtation" was hardly apt. I said that if the Ambassador desired to employ amorous similes it seemed to me that the term "liaison" was far more accurate. I said, furthermore, that the hostility of Admiral Darlan to the British Government and to the British nation was now so open and apparently so violent as to make it impossible for this Government to understand how a man who was animated as Admiral Darlan was, and who had in practice carried out his individual prejudices so frequently, could possibly be regarded as capable of carrying on the policy laid down by Marshal Pétain. I said I was sure that the Ambassador realized from the American press and from prominent Americans with whom he spoke, how very strongly public opinion in this country shared the opinion I myself had expressed to him.

The Ambassador said that this was unquestionably the fact. He asked me what I thought he had better do.

To this I replied that, as the Ambassador knew, I had some time ago suggested to Lord Halifax that a personal and confidential meeting between the two Ambassadors would be helpful from every stand point. I said that I would again speak to Lord Halifax about this possibility and should such a conference be possible of arrangement, I thought that might be the first practical step which might be taken. I said that if as a result of such a conference the British Government felt it could, without prejudicing its own interests, favor continued negotiations between France and the United States for the purpose of supplying food to the civilian population in unoccupied France, this Government of course would be happy to proceed at once in that direction.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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851.48/340a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 17, 1941—11 p. m.

1294. The two French vessels *Ile de Ré* and *Leopold L D* with flour shipments for unoccupied France are scheduled to leave New York today.

As you will recall, during the period of tense relationship between the London and Vichy Governments because of Darlan's position which was, of course, taken largely for political reasons under German pressure, the President as a result of a direct appeal from Churchill which was reconfirmed on March 29 to take some action to alleviate the situation, suggested two shipments of breadstuffs to be

distributed in unoccupied France by the American Red Cross. On March 20 the British Ambassador informed the Acting Secretary of State<sup>62</sup> that his Government fully agreed to the shipment of the two gift cargoes under conditions which had been previously agreed regarding distribution and guarantees that no similar foodstuffs would be permitted to pass to occupied France. When the French Government's assent to the same conditions was given, the Red Cross proceeded to conclude the necessary arrangements for the early despatch of these vessels.

Subsequent to the conclusion of this arrangement a press campaign both in the United States and in England, obviously inspired by British official sources, has been encountered in which the United States is pictured as pressing the British Government contrary to its wishes and better judgment into a relaxation of the blockade policy in favor of France. That campaign describes the American interest as sentimentally humanitarian. As a matter of fact sentimentalism plays but a little part. We believe we see an opportunity to benefit both the British cause and our own in a most practical way. Our experience with the shipments of Red Cross supplies thus far delivered in unoccupied France is eminently satisfactory and we know that the effect of the shipments on French public opinion—still a factor not to be ignored—is good from our point of view and that of the British. We have at all times emphasized to the French that American and British policy fully harmonize and we have sought to give the British every credit for any concessions they have made. We have no intention of going further without full and complete agreement with the British Government.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/100894 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 18, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received April 19—4 p. m.]

461. Department's telegram 291, April 3, 5 p. m. I saw Marshal Pétain alone this afternoon. (He told me with a chuckle that he arranged the hour to coincide with a Cabinet meeting over which Admiral Darlan was presiding so we should be uninterrupted.) I first told him of my recent trip to the south of France and of my conviction of its utility as it enabled me to inform my Government of the actual distribution of the milk, et cetera, to French children without any leakage and to recommend continuance of the sending of such supplies. I likewise said to him that my trip had enabled

<sup>62</sup> Memorandum of conversation not printed.

me to perceive in my talks with many people everywhere the great esteem and affection with which he is regarded throughout that section of France. I then talked frankly to him along the lines suggested by the Department.

As to operation of French factories in the occupied zone, he said the Germans are complete masters and do as they please; as to the unoccupied zone, the Marshal said that if the factories didn't work to some extent for German account, the Germans, as they had threatened, would and could take all the machinery. Furthermore, they would furnish none of the raw materials with which France could help to build up her own forces. He said that he believed factories in this zone are making detached parts but he does not believe any complete airplanes are being manufactured here. He asked for a written memorandum as to just what points we wished to set forth. (As the Department will recall he does not always trust his memory and likes to have something in writing.) He went on to say that he is unfortunately not a free agent in the real sense of the word; that the Germans do not in any sense limit their demands to the terms of the armistice and that when their demands exceed those terms he can only say:

"This is a demand you are imposing because you are the stronger." He then said: "When I oppose them, they threaten reprisals; they say they will block the line of demarcation completely. Then my Ministers could find out what is happening in the occupied zone and all economic life between the two zones would be cut off. I cannot refuse them directly; I have to try to accomplish something by diplomacy."

"You noticed my radio address which he [I?] thought was very moderate?" he went on. I replied that it had made an excellent impression in the United States. "Well", he continued, "it made the Germans furious and brought threat of serious reprisals if I ever again said publicly that we could not attack our former ally".

As to Admiral Darlan, he said that he thinks the Admiralty loyal to him; that the Admiral keeps him informed and consults him on important questions in Vichy. Of his trips to Paris he was not so sure but he did not believe that the Admiral was doing things behind his back; he certainly hoped not. He admitted the Admiral's anti-British feeling but said that [at] least they were less violent than those of Laval, who had kept him in a constant state of anxiety on this score. True, Darlan had made some very foolish statements at the beginning but he is now much more restrained and the Marshal has made it clear to him that he must make no more such indiscreet declarations.

[The remainder of this telegram is printed on page 294.]

740.0011 European War 1939/10162

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] April 18, 1941.

The British Ambassador called at his request. I discussed with him the French situation and again made clear to him that this Government has been exerting itself to the utmost since the French Government left Paris to prevent the French from giving naval and other aid outright to Hitler through the Laval and Darlan influences in the French Government. The Ambassador spoke of the increasing pressure the British are bringing to bear on the French Government on account of increasing instances of abuses of their neutrality by the Darlan group by aiding Germany in one way or another. I replied that I could fully understand and appreciate this viewpoint. I said that there is only one thing worse than the abuses that are being carried on by the Darlan group and that would be a complete dissolution of relations with France by Great Britain and the United States with the result that the French Navy, French bases, and all-out aid would be turned over to Hitler without delay, because the Petain branch of the French Government would then promptly be overridden and submerged by the Darlan forces. I said that the policy of my Government, of course, has been and is that the easier course is to use every possible pressure on the Petain Government to stand firm, to uphold its hands in every practical manner, and thus to minimize at least to the fullest possible extent the abuses to neutrality and to the terms of the armistice that the Darlan group is engaging in as partisans of Hitler. I added that this from our viewpoint is a much more effective and helpful policy than to abandon the Petain Government entirely with the result I have already described. The Ambassador said that he felt disposed favorably towards this position and hoped that this Government would not abandon this policy, at least until he could hear further from his Government.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

851.00/2288

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

[WASHINGTON,] April 25, 1941.

The French Ambassador called to see me this morning at his request. The Ambassador read to me a telegram he had received from his Foreign Minister, Admiral Darlan, commenting upon the Ambassador's report of his last conversation with me. Admiral Darlan instructed the Ambassador to state that he was deeply hurt by the refer-

ences to him and to his policies which I had made to the Ambassador, and desired the Ambassador to reiterate officially to me the assurances previously given, namely, that the French Government, so long as Admiral Darlan remained Foreign Minister, would not agree under any circumstances to undertake any actions in the interest or benefit of Germany other than those which were specifically called for by the terms of the Armistice and that nothing beyond this would be agreed to. Admiral Darlan further referred to the possibility of the transfer of the *Dunkerque* from Oran to Toulon and said that as I had already been informed, that transfer would not be made. Admiral Darlan further specifically denied that any supplies of rubber, bauxite, aluminum, et cetera, coming from abroad were being permitted by the French Government at Vichy to pass through unoccupied France to occupied France for the benefit of the Germans.

I stated to the Ambassador that I was, of course, glad to receive these assurances, but that I could only state, and state very emphatically, that the information which this Government had relative to the last point mentioned by Admiral Darlan was completely counter to the statements made by Admiral Darlan.

The Ambassador did not press the point.

At this stage he complained again of the fact that his Government was not keeping him informed of developments and expressed the greatest disquiet and agitation, which I thought seemed completely sincere on his part, at the continued infiltration of German officers into North Africa. The Ambassador said that when he had been in the army, he had been in Morocco and for that reason he realized better than many others how dangerous this was.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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851.48/413

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

[WASHINGTON,] April 25, 1941.

The French Ambassador called to see me this morning at his request.

The Ambassador by instruction of his Government made the following request: that until such time as a satisfactory agreement could be reached between the French and the American Governments, with the acquiescence of the British Government, for the purchase by the Vichy Government of food supplies in the United States for the civilian population in unoccupied France, the American Government agree to permit two ships—not more than this number at any given time—to ply between unoccupied French ports and the United States for the purpose of taking food from the United States to unoccupied France,

the control of the distribution of the cargoes of such ships to be undertaken by the Red Cross with as many observers and agents for that purpose as the Red Cross and the American Government might consider necessary. The Ambassador further said that French ships not now being utilized could be brought from Martinique to the United States for that purpose with the understanding that if the request were agreed to by this Government, these ships would not depart from American ports until the two Red Cross ships now taking wheat to France were on their return journey. In this manner, he said, the United States could have full assurance that the French ships permitted to leave United States ports for the purpose of taking food to France would be sent back to American ports.

I told the Ambassador that the proposal would be taken under consideration and I would endeavor to give him a reply early next week. I said that of course, as the Ambassador realized, the policy of the French Government was a determining factor with regard to the attitude which this Government would assume towards this proposal and I asked him in that connection whether he had any information as to the nature of the negotiations which Admiral Darlan was undertaking in Paris with the German authorities.

The Ambassador said that he did not. He took occasion to speak with great contempt of M. de Brinon and the policies which he was pursuing in Paris and spoke once more with a great deal of hostility regarding Admiral Darlan and the role which he was playing.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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851.48/371: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 25, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received April 26—11:55 p. m.]

488. The Embassy has received the following note with an urgent request that the sense thereof be cabled to Washington:

"On April 17 the French Ambassador at Washington informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that during an interview which he had on that day with Mr. Sumner Welles the latter stated that he had been unable, in spite of the guarantees of control offered by France for the distribution in the free zone of American wheat imported into that zone, to obtain from the British Government the authorization which he had hoped for.

Mr. Henry-Haye having asked Mr. Sumner Welles to give the reasons for this attitude by pointing out that the critical period of the French supply in wheat was drawing rapidly near, the Under Secretary of State stated that the British Government had succeeded to a certain extent in making the State Department share the anxiety

which it feels with regard to the policy of Franco-German collaboration.

Mr. Haye then recalled Marshal Petain's latest declarations renewing the assurances that the French Government intended to restrict itself to the terms of the armistice. Furthermore and in spite of the satisfaction given on the French side the matter of the transfer of the warship *Dunkerque* was not mentioned.

Mr. Sumner Welles then mentioned to the French Ambassador the transfer of goods (bauxite, rubber, gasoline) considered as a direct help to England's enemies.

On Mr. Henry-Haye's insistence Mr. Sumner Welles was good enough to agree to examine again with Lord Halifax the question of supplying the free zone of France American wheat with the sincere desire to persuade the Ambassador of the British Government to accept a regular plan of supply.

The French Government has informed the French Ambassador at Washington that it has taken note with painful surprise of the foregoing information.

It was pointed out to Mr. Henry-Haye that the latest advices received from his Embassy stated that the American Administration 'intended to win acceptance for the principle of the controlled supplying of the unoccupied zone and that in consequence it would take the necessary action with the British Government'. It was pointed out to Mr. Henry-Haye that on April 10 Mr. Sumner Welles had informed him that the State Department hoped to communicate to him within a few days the lines on which an agreement could be reached for the supplying of the unoccupied zone.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs pointed out to Mr. Henry-Haye that the attitude of the State Department is all the more surprising in as much as in his last speech [to?] the House of Commons Mr. Churchill himself stated that although the British Government was unwilling to allow the shipment to unoccupied French territory of goods which might be utilized by the army of the enemy he would not be opposed to sending foodstuffs to the free zone.

Mr. Henry-Haye was invited to take the first favorable occasion to remind Mr. Sumner Welles of this fact and also to call the Under Secretary's attention to the following arguments:

1. The critical period for the supplying of the free zone with wheat is not only very close but it is possible right now to say that it has begun. As a matter of fact until the present time the supplying of the seven departments of the south which do not produce wheat and where the shortage is greatest (Bouches-du-Rhone, Var, Alpes Maritimes, Gard, Herault, Pyrenees Orientales, Aude) has been assured:

(a) By requisitions made in departments of the unoccupied zone producing wheat and better provided.

(b) By imports from North Africa.

Imports from North Africa can no longer be counted upon and on the other hand the available supplies of the wheat producing departments of the unoccupied zone are no longer sufficient to allow them to continue to supply as they have done up to the present the departments which have shortages.

Consequently the supplying of the free zone with wheat can no longer be assured after May 1st except by contributions from the free zone. Now these which amount to 40,000 tons per month are quite insufficient to satisfy even a small portion of the needs of the departments which have the greatest shortage. Consequently and in order not to create too great a disparity between the food rations of the departments in the free zone which have the greatest shortage and those of the departments which are better off the Secretary of State for Supplies will find himself obliged, if no fresh shipment is sent from America, to reduce the individual bread ration already very insufficient by at least 50 percent.

In view of this very critical situation and while awaiting the adoption of the regular plan of food supply promised by the State Department, the French Ambassador at Washington was instructed to submit the following proposals: The French Government asks that the American Government agree to send, at the beginning of July at the latest, the two ships loaded with wheat for the free zone.

This wheat will be bought by the French Government and will be sold in accordance under the usual commercial conditions. The two ships will bring to the unoccupied zone the control personnel judged necessary who will be assigned to the American Consulates. It will only be after the favorable report which will be made by the controllers concerning the distribution of this wheat in the unoccupied zone, that two other ships will be sent and so on as long as a decision has not been taken at Washington with regard to the regular supplying.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not doubt but that this request, being thus limited, will be accepted. The Ministry will be most appreciative if the Embassy will recommend it to the State Department.

2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the French Ambassador at Washington moreover that nothing justified the apprehensions shown on the American side concerning the conditions under which the French Government intended to apply the provisions of the armistice conventions.

In this respect the assurances which Mr. Henry-Haye was instructed to give to the State Department retain all their value. These assurances are the following:

(a) The French Government will not accept any aggravation of the conditions imposed by the armistice in favor of the occupying power;

(b) It goes without saying that there can be no question of asking the French Government to evade the execution of obligations undertaken by it in the armistice conventions;

(c) The French Government will endeavor to limit as strictly as possible the numbers of the control commissions, and will take care to limit their duties and activities to the framework set forth in the armistice conventions in order in particular not to compromise the normal control of the French authorities over ports, airdromes and means of communication of French Africa.

3. The decision taken by the French Government concerning the transfer of the *Dunkerque* gave the necessary assurances to the Government of the United States. Mr. Sumner Welles personally showed



himself particularly satisfied. Inasmuch as no new occurrence has taken place since then with regard to this warship which would be of a nature to cause anxiety to the American Government Mr. Henry-Haye was invited to renew to the Under Secretary of State the assurances already given on this matter to His Excellency the American Ambassador at Vichy. Mr. Henry-Haye was asked to deny formally the allegations of a certain propaganda tending to present as 'alarming' the measures which at one time were envisaged with regard to the transfer of this warship.

4. By a note transmitted on April 11 to the Embassy of the United States the Ministry of Foreign Affairs answered point by point the allegations published by the *New York Times* which emanated from the British Ministry for Economic Warfare.

These allegations related to the importations into the free zone of bauxite, aluminum and rubber sent from overseas.

The French Ambassador was invited to ask Mr. Sumner Welles to be good enough to communicate the foregoing arguments to Lord Halifax at the next meeting which the Under Secretary of State for the United States will have with the British Ambassador concerning the supplying of the free zone with wheat.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be particularly grateful if the Embassy of the United States would not [*now?*] recommend favorably to the Federal Government the *démarche* which the French Ambassador in the United States has been instructed to make in pursuance with the foregoing indications."

As the Embassy has so often indicated in the past, it is strongly of the opinion that the sending of limited quantities of wheat for the unoccupied zone, in view of the means of control and the unlikelihood that equivalent amounts of wheat or similar products would reach either Germany or the relatively well supplied occupied zone area, is thoroughly sound policy. We feel that the political advantages of such a gesture hold equally true regardless of the quantities of raw materials or manufactured products which the occupied zone and/or the Germans may be acquiring from this area. It is the only insurance against the effectiveness of the anti-blockade propaganda which will surely be launched if this limited amount of aid is not forthcoming.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/10536a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, April 30, 1941—1 p. m.

375. This Government is increasingly concerned as the result of accumulative evidence that Germany is now bringing every kind of pressure to bear upon the Vichy Government to agree to large scale and ever-increasing infiltration of Germans into North Africa and Morocco; for free passage of German forces across unoccupied France

to the Spanish frontier; and for a rapid change from France's present position of capitulation to one of collaboration and even potential participation in the existing war on the side of Germany.

The Department feels that it is of the utmost importance that you see Marshal Pétain again immediately, and by all means alone. You should impress upon him the consistent and continuing desire of the United States to do what it can to give practical assistance to him and to the people of unoccupied France in relieving existing distress and in that connection you may state that your Government has today informed the French Ambassador in Washington that the United States agrees in principle to the last proposal made by the French Government as reported in your telegram 488, April 25, 6 p. m., and will undertake to negotiate immediately with the cooperation of the British Government an arrangement whereby two food ships can be made continuously available under such supervision and control by American representatives as has been agreed upon in the case of the two gift ships now on their way to France.

You should state that if the French Government acquiesces in the demands now being made upon it by Germany and agrees to conditions not provided in the Armistice or to any form of active collaboration with Germany, the practical assistance and the moral support which the United States ardently desires to make available to Marshal Pétain and to the French people both in unoccupied France and in North Africa could, of course, not be continued. In the considered opinion of the United States, the future liberty, independence, and greatness of France depends upon continued resistance by Marshal Pétain to these German encroachments.

You may further state to Marshal Pétain that this Government has been informed by the British Government that if the French Government will effectively resist these encroachments, it will give them the utmost assistance in its power. The British Government believes that it should be possible to hold Syria against any forces which the Axis could bring against it in the near future, and that in the event that the French Government resists, the French and British fleets acting together in the eastern Mediterranean could cut the Axis communications with Africa and make any descent by the Axis powers upon Syria a matter of grave hazard to Germany and Italy. The British Government has confidently asserted to the United States Government that French resistance and renewed Franco-British collaboration would go far to prevent the dangers which the French Government at the present fears.

In conclusion you should say that the United States Government understands the position of Marshal Pétain to be, as he has asserted to you, that he would agree to no encroachments by Germany over

and above the conditions laid down in the Armistice. In full appreciation of the friendship between the French and the American peoples which has existed throughout the course of the independent life of the American nation, and with the most earnest hope on the part of this Government that France may again be restored to the full measure of her proud position in the family of nations, the Government of the United States trusts that the French Government will resist any illegal and illegitimate demands made upon her by Germany, and make such resistance felt in every practical way which may be available.

The Department feels it would be preferable that this message be delivered orally and that no written text be made available to the Marshal.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/10537½ : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 4, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received May 5—8:30 a. m.]

508. Yesterday at 5 p. m. I obtained an interview with Marshal Pétain, no other person being present than Mr. Everett<sup>63</sup> to act as interpreter, and I informed him orally of the contents of Department's cable despatch 375, April 30, 1 p. m.

The Marshal expressed pleasure and high appreciation of the effort being made by America to keep two ships continuously available to import wheat to unoccupied France. He said it will ease an immediately serious situation "if it can be accomplished". Quotations are the Marshal's words.

He stated that there has as yet been no pressure from Germany to permit more Germans to enter North Africa, to permit the passage of German troops through unoccupied France to the Spanish frontier, or to obtain assistance from France in the war against England.

He said that Admiral Darlan is today in Paris in compliance with a request to consult, presumably with representatives of the German Government, that he has no information whatever as to what is the purpose or what may be the result of this conference, but that he expects some demands for increased "collaboration".

He promised to inform me in regard to the result of Admiral Darlan's conference and to inform me definitely in regard to any decisions that he may make in connection therewith, stating that he has always been frank in his relations with me as I have been with him and that

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<sup>63</sup> Curtis T. Everett, First Secretary of Embassy in France.

he will not permit of any deception or evasion in our exchanges of information. This I believe to be an accurate statement of the Marshal's personal attitude but I am not sure that facts are not sometimes concealed by subordinates in his entourage without his knowledge. He stated that he does not intend to agree to any collaboration by France that is beyond the requirements of the Armistice Agreement, that he has publicly stated that he will not consent to any offensive action against his former ally, that Germany has no need of a passage for its troops through unoccupied France to the Spanish frontier, and that he is endeavoring to limit the number of Germans in the African colonies. It is accepted here as a fact that a refusal by the Marshal to agree to German demands would have no deterrent effect on German [apparent omission].

He is thoroughly aware of the danger to our plans to provide food involved in making concessions to Germany, and if his Government is forced to collaborate to such an extent as to stop our importation of food, he will understand the impossibility of our continuing the supply and will appreciate what we will have already done and [our?] intentions.

The Marshal, who 3 days ago conferred with Pietri, the Ambassador to Spain, thinks it possible that Germany will in the near future march through Spain either against Gibraltar or to some other place on the Mediterranean coast from which the Strait can be controlled. He has recently inspected and is familiar with the defense equipment of Gibraltar. Germany has heavy artillery installed on all sides of Gibraltar, and as a soldier he will be interested to learn about the effect of heavy artillery fire on the solid rock.

He does not believe that it is necessary for Germany to occupy Gibraltar as the Straits can be covered by gunfire from the Spanish Coast and the Coast of Spanish Morocco. He is aware of the danger to French North Africa involved in the arrival of German troops in Spanish Morocco but does not seem to feel that France can do anything to prevent it. In reply to my statement that the British Government will give all the assistance in its power if German demands beyond the letter of the Armistice Agreement are effectively resisted, he said: "I am unable to make any comment on that."

In regard to the possibility of using the French Fleet to assist in the control of communications with North Africa and Syria he said that under terms of the armistice he is not permitted to use the French Navy against the Axis Powers and that he is doing his best to adhere to the Armistice Agreement. While I take advantage of every opportunity to assure the Marshal and members of his Government that the Axis Powers will certainly be defeated, I am convinced that there is no prospect whatever of getting any assistance for the British

cause from the French military or naval forces at the present time or until a tangible British victory somewhere gives promise of the probable eventual defeat of Germany.

Germany's rapid success in Greece and in North Africa has had a serious effect on British prestige here and on the attitude of those officials of the French Government who have heretofore been pro-British if inarticulate.

The Marshal told me that he has informed the Germans that he cannot govern without the approval of the French people who are his sole interest and that he will refuse to accept any demands that do not meet with the approval of his people. He has the full confidence and the openly expressed affection of practically the entire population of France. His Ministers, particularly Darlan, definitely have not that confidence. They are believed to be pro-Axis and most of the people are either openly or secretly pro-British.

The Marshal, just returned from a journey in celebration of Labor Day which he said was a difficult physical effort, appeared fatigued and worried.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/10743a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, May 8, 1941—9 p. m.

395. Please seize the first available opportunity of presenting to the Marshal orally the following message from the President:

"I have been greatly gratified to receive from Ambassador Leahy your renewed assurances that your Government does not intend to agree to any collaboration with Germany which goes beyond the bare requirements of the armistice agreement and that you are also endeavoring to the utmost of your ability to limit the infiltration of Germans into French African colonies. I have also noted with much appreciation your public statement that you will not consent to any offensive action against France's former ally.

With full realization of the serious difficulties in which the French Government finds itself, I feel sure you will permit me to suggest that a very desirable and happy effect would be created upon public opinion in the United States and, I am sure, as well upon public opinion in all of those other free countries who ardently hope for the complete restoration of the independence and territorial integrity of France, were you to issue orders to the French authorities in the French colonies that the French Empire must be preserved intact against any or all outside aggression, and that any attempt whatsoever to violate French territory or to use French territory as a base for military operations must be resisted by those authorities and by all loyal French citizens within those territories. Your Government has already ordered these authorities to resist any attempted British

occupation or attack. I feel that surely, in the interest of France herself, such orders should include the possibility of attack by the Axis powers. As I read them, there is nothing within the terms of the armistice which would prevent such action on your part.

This clear indication that the French Government intends to comply honorably with the terms of the armistice but will not permit any encroachment upon French liberties over and above the terms of the armistice will be greatly welcomed here and would, of course, as you will understand, do much to rally popular enthusiasm in the United States for the measures of assistance which we intend to continue giving to the civilian population of unoccupied France and in the French colonies where such assistance is required.

This Government is willing to proceed immediately with the conclusion of the negotiations which will make it possible, under the measures of control agreed upon, to make two ships continuously available to import wheat into unoccupied France. I earnestly hope that as time passes, conditions will make it possible for us to expand still further the measures of our intended assistance in line with the need which exists."

Please telegraph any reply that may be made to you by the Marshal.

HULL

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851.48/422

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

[WASHINGTON,] May 9, 1941.

The French Ambassador called to see me this morning. I told the Ambassador of the contents of the last instruction sent by the Department to Admiral Leahy<sup>64</sup> stating the willingness of this Government to consider the proposal made by the French Government for the sending of two food ships each month, the expenses to be paid from French funds in the United States. I told the Ambassador that Ambassador Leahy had conveyed this message to Marshal Pétain and I said that the Department was consequently now prepared to discuss with the French Ambassador the details and terms of such agreement as might be required to cover the arrangement proposed.

I made it very clear to the Ambassador that any consummation of this negotiation, insofar as we were concerned, was contingent upon a continuation of the policy announced to us by Marshal Pétain, namely, the observance by the French Government of the strict terms of the armistice with Germany and no cooperation or collaboration between France and Germany above and beyond the bare limits of the armistice agreement. I said that, of course, the other conditions would cover complete control by American observers over the distribution of such

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<sup>64</sup> Presumably telegram No. 375, April 30, 1 p. m., p. 158.

food supplies as might be sent from the United States in this manner and the observance as well by the French Government of the other terms which had been laid down by the United States when the first Red Cross shipments had been agreed upon.

I suggested to the Ambassador that the appropriate representatives of the French Embassy consult with Mr. Atherton<sup>64a</sup> in order that discussions might be commenced. I further said that the Ambassador would, of course, understand that our willingness to discuss an agreement of this kind was merely an indication of our willingness to consider the conclusion of an arrangement in principle and that I feared from newspaper accounts published today that the concessions which it was alleged the German Government had made to the French Government implied considerable concessions made by the French Government in turn therefor. I said that I earnestly hoped this was not the case since, if it were the case, it might make the discussions, which I expressed our willingness to undertake, fruitless.

The Ambassador said that he fully understood the basis upon which the discussions were to be commenced and that he had as yet no indication whatever from his Government of the nature of the agreement which might be used between the German emissaries in Paris and Admiral Darlan. The Ambassador said he believed the only concession which Germany could make which would create any important effect upon public opinion in unoccupied France was the release by Germany of a considerable number of French prisoners of war. He said it was natural at a time like this that many families whose breadwinners were in prison camps under German control would be so anxious to get their husbands or relatives back as to make this objective seem all-important and to make further concessions to Germany seem of relative unimportance. He said, however, that in his considered opinion practically the total French population in unoccupied France was strongly anti-German and unwilling to approve any further concessions to Germany. He further stated that he did not believe that the German Government would release any considerable number of French prisoners of war since all of these Frenchmen would undoubtedly be strongly anti-German and their return to liberty in unoccupied France at the very moment when Germany was apparently preparing to invade England seemed to be illogical from the German standpoint at this particular moment.

The Ambassador said that he assumed that one of the concessions the Germans would demand in return for any alleviation in the control of the boundary between unoccupied and occupied France would be

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<sup>64a</sup> Ray Atherton, Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs.

the return to occupied France of French securities of all kinds which had been evacuated from Paris prior to the armistice. He said it seemed to him very likely that the Germans would insist upon such return in order that they might thus acquire with paper money the purchase of these securities and would get thereby a dominating control of French industries in France.

The Ambassador stated that he would advise me as soon as he had any precise information of the terms of any agreement which might be entered into.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.0011 European War 1939/10849 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 12, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received May 13—6:10 a. m.]

540. The Embassy received a visit this afternoon from an official of the Foreign Office whose sympathies with the cause of the democracies are exceedingly strong. He said with some agitation that he considered the coming hours extremely critical for the future policy of France. The Marshal, he said, had just lunched with a friend of his and was in a state of great depression, frankly stating that in the next 2 or 3 days he would have decisions of the greatest importance to make. The propaganda, our informant said, of Darlan and his associates that the United States is not serious in its desire to help the British and that when the British are defeated as they will be in the next few weeks or months we will promptly make our peace with the Nazis, has had a telling effect.

We saw Rochat later and told him of our anxiety with respect to the gravity of impending decisions and asked, knowing his sympathies, if he had any suggestion to make off the record. He said that frankly he had not the slightest knowledge of what the German demands might be, although he agreed that they might be far reaching, nor does he even know where Darlan is or his plans.

The Marshal was unable to see me today but has promised an appointment for tomorrow. I will then deliver orally the President's message (Department's telegram 395, May 8, 9 p. m.) and I propose to tell him that any serious concessions to Germany beyond the Armistice Agreement will permanently alienate the friendship and cooperation of the people of the United States.

LEAHY



711.51/165a

*The Secretary of State to President Roosevelt*

WASHINGTON, May 13, 1941.

With regard to the attached letter of April 21st<sup>65</sup> from Admiral Leahy which you sent to me for comment, the Admiral's impressions of the way things are going in Vichy are not very encouraging, but of course that is the situation with which we have become familiar through his telegraphic reports at the time of and since his writing this letter. As you and I have agreed in discussions of our handling of the Vichy Government, our only way of keeping our relations with the Marshal stabilized as much as possible is to continue to keep in touch with him and to support him insofar as we can without interfering with the British war measures.

Our present discussions with Vichy on the subject of the two vessels for the continuous shipment of wheat to Unoccupied France are going forward and our arrangements for permitting provisioning of North Africa are also progressing. I see no better course to pursue than to go on with these matters, subject, of course, to termination or reversal immediately upon Vichy taking any action detrimental to the British cause.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

740.0011 European War 1939/10882 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 13, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 10:35 p. m.]

544. At 4 p. m. I had an interview with Marshal Pétain and delivered to him orally the President's message (Department's telegram 395, May 8, 9 p. m.).

The Marshal asked to have General Huntziger<sup>65a</sup> present.

Before I delivered the President's message, the Marshal said that he is unable to give us any useful information, or make any reply until after Admiral Darlan returns to Vichy, probably this evening, and that he does not know what demand Admiral Darlan may bring.

I also brought up the matter of German airplanes landing in Syria<sup>66</sup> and the shipment of guns and ammunition from Syria to Irak.

The Marshal replied that the German planes landed in Syria without his permission under the pretext of Armistice Commission Control.

<sup>65</sup> Not attached to file copy.

<sup>65a</sup> Gen. Charles Léon Huntziger, French Secretary of State for War.

<sup>66</sup> See vol. III, pp. 686 ff.

General Huntziger said that the guns being delivered are French guns that were turned over to Italy at the time of the Armistice and that are not now in the possession of the French Army.

I asked the Marshal if I may inform my Government that he does not intend to give any military assistance to Germany.

He replied that I may be sure that he will not "give any voluntary active military aid to Germany". He stressed the qualification "voluntary active military aid".

In replying to my expressed certainty that America will accomplish the defeat of Germany, both the Marshal and the General indicated great skepticism and asked me how much time will be required to defeat Germany.

In closing the conference, I informed the Marshal that any military assistance to Germany beyond the strict requirements of the Armistice will bring about a permanent loss of the friendship and good will of the American people toward France.

The Marshal replied that he had received the same message before.

The Marshal appeared nervous and apprehensive of its contents before the President's message was read to him, apparently under the impression that it had to do with Admiral Darlan's visit to Berchtesgaden, and very apprehensive about what Darlan will bring back.

In my opinion there are few demands except "voluntary active military aid" that the Vichy Government is likely to refuse.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/10928 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 13, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received May 14—10: 35 p. m.]

547. I feel that the time has come when I should make clear to the Department that the trend of French policy today is definitely toward greater collaboration, willingly or unwillingly, with Germany and that the Department should not anticipate a reversal of this trend under present conditions; nor should it expect any serious resistance to German demands where such demands are of sufficient importance to the Germans to warrant the exercise of degrees of pressure which are within their power. I am satisfied that at the present time the Marshal will offer no resistance to any German demands short of "voluntary active military aid."

There are only two possible developments today which could stimulate resistance by the Marshal or by his Government: A British victory in the Middle East, or some definite action (not words) on our part

sufficiently important and concrete to convince the French Government of forthcoming active participation by the United States in the war.

Last winter when the British were advancing to Benghazi and beyond and when the progress of our Lease and Lend Bill led to exaggerated hopes in France of the implications of its passage in terms of immediate action, the Marshal's attitude was noticeably "stronger" and his declarations as to the limits of collaboration beyond which he would not go were more promising than is the case today. The rapidity of the German advance in Libya, the rapidity of the conquest of Yugoslavia and Greece, particularly the overwhelming German air superiority displayed in the latter struggle, and the apparent success of the German air and submarine campaigns in the Atlantic have served almost completely to destroy the hopes which had slowly and gradually been built up over the months since last June that a British victory is possible. Though it has of course immeasurably strengthened their hands, belief in the success of German arms is not confined to the small but influential circle of collaborationists: even the ardent Anglophiles and the simple people of both zones who have such a bitter understanding of what a German victory will mean for France have now largely become so discouraged as to hope only for an early peace and for the liberation of the million and a half prisoners. Accompanying this feeling is a growing belief in the doctrine proclaimed by the Germans and their French collaborationist friends—false as Nazi history shows it to be—that by helping Germany now the terms of peace imposed by the victor will carry proof of their generous and liberal attitude; that a contrary policy by France today will correspondingly render the peace terms imposed that much harsher, and the lot of the people and the prisoners that much more difficult in the interim.

France and the Marshal have, since last June, had but three trump cards of value to play against the Germans; first, the possibility of the Marshal's resignation; second, the possibility of resumption of war on the British side in North Africa; and third, the possibility of utilization of the French fleet in the British cause. The fact that the Germans have not destroyed the Marshal or his Government seems ample proof of their feeling that his disappearance would increase their difficulties in administering the country and would also increase the danger of riots, sabotage, and other burdens of occupation. Apparently, in German eyes, a Laval government kept in power by German machine-guns would present more difficulties than it is worth and therefore a threat by the Marshal to resign would seem to be clearly one of his trump cards. There did seem to be a possibility during his former attitude last winter that the Marshal, if German demands exceeded either his wishes (such as restoration to power of his detested

former associate Laval) or what he considered the limits of honor and dignity such as military aid to Germany, might have resigned. Though he had shown signs of increasing discouragement in recent weeks and clear indications of a growing fatigue with the burdens that he is forced to bear there is a good reason to believe that he would regard such action on his part, whatever measures of force the Germans take, as a betrayal of his people and a violation of his promise printed on so many of his photographs appearing throughout the country: "I make to France the gift of my person." That he will relinquish more and more authority even on matters of policy to Darlan seems likely; that he will resign and declare his reasons for so doing seems highly improbable.

As to resumption of the war in North Africa the Marshal made his decision on this point last June and there is nothing to indicate that he has for a moment wavered. He has told me on more than one occasion of his ardent desire to keep out of the war and I have no reason to doubt his resolution on this point.

If he has suffered many disillusionments with respect to the methods and promises of his German conquerors, he has never, even last winter, approached the point of military resistance. As the Department will recall, it was the Marshal last June who, with Laval, led the fight against continuance of the war from North Africa. He did so because he felt that the sufferings of the population, both military and civilian, of metropolitan France would be greatly and vainly increased thereby. He still, I am convinced, holds that view. He will not, under conditions prevailing today, with German military fortunes as high as they are, give direct orders to Weygand to resist with force any German attack. Though he is much disturbed and discouraged at the German threats to North Africa and the possibility of the arrival of German troops in the Spanish Zone of Morocco he will not in my opinion either order resistance or tacitly authorize it. From this distance I find it difficult to believe that without such orders Weygand, when the moment comes, will take up the fight—especially now that German armored divisions have arrived in Libya. He cannot of course do so with any hope of success in the absence of planes, tanks and artillery in quantity.

Presumably, with the arrival of Murphy<sup>67</sup> in North Africa, the Department will be better able to judge Weygand's attitude than I can from here.

As to the fleet we may be sure that as long as the Marshal remains and as long as Darlan is in power it will not be employed to help the

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<sup>67</sup> Robert D. Murphy, Counselor of Embassy in France, assigned to special duty in North Africa.

British. The danger is as it has always been that through the pretext of convoying through the blockade or defense of the colonies its guns will again be turned against France's former ally. While the Marshal, I believe, will stick to his oft repeated promise that the fleet will not be turned over to Germany they may accomplish the same object by indirect methods: this as we have often stressed is a principal danger.

In conclusion therefore I feel that, while much of the foregoing may be obvious, I should inform the Department that in my opinion the Marshal will not renounce "collaboration"; that he will not reenter the war on the side of the Allies and that the Germans can and may either with or without his authorization either with or without token concessions in return send troops through the unoccupied zone, take control of Mediterranean ports, acquire air or naval bases in Africa or Syria, or accomplish any other objective they seek. The only deterring factor, with British prestige at its present low ebb, is the amount of pressure the Germans wish to exert and the importance to them of their objective. The feelings of the people of France are an important restraint upon what the Marshal or even Darlan might willingly concede. They are not, however, enough to steel him to resistance by force in North Africa or elsewhere against any steps that the Nazis decide to take.

The calling of Admiral Darlan to Berchtesgaden by Hitler is so reminiscent of the Schuschnigg and Hacha incidents<sup>68</sup> as to indicate serious complications in the near future.

A definite aggressive radio campaign from America via the B.B.C.—always respecting the person of the Marshal—to inform the friendly people of France as to what our attitude will be in the event of collaboration is indicated as immediately necessary.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/10971 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 15, 1941—9 p. m.  
[Received May 15—6:30 p. m.]

561. Marshal Petain has just made the following statement over the radio:

"Frenchmen: You have learned of Admiral Darlan's talks with Hitler. I had approved the principle of their meeting. Their new

<sup>68</sup> Presumably reference is to Austrian Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg's visit with Hitler at Berchtesgaden on February 12, 1938, at which time Schuschnigg was forced to admit Nazis into his government, and to the summoning of President Emil Hacha of Czechoslovakia by Hitler to Berlin on March 14, 1939, when Hacha placed the fate of the Czech people in the hands of Hitler.

meeting enables us to light the road before us and continue conversations in which we are engaged with the German Government. It is no longer a question today for public opinion, so often anxious because badly informed, to wait our chances, to measure our risks, to judge our gestures. It is a question for you Frenchmen to follow me without question on the paths of honor and national interests. If with rigid public discipline we are able successfully to conclude these negotiations, France can overcome her defeat and maintain in the world her rank as a European and Colonial power. My friends, that is all I have to say to you."

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/11116a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*<sup>69</sup>

WASHINGTON, May 15, 1941.

411. The President has issued the following statement today:

"The policy of this Government in its relations with the French Republic has been based upon the terms of the armistice between Germany and France and upon recognition of certain clear limitations imposed upon the French Government by this armistice. Furthermore, we have had assurances given by the head of the French State on behalf of his Government that it did not intend to agree to any collaboration with Germany which went beyond the requirements of that armistice agreement. This was the least that could be expected of a France which demanded respect for its integrity.

"The people of France, who cherish still the ideals of liberty and free institutions and guard that love of these priceless possessions in their minds and hearts, can be counted on to hold out for these principles until the moment comes for their reestablishment. It is inconceivable they will willingly accept any agreement for so-called 'collaboration' which will in reality imply their alliance with a military power whose central and fundamental policy calls for the utter destruction of liberty, freedom and popular institutions everywhere.

"The people of the United States can hardly believe that the present Government of France could be brought to lend itself to a plan of voluntary alliance implied or otherwise which would apparently deliver up France and its Colonial Empire, including French African colonies and their Atlantic coasts with the menace which that involves to the peace and safety of the Western Hemisphere."

HULL

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<sup>69</sup> The same telegram was sent on the same date to the Legation at Tangier, for Murphy (No. 61), to the Embassies in Italy (No. 357), the United Kingdom (No. 1675), Germany (No. 1377), Spain (No. 238), and to the Legation in Portugal (No. 273).

851.85/232

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Adviser on Political Relations  
(Dunn)*

[WASHINGTON,] May 16, 1941.

Mr. Jacques Dumaine, Counselor of the French Embassy, telephoned this morning to say that the French Ambassador asked him to remind us of a promise we had made to inform him in the event any measures were taken with a view to placing guards upon the French vessels in American ports, and to ask whether we would be good enough to send him a note setting forth the action we had taken with regard to these ships.<sup>70</sup>

I told Mr. Dumaine that I did not think the Ambassador should expect to receive any word from us with regard to the action we had taken with respect to the French ships, and I wished to point out that this Government had received no word whatever from the French Government with respect to the action it had taken vis-à-vis the German Government,<sup>71</sup> directly contrary to the assurances which had been given to this Government by the French Government, and that, furthermore, this Government would take whatever measures it considered necessary for its own protection with respect to the new situation created by the attitude of the French Government.

Mr. Dumaine said that the French Embassy here had received no information whatever from Vichy with regard to the present developments, but that as soon as any information was received, they would take steps to communicate it immediately to the Department.

JAMES CLEMENT DUNN

740.0011 European War 1939/11043 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 17, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received 9:16 p. m.]

567. Embassy's telegram 565, May 16, 7 p. m.<sup>72</sup> The following communiqué was given out last night by the French Information Service and published in this morning's press here:

"In Government circles surprise is shown over the statements which Mr. Roosevelt made at Washington<sup>73</sup> according to which he

<sup>70</sup> The United States Coast Guard on May 15, 1941, placed armed guards on French merchant ships lying in American ports.

<sup>71</sup> Marshal Pétain on May 15 broadcast acceptance of Hitler's terms calling for closer collaboration between France and Germany.

<sup>72</sup> Not printed.

<sup>73</sup> See telegram No. 411, May 15, to the Ambassador in France, p. 171.

interpreted the radio address of Marshal Petain<sup>74</sup> as the placing of French colonies at the disposal of Germany.

That interpretation seems all the more astonishing as it is accompanied by unofficial statements which envisage the occupation of French Guiana and Martinique.

Likewise, the occupation by an armed guard of 10 French ships in American ports, including the *Normandie*, constitutes an act, the character of which cannot be explained only by the ideological reasons with which they are trying over there to cover it.

In May 1940, when France was abandoned by England, America did not feel that it should answer her appeal. Today, France, desirous of maintaining her position as a great power and the integrity of her territory and Empire, has the right to envisage with her conqueror the conditions of a common reorganization of continental Europe.

This in no way signifies that she has any intention of attacking England and even less the United States.

The threats of Mr. Eden<sup>75</sup> against Syria and the bombardment of Syrian airdromes have just been added to what France still refuses to consider as wilful Anglo-Saxon aggression.<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, the statements which Mr. Henry-Haye, French Ambassador at Washington, has made to the American press on this subject express the point of view of the people of France: 'enemy of all dissidence and trusting in the wisdom and high patriotism of Marshal Petain.'

The morning press likewise carries under a Washington dateline of yesterday the following summary of the President's statement:

"Mr. Roosevelt declared today to the American public that he found it difficult to believe that the French Government could lend itself to a plan of voluntary [alliance] which would apparently deliver up France and her colonial Empire including French African colonies and their Atlantic coasts with the menace which that involves for the peace and safety of the Western Hemisphere.

The statement of President Roosevelt was made after a long conference with Mr. Hull and Mr. Welles on the situation of France after the speech of Marshal Petain on Franco-German collaboration. The President states that it is inconceivable that the people of France would be willing to accept any agreement for so-called collaboration which in reality implies their alliance with a military power whose central and fundamental policy calls for the utter destruction of liberty and popular institutions."

(It will be observed that no reference is made in this summary of [to] the first paragraph of the President's statement.)

LEAHY

<sup>74</sup> For text of address, see *New York Times*, May 16, 1941, p. 1.

<sup>75</sup> Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>76</sup> For correspondence regarding occupation of Syria by British and Free French forces, see vol. III, pp. 725 ff.



740.0011 European War 1939/11192

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] May 19, 1941.

The British Ambassador called at my request. I said that, in the light of the new developments in the French situation, I had suggested to my associates and to the President on Saturday<sup>77</sup> that we should proceed along three main lines: (1) Endeavor to ascertain just what can be salvaged through the Vichy Government by every kind of treatment that might be practicable and wise; (2) in the same connection, examine all phases of the matter thoroughly to ascertain what can be developed to our advantage from Weygand and the situation in Africa generally in return for cooperation by us; and (3) confer with the British. I said that it is manifestly important for us to ascertain the probable relations of the British to the French while we are going forward with points one and two mentioned above. I stated that, of course, if the British should get into open war with the French, it would mean that this country would be directly influenced thereby, and that naturally any effort to salvage much from the French situation would be rendered more or less impossible.

The Ambassador did not undertake to say what the future attitude of his Government might be in the above respect except to say that, contrary to current reports, he was of the opinion that the French have not agreed to give to Germany as much aid as Germany is seeking.

He then said that he hoped special attention would be given to Weygand by us, and that Weygand might give a favorable answer, adding, however, that his response might be entirely unfavorable or hopeless in its nature. I explained to him about the mission of Mr. Robert D. Murphy to Northern Africa, and said that I thought that both he and Ambassador Leahy would overlook nothing that could be said or done.

The Ambassador said that he had cabled to London in regard to the matter of sending a person to Lisbon and would advise us just as quickly as he received a reply.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

740.0011 European War 1939/11148 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 20, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 7:52 p. m.]

577. We asked Rochat this morning whether there was anything he could tell us concerning recent developments in the field of Franco-

<sup>77</sup> May 17.

German collaboration, particularly as to what the Germans are expecting in return for the concessions they are making. He said that the promised return of some 100,000 prisoners which was announced yesterday, the authorization for Government officials and heads of industrial and agricultural enterprises to enter the forbidden zones of the north and east and relaxation of the restrictions on interchange of merchandise, monetary remittances, etc., between the occupied and unoccupied zones are concessions of real interest to France and the French people. (He does not believe there will be any removal of the demarcation line northward with consequent evacuation of Paris. Military necessity, he said, will require the Germans to hold the nerve center of Paris.) France is in duty bound, he said, to do what she can to improve the country's lot: the armistice is a document which was drawn up with the thought that the war would be over in a few weeks; it has remained in force now for nearly a year and conditions, with the strangling restrictions of the demarcation line, industrial stagnation, etc., are intolerable for the material welfare of the people of France. Therefore no Government can conscientiously refrain from doing what it can, whether under the name of collaboration or otherwise, to obtain some improvement. As for what Germany is asking in return, he said that to his knowledge no demands have been made. While he agrees that obviously Germany is not making these concessions for nothing, he feels that the Germans have a real interest in obtaining a more or less wholehearted "collaboration" from France. Germany, he said, is now the military master of the Continent of Europe; the war may last a long time, there must certainly be a feeling on the part of Germany's leaders that the time has come to start to organize the new order on the Continent. It is not sufficient, he thinks, from the German point of view merely to occupy countries militarily and force a certain minimum of production by slave methods. The logical place to obtain real industrial cooperation in organizing their new Europe is France and from the German point of view he feels that this in itself can explain the German desire for collaboration.

We pointed out that while much of this might be true past experience would seem amply to justify fears that under the name of "sincere collaboration" the Germans will expect African or Mediterranean bases, right of troop passage and other "facilities" when the time comes that they need them.

He said that this might well be possible for the future but that he could assure us that no demands of any sort with respect to North Africa or troop passage through unoccupied France have yet been made. Admiral Darlan, he said, has gone up to Paris again probably for 2 or 3 days to continue negotiations.

We inquired the meaning of the news item in this morning's papers given out by the official French information office concerning the problem of dissident French colonies. After mentioning the recent broadcasts of General Catroux, the bombardments of Syrian airdromes by the R. A. F.<sup>77a</sup> and British efforts to "foment dissidence in the greater part of the French Empire" the item states: "France is proud of having resisted vigorously where she could, but the hour has no doubt come for her to recover especially in Africa the whole of her Empire and if there is a point to emphasize it is the problem of dissidence which is to be settled solely between France and the rebels. The rebels are for the most part good Frenchmen who have been misled. At the moment when she is making an [effort?] to recover them and bring them back to France, France cannot permit a foreign power to intervene to prevent her. To speak only of the territories of Tchad or Gabon and French Equatorial Africa and the Cameroons in general, these are the provinces of the French Empire over which French sovereignty must be entirely reestablished." (We understand also that directives have been given the press to endeavor to prepare public opinion for a move against De Gaulle territory. The Germans are, we are told, not unaware of the effect of such a program on Franco-American relations.)

Rochat said that frankly he did not know the meaning of this statement nor even who had issued it. He said however that the problem of the De Gaulle dissident movement is one on which the Government is extremely sensitive.

He said he has no recent news from Syria nor any indications of German intentions in that respect.

He believes, however, that unless the Germans obtain right of troop passage through Turkey, which he said is not at all unlikely, it will be difficult for Germans to reach Iraq in force with material; thanks to British opposition, to land German troops and matériel by sea in Syria will not be an easy task. He added that the British seem to be very vigilant now in preventing German reinforcements arriving from Sicily to Libya and French information indicates that the German forces in the latter area are running short of supplies.

In conclusion he said that while he wanted to do so in the most informal way, he had instructed to "protest" against the reception of Eve Curie<sup>78</sup> at the White House and recent articles in the American press referring to "Marshal Pétain's age and fatigue". (He indicated that a telegram in this sense is being sent to Henry-Haye who had cabled the foregoing reports in a rather strong telegram to Vichy.)

LEAHY

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<sup>77a</sup> Royal Air Force.

<sup>78</sup> French writer, who while on a visit to the United States was deprived of citizenship by the Vichy Government. It was alleged that she opposed the sending of food to France by the United States, but she denied the allegation.

851.85/236

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] May 20, 1941.

The French Ambassador called at his request. He proceeded quite fully to protest, on behalf of his Government, against the action of this Government in allegedly violating an agreement to the effect that French ships in our harbors would not be occupied without notice first being given to the French Government or to the Ambassador here.<sup>79</sup>

He then proceeded to say that he was surprised at the emotional nature of the expressions here following a recent announcement by Marshal Pétain about future "collaboration with Germany", and in which he expressed approval of what Admiral Darlan was doing. The Ambassador said he had cabled twice to his Government for the facts relating to this announcement in order that this Government might be accurately informed.

He brought up the question as to whether the French Government could send back the two boats from France without their being occupied by the Coast Guard when they reach our harbors. He also inquired whether any French boat could come into our harbors without being placed in protective custody, and he made reference to the question of interference with shipping between France and North Africa.

The Ambassador then referred to the situation of the Syrian air bases and the recent German movements in that area. He said that the armistice terms authorized the German Government to control those air bases.

The Ambassador stated that history would show that the French have been badly treated; that they were forced to sign the armistice; that they should have received aid last year at a pivotal stage, and although they were promised such aid, there was a complete failure in the matter of supplying it. (He apparently was hinting at the failure of this Government to go into the war, or something of the sort, a year ago last spring.)

I then proceeded to say that in the light of the portentous nature of the recent announcement by Marshal Pétain, I had not even thought of the shipping matters, to which the Ambassador referred, much less had I given any consideration to them. Furthermore, there would be little done in this direction pending a thorough clarification of the full significance of the Pétain announcement and all that was behind it, with special emphasis on whether there was envisaged collaboration above and beyond the terms of the armistice between France and Germany. I said that around May fourth, Marshal Pétain had as-

<sup>79</sup> For correspondence regarding French ships in American ports, see pp. 526 ff.

sured this Government that the integrity of the German-French armistice terms would be maintained by France, and that France, therefore, would not render military aid to Germany over and above the strict terms of the armistice.<sup>80</sup> I added that he could imagine the astonishment of peoples here and everywhere when they saw the announcement of Marshal Pétain with its clear, express and implied meanings; that the definite belief was created in every nation of the world that the French Government at Vichy had gone straight into the arms of the German Government presided over by Hitler, with all the implications of such a step; that the well known pro-Hitler officials of the French Government have finally taken over control, and, having done so, their first thoughts were to deliver France body and soul to Hitler. Such would appear to be the case if the accompanying acts and utterances of French spokesmen and the implications arising therefrom signify anything. It would seem that these pro-Hitler French officials have convinced others of their hope, if not their belief, that Great Britain would lose in the war, and, therefore, the wise course was to move into the camp of Hitler and Hitlerism, when everybody knows that Hitlerism is a system and a philosophy dedicated primarily to undertaking to destroy all individual liberty and the free institutions of conquered peoples.

I emphasized at this point that French officials in an attempt to justify this new attitude were making reference to wholly minor and microscopic considerations, such as the question of food supplies, the securing of some reduction in the expenses of occupation, and the failure of somebody to aid France last year, and that these considerations are but infinitesimal phases of the situation compared with the single important question of saving the liberties of all free countries possible by successfully resisting Hitler's march of devastation across the earth. I also said with the strongest possible emphasis that this country, profoundly believing, as it does, that Hitlerism means the utter destruction and extinction of individual liberty and civilization wherever it spreads, is determined with all of its strength and resources to devote one year or five years or ten years, if necessary, in seeing to it that Hitler does not get control of the high seas of the world; and that any tyrant operating with barbaric methods, as in the case of Hitler, who must rely on the conquered peoples whom he has placed in a state of semi-slavery, for the stability and permanency of the structure of military and tyrannical rule he has built up at Berlin, cannot long survive on land. I said that this undertaking is primarily, of course, for the preservation of the liberties of the people of my own country, but incidentally also for the liberties of the British,

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<sup>80</sup> See telegram No. 508, May 4, 11 a. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 160.

and the early restoration of the liberties of the French among other peoples, who, in the present situation, should make common cause with us in every feasible way to this end. This should be the governing consideration, therefore, of those who have any interest at all in preserving or restoring the liberties and the popular institutions of free countries and hitherto free countries; that this consideration apparently is brushed aside by the pro-Hitler French officials, who defend their course of delivering France to the mercies of Hitler for the indefinite future by referring to relatively trivial matters, such as the failure of somebody to aid France, or that ample food is not forthcoming from abroad, or that the occupational expenses were reduced, and 100,000 prisoners released. I said those who love liberty, as the French people do, would in my judgment not remotely think of such paltry considerations as these in exchange for the liberties, the wonderful institutions and the very soul of France. I added that this country is thoroughly dedicated to the success of the British, who are fighting for this great cause of popular institutions and life and liberty, and that any military aid rendered to Germany beyond the strict terms of the armistice is an attempt to slit the throat of the United States indirectly, and hence the deep feeling this country has in the reported new plan of "collaboration" between the Vichy Government and Germany; that no one has any idea of what all this plan contemplates; that constant secret conferences are going on between pro-Hitler French officials; that the pro-Hitler French officials and the press they control are almost daily threatening to fight Great Britain or even the United States about matters which have not in any sense been broached so far as the United States is concerned; that when France assumed a mandate over Syria she was bound by a pledge on the part of France in the United States-French agreement not to permit any interference with the sovereignty of Syria by a foreign nation. This obligation of France was not even raised by her at the time of the armistice, and in the next place the retention of control over French air bases in Syria by Germany would ordinarily contemplate control to prevent their undesirable or improper use to the detriment of Germany, and not complete license to Germany to transport any and all kinds of implements and supplies anywhere over Syria, which is exactly what Germany needs for the purpose of establishing a great base of operations against the British throughout the middle eastern area. On the contrary, one of the high French officials in Syria was openly expressing sympathetic interest in Germany and the French authorities in Syria, while perfectly mute and silent as to unlimited German occupation, were daily publishing violent threats against the British if they dared in the least to resist this proposed establishment of a great German base in Syria.

I concluded by saying that all of these circumstances, together with Marshal Pétain's announcement, caused the world, including the United States, to believe that there were far-reaching considerations involved, and possibly a military alliance. For this reason, few things have been more painful to this Government than to get this information and feel constrained to suspend many mutually desirable relationships involving shipping, commerce, etc., with France until there is a complete clarification of this recent development. I stated that the first thing the French Government should do, if the Ambassador is at all correct in his protestations that the French Government proposes to conduct its relations with Germany strictly within the limitations of the armistice, is to find suitable ways, which can easily be done, to correct the deep-seated impression to the contrary existing in this and all other countries.

I said that this Government would be very desirous of receiving in writing a clear statement and pledge by the French Government to the effect that it will do no more than observe the terms of the armistice so far as extending any military favoritism to Germany is concerned, etc. The Ambassador said he would be glad to attend to this matter right away. He also agreed to my suggestion that the French Government should clarify its position in other countries as well.

I repeated again that I was not even thinking about these shipping and other minor matters about which the Ambassador was protesting, and could not do so pending clarification of the matters of major and urgent consideration. He did not request any different course on my part.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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711.51/158

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] May 21, 1941.

The British Ambassador called at his request. I related to him the substance of my talk with the French Ambassador on yesterday, all of which he heartily approved.

He then inquired as to whether we felt as though we could recognize De Gaulle in any more conspicuous way than heretofore. I replied that, of course, we were seeking to salvage whatever we could from the situation of Weygand in Africa, and from the Government at Vichy, and that if Weygand should stand up, De Gaulle would have to become subordinate. To this he agreed.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

740.0011 European War 1939/11895

*The British Ambassador (Halifax) to the Secretary of State*<sup>61</sup>

SUBSTANCE OF A TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE ON  
MAY 23

It is learnt from a highly secret but reliable source that the recent agreement concluded as a result of the conversations between Hitler and Darlan was not confined to political matters only, but covered the question of military cooperation between France and Germany. This cooperation included not only arrangements for the transit of troops and arms through Syria but also the offer of naval and air bases in French North African colonies as well as in the rest of the French Empire. It also included arrangements for the use by the French of French merchant shipping for the maintenance of traffic with the French colonies.

Another highly secret report indicates that the Germans have advanced their aims in the form of economic cooperation for which the agreement of Marshal Petain is more readily obtainable. It will be found that in this way France has assented to incorporate African colonies and Syria in the "new order". The Germans are said to calculate that this cooperation by the French will provoke reactions from the British side and that as a result France will be drawn into the war.

Information from a less reliable quarter suggests that the Franco-German agreement contains provisions for the cession of Atlantic bases.

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740.0011 European War 1939/16688

*The French Ambassador (Henry-Haye) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, May 27, 1941.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: In the course of the interview which I had with Your Excellency on May 20, you expressed to me a desire to receive written assurances from the French Government defining the position taken by it following the recent Franco-German conversations relative to its foreign policy.

I have been instructed by a communication dated May 24 from His Excellency Admiral Darlan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to give the Federal Government the following information:

The French Government asks me first of all to point out to Your Excellency that it has always taken the greatest care loyally to fulfill

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<sup>61</sup> Transmitted with covering letter dated May 24, 1941.



engagements assumed by it vis-à-vis the United States. It declares itself rightfully astonished at the unilateral decision of the American Government in ordering, without notice, the military occupation of French vessels stationed in United States ports. It is no less astonished at the seizure by British authorities of the oil tanker *Schéhérazade*, despite the fact that, before its departure from American waters, this vessel had obtained a British navicert and a guarantee of free passage given by the federal authorities.

The French Government furthermore expresses itself as painfully surprised at recent manifestations of American opinion advocating certain hostile measures against our possessions in the Western Hemisphere, particularly against the French West Indies.

These manifestations are the less justified inasmuch as, in its American possessions, my Government has granted all the guarantees asked by the Federal Administration.

The French Government, having never failed in its written engagements—renewed here today—has full basis for considering the contemplated measures as unfriendly and unjustified.

It is thus advisable to seek out and define the causes which may have led the Federal Government to change its attitude with regard to the Government of France.

Your Excellency was good enough to advise me, on May 20, of the anxiety which you felt concerning the consequence which a reversal of French policy might have for American interests.

I informed my Government of these fears. It authorizes me to give Your Excellency the following data:

In continuing with the occupying power the policy of collaboration inaugurated last October by the Montoire interview, a policy which was, at the time, noted by the United States, the Government of Marshal Pétain formally renewed its previous declarations by the speech given by Admiral Darlan on May 23.<sup>83</sup>

The Admiral in fact confirmed that France will not lend itself to the surrender of its fleet or to the cession, to any power whatever, of a territory belonging to the Empire.

The flight of German and Italian airplanes over Syria and the use of the airdromes of the States of the Levant constitute the sole specific arguments which have been invoked to justify American apprehensions.

I have the honor to recall to Your Excellency, as I pointed out to you on May 20, that this is a question of obligations resulting from

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<sup>83</sup> For text of speech, see *New York Times*, May 24, 1941, p. 4, or *Documents on American Foreign Relations* (Boston, World Peace Foundation, 1941), vol. III, p. 400.

the terms of the armistices signed at Rethondes and at Rome and more particularly from Article 18 of the Franco-Italian Convention.<sup>84</sup>

If from the time of the armistice until the conclusion of the operations in Greece, Germany and Italy did not demand a strict application of Article 18 in Syria and Lebanon it is because no theater of operations existed in the neighborhood of our possessions in the Levant. That was no longer true after the opening of hostilities in Iraq.

With respect to the use by the German and Italian armies of French war matériel, that results from the obligations established in Article 6 of the Franco-German armistice convention and from Article 11 of the Franco-Italian convention.

These articles expressly provide that arms and munitions of any kind remaining in unoccupied French territories should be collected and placed under Italian or German control.

But the French Government must make it clear that it did not give direct assistance to German and Italian forces supporting the military action of the Government of Iraq. No war matériel, other than that already placed under the control of the Axis powers, was supplied to Italian or German armies.

If the Government of Marshal Pétain must now carry out the hard obligations resulting from our defeat last year, it requests the Federal Government to understand the difficult situation which it must face.

While respecting the essential engagements entered into vis-à-vis the United States, my Government owes it to itself to seek, by means of an agreement with the occupying power, an attenuation of the heavy consequences entailed for it by the prolongation of the war and by the heavy reverses of France whose armies, in 1940 fought wholeheartedly and desperately without support.

The foregoing explanations allow me to hope that within a very short time the American Government will have the necessary measures taken for the resumption of the maritime traffic and the exchanges between the United States, the free zone of France, and the possessions of its Empire.

By two attached notes<sup>85</sup> I request Your Excellency to have steps taken for the immediate withdrawal of the armed guards which are occupying our vessels in American ports and to be good enough to intervene with the British authorities to obtain the prompt release of the oil tanker *Schéhérazade*, improperly seized.

The application of these two measures would contribute to dispelling the very distressing impression felt in recent days by Frenchmen and

<sup>84</sup> Armistice Agreement signed June 24, 1940. For text in English translation, see *New York Times*, June 26, 1940, p. 5, or *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, July 1939-June 1940, vol. II, p. 436.

<sup>85</sup> Not attached to file copy, but see note of May 26, from the French Ambassador, protesting the occupying of French vessels in U. S. ports by U. S. armed guards, p. 531.

to maintaining the traditional and cordial relations of our two countries.

In the present serious circumstances and in the course of events which may occur in a near or distant future, Your Excellency will not, I am sure, underestimate the considerable interest which exists, for the United States and for France, in safeguarding a collaboration which, in the past, has been the source of such noble accomplishments.

Before concluding this restatement of facts, allow me to recall to Your Excellency the delicate period which marked Franco-American relations from October to November, 1940.

On October 24 the Honorable Sumner Welles had me come to the Department of State to hand to me, for President Roosevelt, a message intended for Marshal Pétain.<sup>86</sup>

That message contained warnings against carrying out important concessions made to Germany and unjustly attributed to the new French policy.

The Marshal replied by a note which I had the honor to deliver to Your Excellency on November 4<sup>87</sup> and which completely refuted the allegations made by ill-intentioned informants.

In the course of that interview on November 4,<sup>88</sup> I placed Your Excellency on guard against the serious difficulties which might result from consideration being given in official American circles to uncontrolled rumors. On the other hand, I asked the Government of the United States to take as valid the engagements entered into by France and to have confidence in its Government.

On the basis of this experience, I have the honor to make the same request to Your Excellency today.

Seven months have elapsed since that interview and although the material aid asked of the United States by France, in its distress, has been given us only in a very small proportion in relation to our immense needs, the French Government, during the course of a cruel winter, resisted all internal and external pressure and courageously and worthily maintained the line of conduct which its chief had laid down.

American opinion, badly informed as to the conditions under which France entered the war and as to the wholly incomparable sacrifices borne by the French, shows itself unjustly hostile with respect to a nation which has never selfishly refused its assistance to an equitable cause.

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<sup>86</sup> See telegram No. 636, October 25, 1940, noon, to the Chargé in France, *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 475.

<sup>87</sup> See note from the French Embassy dated November 2, 1940, *ibid.*, p. 481.

<sup>88</sup> See telegram No. 689, November 6, 1940, 6 p. m., to the Chargé in France, *ibid.*, p. 482.

The glorious past of France and the future which it is resolved to make for itself, despite its present misfortunes and its disillusion, make it hope that in this period—one of the most anguished of its long history—the friendly understanding of the American Government will not fail it, and this in the very interest of the United States and of France, the aspirations of which two countries have never been opposed.

It is in this conviction, Mr. Secretary of State, that I beg you to accept [etc.]

HENRY-HAYE

711.51/157 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

[Extract]

VICHY, June 4, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received June 5—7 : 02 a. m.]

628.

I asked the Marshal<sup>89</sup> whether he had read the President's statement<sup>90</sup> and he replied in the affirmative. I said that in my opinion it made it perfectly clear that we are determined that Nazi Germany shall be defeated and that in the end will be defeated.

The Marshal and Admiral Darlan both immediately asked "When?". The latter inquired how we expected to send 2,000,000 men and land them on the European Continent. He went on to say, and the Marshal agreed: "It is not for me to advise President Roosevelt, but the United States is the one winner of this war *today*. You have air bases. Canada, which used to give you difficulties, is now under your influence, and you have a large merchant marine. Your influence is preponderant and even Germany would have to take heed if you would throw that influence for a compromise peace.

If the war goes on—and it may last for years—it will mean only destruction of all concerned and the United States itself will end in social revolution. Communism alone will prevail throughout Europe." The Marshal said he thought Germany would be the first affected by communism, and France next. Darlan took issue with this in view of the "discipline and order" of the German people.

France, said Darlan, is like a prostrate man with a great stone on his chest which he must seek to push off by all means in his power in order to live. Ever since 1870 the country had lived at enmity with

<sup>89</sup> Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain.

<sup>90</sup> Presumably a reference to the President's radio address of May 27, 1941; for text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, May 31, 1941, p. 647.

Germany and this could not go on forever. France's political leaders of the so-called advanced democracy of the ten years' war had failed to perceive the reality of this fact and were prevented by the British from seeking agreement with Germany. Now France must end that era. He has dealt with Germans, he said, and while it would be childish to believe all they tell him, he has found them more honest than the British with whom he had dealt during the past 10 years and everything that Hitler had told him he was going to do, he had done. What further acts of aggression against France British stupidity might now lead them to perform—and he had never found a limit to British stupidity—he could not say, but the limit of French patience had been reached.

I left them in no doubt that the American people would never agree to compromise with the Nazis, that we had no confidence in Nazi promises or that we would not permit a German victory or a compromise peace. They greeted my statements, however, I feel, with polite skepticism as to how and when we are going to win the war.

Neither the Marshal nor Darlan was willing to give any indication of the scope or limits of their collaboration policy. I left with the distinct impression that the Marshal, who seemed quite calm and cheerful, considering the vital importance of decisions he must have recently been compelled to make, has completely accepted the action of his Foreign Minister, and that he is likely to approve any commitments that Darlan may make in the future.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/11755 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, June 7, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 11:45 p. m.]

652. The only mention which has been permitted in the French press in the unoccupied zone concerning the statement which the Secretary made at his press conference on June 5th,<sup>91</sup> is the following officially inspired article which appears in identical form in this morning's papers:

“Franco-American relations.

Our policy is not a policy of aggression and oppression, declare authoritative French circles, in answer to a declaration made by Mr. Cordell Hull.

Mr. Cordell Hull made a declaration on Franco-American relations at a press conference, in which he stated: ‘If the French Gov-

<sup>91</sup> See Department of State *Bulletin*, June 7, 1941, p. 681.

ernment should adopt a policy of collaboration with other powers for the purpose of aggression and oppression, this policy would be considered inimical by the United States.<sup>9</sup>

There is astonishment in authoritative French circles at what the American Secretary of State qualifies as a policy of aggression and oppression, a policy which is directed against nobody and which intends no harm to the interests of any other power, which is inspired only by the sole anxiety to establish better relations in Europe and maintain, against all attacks, the liberty of the French Empire and of its means of communication.

It is noted that the French Government intends, for its part, to maintain friendly relations with the United States, but the Federal Government cannot fail to understand that the first task of the French Government in the particularly difficult situation in which it finds itself, is to safeguard the vital interests of France and of its Empire.<sup>10</sup>

It will be noted that the Ministry of Information selected for quote a single sentence from the Secretary's statement to which to make public reply. The obvious intention of the above press release apparently was to convey to the French people that the United States is adopting a quite unjustified menacing attitude toward their country. While official circles in conversation have so far maintained the "no comment" attitude apparently imposed upon them, some of our Foreign Office friends tell us privately that the promptness and vigor of the Secretary's statements have made a "real impression" and have had a "salutary" effect.

With reference to the Embassy's telegram 1090, December 6, 11 a. m. [*p. m.*]<sup>92</sup> and previous; and to the Department's 818, December 7, 6 p. m.,<sup>92</sup> the suppressing from the public of the Secretary's statement—as in the earlier cases of the President's declaration of May 15 and the watering down of the President's speech of May 27—appears to furnish important examples of the real need to keep the French public better informed. A growing number of people in various walks of life have in the past fortnight urged that American news broadcasts in French be transmitted if possible through London. As I have reported in the past, the public here has much confidence in the impartiality and accuracy of our broadcasts and little in the British broadcasts which it feels contain much propaganda. If we are to hope to keep the French people informed of our policies and our views, I feel that it is of real importance to endeavor to arrange relaying of American broadcasts through England or some other point on the European Continent.

LEAHY

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<sup>92</sup> Not printed.

740.0011 European War 1939/12478 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, June 25, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received June 26—7: 15 a. m.]

748. While public opinion in France is slow in formulating any considered opinion of the full significance of the Russo-German war,<sup>93</sup> it is fully appreciated here as a development of the utmost importance and it constitutes one of the two topics of conversation wherever Frenchmen meet (the other, of course, is food). In general, there is elation that two detested powers are at last fighting each other and a vague feeling that during the battle, at least, France may have some respite from German pressure and German threats. There are elements, however, among the bourgeois and big industrialists whose leanings toward collaboration will be strengthened by this "tangible evidence" of Germany's intention to save them and their possessions from communism and confiscation.

Rochat says that this viewpoint should not be underestimated in view of the strong feeling that communism and the power of the Communists in France were largely responsible for her unpreparedness and wartime collapse. Many people will argue he said that there are two great menaces to the world today: Communism and Nazism, and that if the former can be eliminated, there is that much gained. The source mentioned in our telegram 686, June 13, noon,<sup>94</sup> and who is of course in a position to know, likewise finds from censorship of letters and surveillance of activities in his area that there is substantial support for this view.

On the other hand while Rochat did not so state, among the still powerful—in spite of Vichy's efforts at suppression—Communist elements and the other still numerous supporters of the former popular front, sympathies will be with Moscow and opposition to collaboration (except to the extent that it means jobs) will be strengthened.

LEAHY

851.48/451

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] July 8, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me this morning at his request.

I took up with the Ambassador the request which Norman Davis<sup>95</sup> had made of me this morning involving the further shipment of

<sup>93</sup> Germany invaded Russia June 22, 1941.<sup>94</sup> Not printed; the source referred to is Charles Rochat.<sup>95</sup> Chairman of the American Red Cross.

powdered milk through the Red Cross for the French children in unoccupied France. I said to the Ambassador that in order to avoid discussion of a need for sending a further Red Cross ship to France, it seemed to Mr. Davis and myself that a practical solution would be to send on each one of the French ships leaving New York for North Africa a small quantity of powdered milk which could be transhipped from Casablanca to Marseille, at which latter port it would be taken in charge by Red Cross representatives and then distributed to the French children along exactly the same lines as have hitherto been employed. I said that the giving of powdered milk by the American Red Cross to the children of unoccupied France, from every report I had received, seemed to me to be of great political expediency and very definitely in the interests of Great Britain and of the United States. I stated that what was now suggested was merely a continuation of the policy already concurred in by both Governments some months ago. The Ambassador said that he was personally entirely in accord with the suggestion made and the desirability of continuing this policy, and that he would endeavor to get a favorable reply from his Government as rapidly as possible.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.0011 European War 1939/13606 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*<sup>96</sup>

[Extract]

VICHY, August 1, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received August 2—7:33 a. m.]

970.

Turning once more to the United States and complaining that we are quite ready with criticism but slow in action, Darlan said: "When you have 3,000 tanks, 6,000 planes and 500,000 men to bring to Marseilles, let me know. Then we shall welcome you. But neither side can win the war and Europe will be exhausted. It is to your interest, as well as to ours, that there be an early peace".

LEAHY

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<sup>96</sup> A portion of this telegram concerned the situation in Indochina and is printed in vol. v, p. 246; another portion, not printed, concerned military aspects of the war in Europe.



851.48/467a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, August 21, 1941—6 p. m.

3289. Please transmit the following message from the President to Lord Halifax:<sup>97</sup>

"I forgot to speak to you about milk for unoccupied France. Norman Davis informs me that you understand the matter.

Since the American Red Cross has its supervisory organization there and the distribution of supplies previously sent was completed August first, they must either withdraw entirely or send further supplies at once. I feel that in order maintain morale it is advisable to continue at least for the present limited shipments of milk and clothing for children through the American Red Cross.

Please take this up with Winston and advise. Roosevelt."

HULL

851.48/478 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary  
of State*LONDON, September 16, 1941—8 p. m.  
[Received September 16—5:28 p. m.]

4316. Personal for the President. Department's 3289, August 21, 6 p. m. Your message to Lord Halifax was sent to him on August 22 and I received today the following letter from Mr. Eden in reply:

"Lord Halifax, before he went to the country, gave me the message from President Roosevelt about milk for children in unoccupied France, which you sent to him in your letter of the 22d August. This proposal raises great difficulties for us. We are under heavy pressure from some of Allied governments to allow relief to their peoples in occupied territory, whose lot is far harder than that of the population of unoccupied France. These governments are continuing to support the Allied cause to the utmost of their ability, while the Vichy Government is collaborating in an increasing degree with our enemy, and the grant of relief to unoccupied France will not commend itself favorably to our public opinion.

We did, it will be remembered, authorize two shiploads of milk for unoccupied France earlier in the year. We are unable to judge what effect these shipments may have had upon French morale, but so far as we are aware, the generosity of the American Red Cross did not receive in France the publicity which it deserved.

Nevertheless, in view of the President's request, we have again taken the question into consideration and we shall be willing, as an

<sup>97</sup> Lord Halifax returned to England for a visit from August 22 to September 26.

exceptional measure, to agree to admission through the blockade of a very occasional shipment of milk for children in unoccupied France, to be distributed under the supervision of the American Red Cross. In coming to this decision, we have not overlooked the fact that supplies of the milk from the United States, even for ourselves, are likely to fall short of requirements.

I should be grateful if you would convey a reply in this sense to the President."

WINANT

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851.48/486 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, September 24, 1941—8 p. m.

4009. From Norman Davis. It is important to settle the following matter as soon as possible because the position of the Red Cross is becoming embarrassing and if we are not to continue in unoccupied France we must withdraw without further delay and state why we are doing so. Will you consider the following memorandum with Eden and cable me your opinions that I may discuss the issue again with the President:

"Referring to Eden's letter to you in reply to the President's message to Lord Halifax concerning milk for children in unoccupied France, we appreciate the political difficulties for the British Government in consenting to shipment of milk to unoccupied France while refusing to permit shipments to the occupied territories of allied powers. I may point out, however, that insofar as concerns the American Red Cross, there is a considerable difference between supplying milk for children in occupied territories and in unoccupied France.

"Regardless of the blockade, the American Red Cross discontinued relief efforts in occupied territories and is not disposed to resume them, as we were too hampered in our activities and could not have adequate control over our operations. On the contrary, our operations in unoccupied France have been satisfactory because we have had adequate freedom and control. While publicity there has been meagre for the past 2 or 3 months, it has not kept the French people from knowing and appreciating what we were doing to assist them. There is conclusive evidence that what we have done has benefited the French children immeasurably and contributed greatly to keeping up morale. They know that was done through the cooperation of the American and British Governments and are most grateful. Allen can give first hand information about this.

"Our information is that the best opinion in occupied countries is against lifting the blockade against them and thus aiding Germany. Aside from the humanitarian value of Red Cross supply of milk to children in unoccupied France, our Government feels that it does not aid Germany but is of great importance in counteracting German

propaganda, particularly at a time when French public opinion is running more in favor of the allies. It also serves to link a small area in France with what is being done in French North Africa. The Government also feels that this milk program for children, which because of a scarcity of supply here must necessarily be limited, serves as a useful means of maintaining its contact with the Vichy Government.

"Although the President, the Secretary of State and the American Red Cross all feel it would be wise, regardless of the attitude of the Vichy Government, to continue, at least for the present, a limited supply of milk, etc. for children, and that it would have a very harmful effect on French morale to terminate our Red Cross operations, which have been carried on satisfactorily and without interference for more than a year, and which were instituted with the approval of the British and American Governments, we are all reluctant to assume the moral responsibility of urging this further upon the British Government if, as indicated, it still thinks it would be unwise and politically embarrassing."

[Davis]  
HULL

851.48/486 : Telegram

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

LONDON, September 29, 1941—11 p. m.

[Received September 29—7 : 50 p. m.]

4607. For Norman Davis. In an answer to your message in the Department's 4009, September 24, 8 p. m., I took up with Mr. Eden this morning the memorandum contained therein. Mr. Eden told me that the British feel it would be wise to continue for the present a limited supply of milk for children in unoccupied France. The Prime Minister and the Cabinet concur in this decision. They are especially interested in a supply going to babies and needy children. Admiral Leahy makes similar recommendation in his memorandum to Mr. Myron Taylor<sup>98</sup> forwarded by courier to the President and which has been read by both the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden.

The language in the Cabinet's decision and used by Mr. Eden in his conversation with me referred to "occasional shipments".

In discussing this problem with Mr. Allen he felt that a shipment of 6000 tons of dried whole milk at this time would take care of the more pressing needs for a period of 3 months and would also usefully occupy the Red Cross agents now in unoccupied France. It is necessary for you, however, to check on our ability to supply this amount. I would suggest that such a shipment be made. He is also sending recommendations to you in regard to certain drugs that might be distributed through the International Red Cross.

WINANT

<sup>98</sup> Personal Representative of President Roosevelt to Pope Pius XII.

851.48/491 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, October 10, 1941—7 p. m.

771. The British Government has agreed to a proposal submitted to it on behalf of the American Red Cross to permit continuance for the present of a limited supply of milk for children in unoccupied France. The American Red Cross is prepared to make arrangements for the shipment and distribution of milk, vitamin concentrates and clothing for children only, and the shipment and distribution of medical supplies for sick children and adults. If possible the relief supplies will be transported to Marseille in an American Red Cross ship for distribution under the terms and conditions established for the shipments on the *Cold Harbor* and *Ewmouth*,<sup>99</sup> subject to the availability of milk supplies in the present market. It is proposed to include in the cargo to go forward in approximately 30 days, 3,280 tons of milk concentrates costing approximately \$1,000,000, layettes and children's clothing to the value of approximately \$900,000 and certain medical supplies to the value of approximately \$50,000 which may later be included if the shipment of such supplies is approved.

It is essential that confirmation of the agreement by the French Government to the continuation of the operations in unoccupied France and in accordance with the established procedure and the terms of the previous agreements relating thereto be obtained.

You are requested to ascertain whether the French Government will be disposed to give its agreement to these conditions and proposals.

HULL

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851.48/486 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, October 24, 1941—midnight.

4696. Your 4607, September 29, 11 p. m. The French Government has replied to the offer of the Red Cross to supply in unoccupied France milk, vitamin concentrates and clothing for children only, and medical supplies for sick children and adults in the following terms:

"The Embassy of the United States has asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to confirm to it that the French Government gives its agreement to the conditions under which the aforesaid products shall be transported to, and distributed in, the unoccupied zone, these conditions being the same as those already approved by the French

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<sup>99</sup> For terms and conditions, see telegram No. 10, January 6, 8 p. m., to the Ambassador in France, p. 90.

Government on the occasion of the arrival at Marseille of the shipments on the *Cold Harbor* and the *Exmouth*.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honor to inform the Embassy of the United States that the French Government gives its agreement to the conditions indicated in the aforesaid note for the distribution of the products of the Red Cross of the United States.

It avails itself of this occasion to ask the Embassy of the United States to express to the American Red Cross its thanks for the generosity of which once again it is showing proof with respect to the French population."

With regard to the supplementary conditions set forth in Allen's telegram to the Red Cross, (your 4824, October 10),<sup>1</sup> we are prepared to inform the French Government that the two conditions relating to publicity and that distribution must be made as supplementary and not as part of the rationing system are essential. This Government fails, however, to understand the condition that the Red Cross ship clear at Gibraltar. The cargo will have received prior approval of the British Government and the vessel is an American vessel chartered to the American Red Cross and proceeding purely on behalf of the Red Cross. Under the circumstances, there would appear to be no grounds for British naval inspection en route which, if insisted upon, would further complicate the matter.

You may also wish to take occasion to point out that recent publicity emanating particularly from the Ministry of Economic Warfare to the effect that American insistence is alone responsible for this breach in the blockade, scarcely accords with the views of the British Government as expressed in your telegram under reference.

HULL

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851.48/504 : Telegram

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

LONDON, October 29, 1941—9 a. m.  
[Received October 29—8:06 a. m.]

5137. Your 4696, October 24, midnight. We discussed the question of the Red Cross ship clearing at Gibraltar with the parliamentary secretary of the Ministry of Economic Warfare and strongly pressed the view that this condition should be waived. After consulting the highest officials of the Ministry he has sent the following reply:

"We attach considerable importance to this. As I told you yesterday we have had to insert [*insist?*] that vessels which are chartered by the International Red Cross and which sail from Lisbon to Marseille with supplies for prisoners of war should call at Gibraltar. While we have

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

of course no reason to distrust the International Red Cross authorities at Lisbon there is always the possibility that unknown to them some attempt will be made to smuggle contraband on one of these ships. It is, therefore, necessary that we should insist on the call at Gibraltar in order that the vessel may be searched if we have any reason to be suspicious. We have been strongly pressed to dispense with this safeguard but on inquiry we could find no reason for this request except that the Germans and Italians objected to the call. Naturally this did not predispose us to give way and we felt obliged to maintain our position.

"I do not see how we can draw a distinction between one Red Cross ship and annuals [*another?*].

"I should like to emphasize that no practical inconvenience is likely to result from the call at Gibraltar since the inspection is as a rule only formal and the average delay involved in the case of a Red Cross ship is less than 3 hours. We feel that it is highly desirable to maintain the principle in all cases and we do not, therefore, see our way to waive this condition."

Today I spoke to Mr. Eden about the publicity referred to in the last paragraph of your telegram. He had no knowledge of the publicity described. Before going to see him I had a thorough search made of the papers here. We were unable to find any references to the proposed shipments of Red Cross supplies in any English paper nor have we been able to find such references in American papers so far received.

Mr. Eden told me he would check with other departments and ask newspapers to refrain from making any unfriendly references to these Red Cross shipments.

WINANT

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851.48/504 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, October 30, 1941—8 p. m.

4854. Your 5137, October 29, 9 a. m. Inasmuch as the vessel carrying the Red Cross supplies to France will be a Red Cross ship flying the American flag and carrying Red Cross supplies only, we regret that we are unable to accept the British condition that the vessel should clear at Gibraltar.

Adequate assurances regarding the cargo will already have been furnished, inasmuch as no cargo will be loaded which has not received the previous consent of the British Government. In order to provide further safeguards we would however, be glad to select an American Red Cross Commissioner to travel aboard the vessel and insure that there will be no deviation from the route of the ship or its cargo.

Furthermore, in view of the commitments already made by the Germans with regard to the right of search, this call at Gibraltar might give them an opportunity to refuse to agree to free passage for the vessel thus defeating the purpose of the voyage, the importance of which Mr. Eden has already recognized.

Please see the Foreign Secretary at the earliest opportunity and explain this position to him. You may also add that, in my conversation with Lord Halifax yesterday, I explained our views in the matter and asked him as well to take the matter up urgently with his Government.

You will bear in mind in your conversations that publication here of any detention of an American Red Cross ship by the British in Gibraltar would necessarily result in unfavorable publicity.

HULL

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702.6251R/15 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, November 3, 1941—8 p. m.

817. Your 1383, October 27, 9 p. m.<sup>2</sup> You should seek the earliest possible opportunity to see the Marshal and to state that you have been directed by the President to discuss with him the present situation as regards Franco-American relations and to present certain observations on behalf of the President. These observations should be along the following lines:

“Mindful of the ever increasing pressure exercised upon France and its people by the harsh and brutal actions of the German Government, and of the Marshal’s efforts in endeavoring to protect his countrymen from the excesses of the New Order the apprehension of the American people with regard to certain developments must nevertheless be brought to his attention. This is done however with full recognition of his past and continuing endeavors to abide by the terms of the Armistice and to restrict further inroads upon French sovereignty.

The recent demands of the German Government for the establishment of German ‘offices’ not only in the remaining section of France still unoccupied by German troops but in France’s colonial territories of North Africa indicate, however, an apparent intention of the German Government further to penetrate French territory and French life. The Germans as well as all others know that it is the Marshal’s purpose to preserve the French Empire for France and their demands can only be interpreted as representing their desire further to assume control and domination of French territories, both on the Continent and in North Africa. The tragic experiences of other countries demonstrate all too clearly the results of German infiltration which, if allowed to proceed unchecked, ends in complete domination by the minions of National Socialism.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

As Petain is aware, the policy of the American Government as regards France looks toward eventual free restoration to France and its people of all French territories; but if the French Government is forced by the Germans to make concessions which depart from the limitations imposed by the Armistice Convention, this Government must reluctantly consider that a turning point in our relations based on this policy is approaching because of the actions of the German Government and that steps are being taken which, if allowed to continue, will mean the eventual relinquishment of rights within France's own Empire. Such a policy would, if carried out, defeat the aspirations of the French people to maintain the integrity of France and the French Empire and would constitute a severe blow to the hopes of the American people that France would be preserved as a nation."

The foregoing is to be communicated by you to the Marshal if in your judgment it would be useful and expedient.

HULL

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851.33/204 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, December 10, 1941—4 p. m.

908. The Naval Observer in Martinique reported yesterday that Admiral Robert<sup>3</sup> had informed him that the airplane carrier *Bearn* would leave today, December 10, on a 10 days' cruise "for recreation for the crew". At the same time the Navy received word that the French forces in Martinique were replacing the propellers on the grounded planes. A preliminary message was sent to Admiral Robert through the American Consul stating that this Government requested that the ships should not leave Fort de France since under present conditions the departure of the vessel will undoubtedly be subject to misinterpretation. The State Department has now received word that the departure of the *Bearn* has been cancelled by Admiral Robert.

In your interview with Marshal Petain, please inform him of these circumstances and state that this Government appreciates the action taken by Admiral Robert in response to our request. Please request officially of the Marshal, however, as by the personal instruction of the President, that Marshal Petain have addressed to Admiral Robert immediate orders not to permit the departure of any of the naval vessels now in Martinique or in the other French colonies in the Western Hemisphere from the ports where they may now be stationed. You may state that in view of the fact that the United States is now at war with Japan in the Pacific, and in view of the increasingly serious and critical situation in the Atlantic, the departure of the

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<sup>3</sup> Adm. Georges Robert, Governor of the French West Indies.



French vessels would give rise to grave concern on the part of the United States, and that, furthermore, should the vessels leave notwithstanding this request, steps would have to be taken by the United States as a measure of self-defense to prevent the departure of these vessels. As the Marshal well knows, and as the President has repeatedly made clear, it is the President's hope that all misunderstandings and difficulties between France and the United States can be avoided, and it is because of his earnest hope in that regard that the President has requested you to deliver this message to Marshal Petain.

Please state in conclusion to the Marshal that the President would appreciate it if you could be furnished by the Marshal with a copy of the orders in the sense suggested which Marshal Petain may cause to be addressed to Admiral Robert.

HULL

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851.33/206 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 11, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 11 p. m.]

1523. Department's 898, December 6, 4 p. m.,<sup>4</sup> 903, December 8 [9], 6 p. m.<sup>5</sup> and 908, December 10, 4 p. m. At 6 p. m. conferred with the Marshal for a half hour with Admiral Darlan present and discussed the questions contained in cables referred to above, explaining to the Marshal that America's formal involvement in war with Axis Powers may change the entire picture from the point of view of the United States.

The Marshal indicated a desire that we continue our economic relief in Africa and directed Admiral Darlan to prepare a memorandum reply to the specific questions contained in Department's 898, December 6, 4 p. m., his first reaction apparently being that satisfaction could be given to our requests.

In regard to naval ships in French colonial ports in the Western Hemisphere, Admiral Darlan said they have no intention of leaving port and that they are disarmed. In reply to a categorical inquiry he said he will issue instructions to Admiral and will inform me by memorandum in regard thereto.

In reply to a question as to any possible change in the attitude of the French Government toward this Embassy because of the declaration of war against us by Germany and Italy, the Marshal stated that he is most desirous of maintaining the existing understanding

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<sup>4</sup> *Post*, p. 493.

<sup>5</sup> Not printed.

friendly relations between our two governments and that no demand has come from the Axis for France to change its attitude. He said, however, "if Germany should make such a demand, they can starve our civilian population and we are helpless."

He stated France intends to "remain neutral" and if Germany brings pressure to bear toward forcing a change he will endeavor to find means to maintain our recent relations.

It is my personal opinion that no effective effort will be made by the Marshal's Government in our behalf if Germany should ask that diplomatic relations between France and America be made difficult or interrupted. Such a request by Germany is expected by our friends in the Vichy Government and I believe it is also expected by the Marshal himself.

I told the Marshal that our formal involvement in the war caused by the German-Italian declarations of today<sup>5a</sup> changes the situation and makes any French assistance hereafter given to the Axis Powers a direct injury to the United States.

Both the Marshal and Darlan were particularly cordial during this interview and both expressed regret that America has become involved in the "World War".

Repeated to Algiers.

LEAHY

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851.33/206 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, December 12, 1941—2 p. m.

914. Your 1523, December 11, 7 p. m. We have noted the statement made by Admiral Darlan to you to the effect that with regard to naval ships in French colonial ports in the Western Hemisphere the Admiral stated that they have no intention of leaving port and that they are disarmed.

You should see Marshal Petain or Admiral Darlan immediately and say that your Government has taken note of this statement and that in view of the fact that the United States is at war, all necessary measures must accordingly be taken by this Government, particularly in the defense areas off our shores and in the Caribbean region. This Government will undertake to safeguard the French colonial possessions in this area as part of our general defense operations. Because of the necessity of carrying out our defense plans, we cannot permit the movement of other than American or associated naval or air units

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<sup>5a</sup> For declarations of war against the United States by Germany and Italy on December 11, 1941, see vol. 1, pp. 588 and 589, respectively.

operating in these areas. We must, therefore, request, as an evidence of the friendly attitude of France toward this country, that the measures of disarmament of naval or air units, which are now being undertaken by the French Government with respect to any ships or aircraft now stationed in the Caribbean or French colonial territories, be carried out to an extent satisfactory to the United States. In order to insure this degree of demobilization of naval or air units we request that American naval survey parties be permitted to inspect the state of disarmament and immobilization which has been or is to be carried out with respect to the naval units and aviation units in these areas. Inspection parties have already been organized and are ready to proceed and we request that the French authorities in the Antilles and French Guiana be duly informed and authorized to grant the necessary facilities to the American inspection parties.

HULL

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851.33/211 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 12, 1941—11 p. m.

[Received December 13—11 : 30 a. m.]

1531. My 1523, December 11, 7 p. m. We called on Rochat this evening who officially delivered to us three memoranda containing the replies to the question[s] I delivered yesterday [to] Marshal Pétain in the form of three memoranda. He said that "the Marshal has been happy to give you complete satisfaction and assurances on all the questions which you raised."

[Here follows translation of the first memorandum concerning the political position of France in North Africa, printed on page 498.]

The second memorandum dealing with the question of the carrier *Bearn* and other Naval vessels reads as follows:

"The President of the United States has asked the Marshal to issue orders to Admiral Robert not to allow the departure of any French Naval ship from Martinique or from any other port in the Western Hemisphere.

The French Government has the honor to inform the Government of the United States that it is sending the said order. These instructions, moreover, are but a confirmation of those which were sent last year to Admiral Robert following the agreement reached between the two Governments in order to maintain the *status quo* of French possessions in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>6</sup> The French Government does not doubt that the American Government continues to give, under

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<sup>6</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, pp. 493 ff.

present circumstances, its full value to this agreement. It would be happy to receive confirmation thereof."

The third memorandum states that, "As a result of the declaration of war by Germany and Italy against the United States, the French Government intends to maintain an attitude of neutrality during this conflict".

[The remainder of this telegram is printed on page 498.]

LEAHY

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124.51/232a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, December 13, 1941—4 p. m.

925. The most effective measure that remains with us vis-à-vis the Vichy Government is the withdrawal of the American Ambassador and the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Marshal Petain's Government. Should this break in relations become necessary we wish to make it clear that the issue is not with the French people but with the Vichy Government. In my opinion your main reasons for remaining in Vichy today are based on the two assurances given you personally by both Marshal Petain and Admiral Darlan regarding the use of the French fleet and French territory as bases for military operations. If either of these are violated or abrogated we would at once break off diplomatic relations. We are not prepared, however, to waste this forceful gesture of your withdrawal on such a minor issue as the abrogation of code privileges or circumscribed activity.

Should at any time you become convinced that one or both of the assurances above referred to have been violated, you are authorized, if you can no longer satisfactorily communicate with us by cable, immediately to call upon Marshal Petain and state that acting under instructions from your Government you must inform him that by reason of this violation the basis for further diplomatic relations between the United States and the Vichy Government no longer exists. You should then request your passports.

After you have reported to us we would have no objection to a full statement being made on your behalf and through such channels as you deem discreet at Vichy that the break in relations has been caused by the direct abrogation by certain French authorities of the agreements which these very authorities had voluntarily entered into with the United States and which no longer existed.

HULL

851.33/217 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 14, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received December 15—5 a. m.]

1537. Department's 928, December 13, 6 p. m.<sup>7</sup> At 6 p. m. today I had a half hour interview with Marshal Petain and Admiral Darlan together and delivered orally, with a French *aide-mémoire*, the President's message. He replied with expression of appreciation of the President's understanding and courtesy. He repeated his previous assurance that African bases will not be turned [over] to the Axis Powers and that the French fleet will not be turned over to the Germans and will not be used against the British unless the French are attacked.

I then handed to the Marshal a brief memorandum outlining the wishes of my Government as indicated in the Department's 914, December 12, 2 p. m. Admiral Darlan replied categorically that it was impossible for the French Government to accede to such a request. He went on to say that French naval units in the Caribbean were there to protect French colonies; while he appreciated our offer to safeguard France's colonial possessions in the Western Hemisphere, it was unnecessary since France would provide any necessary defense.

He said that the *Bearn* is partly disarmed, that other vessels are not disarmed but under France's agreement with us they will not depart from their West Indian ports. I referred to my last conversation with him (my 1523, December 11, 7 p. m.) in which he said that the French vessels in the West Indies were disarmed. He replied that he only referred to the *Bearn* as being partially disarmed. He added that in view of the fact that French vessels will not be disarmed, inspection by American survey parties is unnecessary. The Marshal said that he sincerely hoped the United States would understand the French position in this matter and he regretted being unable to grant our request.

Admiral Darlan then stated that he has given repeated assurances to the American Government regarding the French fleet. He regretted that both America and England refused to accept this word.

I said that in my opinion if the French fleet was not used against England or the United States and if the Germans are not permitted to establish themselves in French North or West Africa I had hopes that the existing friendly relations between our two countries could be maintained. Both the Marshal and Admiral Darlan said they shared this hope.

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<sup>7</sup> *Post*, p. 499.

Darlan then stated that he believes Germany does not desire at this time to undertake any movement in French North Africa because it is so thoroughly occupied in Russia. He believes that Germany's next effort will be directed toward the east where oil is available, probably through Turkey.

While there is evidence that the Marshal shows signs of some stiffening as a result of Germany's difficulties in Russia and in Africa and America's entry into the war, I would not necessarily assume that he will offer any effective resistance to any demands that Germany may make with its usual threat of pressure.

Both the Marshal and Darlan were again most cordial and friendly during the interview and expressed regret that other countries did not comprehend France's difficulties as did America.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/17698 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 19, 1941.

[Received December 19—7 p. m.]

1571. Embassy's 1530, 12th.<sup>s</sup> In note dated December 17 Foreign Office acknowledges Embassy's communication notifying French Government that a state of war exists between the United States and Germany and states that it is "the decision of the French Government to maintain in the course of this conflict an attitude of neutrality."

LEAHY

740.0011 E. W. 1939/17739 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 20, 1941—noon.

[Received 4:03 p. m.]

1578. Embassy's 1530, 12th.<sup>s</sup> In note to Embassy December 19 Foreign Office acknowledges Embassy's communication notifying French Government that state of war exists between the United States and Italy and states that it is "the decision of the French Government to maintain in the course of this an attitude of neutrality".

LEAHY

<sup>s</sup> Not printed; this telegram reported that notes containing declarations of war by the United States against Germany and Italy were delivered at 5 p. m., December 12 (740.0011 European War 1939/17451).

851.01/357

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

[WASHINGTON,] December 27, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me this morning at his request.

Lord Halifax asked whether I would not see to it that representatives of the Free French were present, if only in the capacity of "observers", at the meeting to be held this afternoon between the President and Mr. Churchill and the representatives of the refugee governments.

I said that the President had not consulted me in regard to this matter, but that if he were to consult me I should strongly recommend against it. I said that, as the British Ambassador well knew, this Government had been moving heaven and earth to keep on close terms with the Vichy Government in the hope that through such influences as we could exercise in Vichy and in North Africa the French fleet would not get into German hands, and North Africa would not be used as a base for military operations by the Germans. I said that it is unquestionable, particularly after the St. Pierre-Miquelon incident<sup>9</sup> which was only forty-eight hours old, that the reception by the President at the White House of representatives of the Free French movement in such a public meeting as that which would take place this afternoon would immediately give the Vichy Government the suspicion that the United States was playing both ends against the middle, and would likewise immediately give Germany the opportunity to use this to the detriment of American influences in Vichy and in order to create confusion on the part of public opinion in unoccupied France and in North Africa.

Lord Halifax appeared to see the light and said that he trusted that this Government, notwithstanding the St. Pierre-Miquelon incident, would not "harden its heart against the Free French". I said that Lord Halifax seemed to ignore one important fact, namely that the British Government had given a measure of official recognition to the Free French and that this Government had never done so. I said that it seemed to me in the highest degree expedient, so long as it was possible to do so, for this Government to continue its present relations with the Vichy Government, provided the Vichy Government did not become completely subservient to Germany and did not take action contrary to the formal assurances given the President by Marshal Pétain. If any change in this situation took place this Government, of course, could then consider recognition of the Free French move-

<sup>9</sup> See pp. 540 ff.

ment. I said that I was unable, however, to see that the Free French movement at the present moment had anything very much to commend it from the practical standpoint. I said unfortunately there were no outstanding men with qualities of leadership and of initiative directing the Free French movement and providing that kind of inspiration to free men, both in France and in other parts of the world, to join in a movement against their German oppressors. I said I felt that if some man like Herriot could get out of France and lead the movement the situation would undoubtedly be very different, but that I could not see that either General de Gaulle or his associates provided any rallying point for French patriotism. For all of these reasons I felt it was wiser and in the best interests of both Governments for the two Governments for the present to pursue their respective courses until and unless existing conditions changed.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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851A.01/87b

*Draft of a Letter From President Roosevelt to the French Chief of State (Pétain)*<sup>10</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] December 27, 1941.

MY DEAR MARSHAL PÉTAIN: At this approaching moment of the new year I am taking advantage of the departure of a courier to send you a message of greeting and also to express by note my gratification for the recent assurances from you which Admiral Leahy has transmitted to me.

Now that this country is actively engaged in the struggle imposed upon it by the Powers of aggression your reaffirmations that no use will be made of the French Fleet for hostile operations in support of Germany and that no utilization of French territory or bases by the Axis Powers will be permitted can only serve to reenforce the traditions which have long linked our peoples.

In the critical days ahead it is the continued hope of this country that French territory shall remain intact and that at the close of the present war to the victorious conclusion of which the Government and the people of the United States have dedicated their every effort France will resume that glorious place which it has held among the enlightened nations of the world. I have not failed to make known to you that the Government of the United States is fully cognizant of

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<sup>10</sup> Notation in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park indicates letter was given to H. Freeman Matthews, Counselor of Embassy in the United Kingdom, to take to Lisbon on December 28 for forwarding to Marshal Pétain.



the severe limitations imposed upon the French Government and people by the terms of the Armistice Convention and that within these limitations there is every reason to believe that France can preserve French soil everywhere for the French people.

You will readily understand how essential it is to the vital interests of the United States that France shall continue to exercise jurisdiction free from foreign domination over its own territories and possessions. I again repeat that as long as French sovereign control remains in reality purely French, subject solely to the limitations of the Armistice Agreement, the Government of the United States has no desire to see existing French sovereignty over French North Africa or over any of French colonies pass to the control of any other nation.

I am confident that during the New Year which lies ahead of us you will defend the honor and integrity of the French people and nation upon which their future so clearly depends.

In conclusion, may I express to you my most cordial wishes for your continued good health.

Very sincerely yours,

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## INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES IN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN FRENCH NORTH AFRICA <sup>11</sup>

### I. Negotiations Leading to Signature and Approval of the Murphy-Weygand Agreement, February 26, 1941

740.0011 European War 1939/7644 : Telegram

#### *The Minister in Portugal (Pell) to the Secretary of State*

LISBON, January 14, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received January 17—3:12 p. m.]

14. For the Under Secretary <sup>12</sup> from Murphy: <sup>13</sup> In accordance with your instructions I visited what seemed to me the key places in French Africa—viz., Algiers, Dakar, Tunis, Bizerte, Oran, Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakech, Fez, and also Tangier. I was fortunate in finding General Weygand <sup>14</sup> not only at Algiers, but also at Dakar and Rabat. I had conversations with him, General Noguès, <sup>15</sup> Admiral Esteva, <sup>16</sup> Governor General Boisson, <sup>17</sup> Governor General Chatel, <sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Continued from *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, pp. 570–636.

<sup>12</sup> Sumner Welles.

<sup>13</sup> Robert D. Murphy, Counselor of Embassy in France, temporarily at Lisbon.

<sup>14</sup> Gen. Maxime Weygand, Delegate General of the French Government in North Africa.

<sup>15</sup> Gen. Albert Noguès, Resident General of the French Zone of Morocco.

<sup>16</sup> Adm. Jean Pierre Esteva, French Resident General in Tunisia.

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Boisson, French High Commissioner in West Africa.

<sup>18</sup> Yves Chatel, Secretary General of the Delegation General in French Africa.

Generals Barrau, Gama, Martin, Lascroux, Lotay, Admirals D'Harcourt, Landriau and Derrien, Secretary General Monick at Rabat,<sup>19</sup> the Comte de Paris and many other French officials and businessmen whom I shall enumerate in my written report.<sup>20</sup> I also had talks with some of the natives, such as the Pashas of Fez and Marrakech.

If you approve I shall outline the tenor of these talks and suggest certain conclusions in this telegram, submitting a written and oral report on arrival in Washington. Several separate telegrams on specific matters are being sent with this.

1. General Weygand and his associates are engaged in laying the necessary foundation for substantial independent military action against Germany and Italy. Their program cannot properly be termed a dissident movement as it is being formulated with Marshal Pétain's<sup>20a</sup> approval. It is based on an ardent desire to retain the control of French Africa in the hands of the duly constituted French Government. Should that Government be captured by the Germans as a result of the occupation of all metropolitan France or otherwise deprived of its present limited authority, French Africa will unquestionably provide the springboard for the military rebound which will follow. The Weygand organization is being constructed along sound and substantial lines but its leaders have no desire to plunge into an ill-prepared adventure. They regard French Africa as France's last trump which must be cautiously and skillfully played. They are all eager for American sympathy and immediate economic cooperation. I believe they merit our interest and practical support in their determination to resist German domination of French Africa.

2. There is no aggressive sentiment against England but definitely a basic sympathy with the British cause. This is especially true of Weygand, the army officers and civilian officials but less true of some of the naval officers.

Weygand in the presence of Boisson told me "Obviously I hope for a British victory. We all do. My primary job, however, is to keep French Africa intact—for France. It is a situation in which the greatest discretion must be exercised. It is a great misfortune that the British feel that everything must be shouted from the rooftops. There are so many ways we could help them in the Tchad and elsewhere if they would only act intelligently." Many others in Weygand's entourage and elsewhere expressed admiration for the British people, their courage and tenacity, and the hope that England would win; some, a doubt that victory is possible; others, a suspicion that Britain has long term designs on French Africa. Boisson

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<sup>19</sup> Emmanuel Monick, Secretary General of the French Zone of Morocco.

<sup>20</sup> Not printed.

<sup>20a</sup> Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, French Chief of State.

inquired whether I believe that the British would ever leave French Equatorial Africa.

3. Economically French Africa is hard pressed. Food is plentiful with the exception of sugar and tea (very important for the Arab population) but business is stagnant. Stocks of many commodities are depleted. There is a severe gasoline and coal shortage. Railway, automotive, aviation and road building equipment is deteriorating and there will soon be an urgent need for replacement.

In this connection I wish to make particular reference to French West Africa and French Morocco. The life blood of those areas is gasoline. [Apparent omission] directly from the camel and bullock stage to the automobile and the airplane. Their rail systems are insignificant and totally inadequate for distribution. The bulk of their automotive and agricultural road building machinery is of American manufacture. The British blockade has cut them off from their regular supply of petroleum products. Use of gasoline has long since been stringently limited to the minimum transport of necessities, even on that basis the supply in French Morocco with the exception of 6,000 tons reserved for military use will be exhausted by February. In French West Africa there is possibly a month's supply.

Monick at Rabat graphically described this situation as dangerous. He said that he is endeavoring to build up around Weygand as much in the way of economic and material support as he can, knowing full well that Weygand is a thorough technician who will not move unless he believes that adequate supplies are available. Monick said that reasonable contentment on the part of native population is essential if there is to be enthusiastic action on their part. He referred, as did Noguès, to the fact that there is a native population of Arabs and Berbers in French Morocco of 6,000,000 as compared with a French population of 150,000. Noguès emphasized that German propaganda is endeavoring to use the growing economic discontent to sow dissension among the natives and destroy their faith in the French. French military authorities have done wonders in conserving their organization intact, developing new strength, and maintaining their authority over the native populations. If they are deprived of the necessities of life, principally because of a breakdown of the transport system, the Germans will be provided again with ground fully prepared for fifth column activity.

Weygand, Monick and others bluntly say that the British must make up their minds: Do the British wish to work for the decomposition of French Africa, thus, in their opinion, playing directly into the hands of the Axis Powers; or do they wish to build up a French Africa which, at a decisive moment, the French hope may play a vital role in the decision of the present European war.

Monick said that he fully understands the considerations which weigh on the British and expressed the wish that he were in London in order that he might persuade his friends there of the urgency of treating French Africa as a friendly element capable of great utility in the future, rather than a dubious force to be dealt with harshly, deprived of means and subjected to adverse propaganda.

Monick also asserted that German action will come within 3 to 4 months or by June 1st at the latest. By that time he feels that it is absolutely necessary that Weygand's organization be built up to a point of effective usefulness. As matters now stand, with the limited supplies available, effective resistance on the part of French Africa to a combined process of German-Italian attack would be almost impossible. He and others urged that if the United States decides in favor of economic cooperation with French Africa that we bear in mind that speed is of the essence.

4. General Weygand said on the subject of economic guarantees: "I am prepared to give whatever guarantees you wish. What does your Government desire? If an American control commission is desired I am quite in accord. You have your consulates here. You know our normal consumption. The British blockade largely controls exports. In addition I can give you my word of honor that whatever you send will be consumed in French Africa. I hope my word still has a value."

I am certain that any reasonable arrangement we suggest will be gladly approved.

5. German and Italian control factors in French Africa are limited to two German civilian delegates of the Armistice Commission at Casablanca and a limited number of the Italian delegates in North Africa only. The French attitude is glacial courtesy. The delegates may not proceed anywhere for inspection or visits unless accompanied by a French officer. Contempt for the Italians especially is noticeable. I mentioned to General Weygand's Air Attaché the other day at Rabat that the General seemed in a rare good humor, and the Attaché replied, "Yes, the Italians had a bad day yesterday." Weygand repeatedly refers to the Italians as that "execrable nation".

6. Under General Weygand's competent direction the military, naval and air establishments are being radically strengthened. Under the Armistice Agreement French Africa was permitted 100,000 effectives. Over 100,000 additional demobilized effectives are now available. There are about 1,500 first class pilots with a corresponding number of mechanics. There are available seven or eight hundred first line fighting planes. French West Africa can provide 400,000 native troops and French Morocco about half that many.

There is a shortage of matériel and I shall cover that matter in another communication. The French are using every possible pretext to persuade the German and Italian Armistice Commission to permit them to increase military effectives in French Africa.

7. French West Africa would welcome establishment of an American trans-Atlantic air service to Dakar. Boisson said that he sincerely hopes that Pan-American will establish a Natal-Dakar service. He promised his cooperation if Pan-American would consider it.

8. Boisson urged that the United States conclude a trade agreement directly with French West Africa. He asserted that he has authority to enter into such an agreement. On my return to Algiers I asked Weygand and Chatel whether they thought such an arrangement possible. Weygand at first doubted but Chatel supported the idea and Weygand finally agreed it could be made.

9. Weygand repeatedly emphasized the need of discretion in our dealing with French Africa under the present circumstances. He said that every time the British radio described him as about to lead an independent movement in Africa it was an added handicap. The Germans requested his recall, he said, about the time of Laval's fall<sup>21</sup>—in fact that was one of the elements in Laval's fall, because the Marshal refused.

Weygand said that it must be clear to us that he must pretend to stand for the policy of collaboration and that he must use the pretext of the De Gaulle<sup>22</sup> and British action in Africa as a bargaining point with the Germans. He repeated that Darlan<sup>23</sup> said recently at Vichy that if De Gaulle did not exist he would have to be invented. He also said that of course he has no intention of attacking De Gaulle, but he is certain that eventually the British will withdraw De Gaulle from French Africa as a disturbing factor.

10. Just as the President's November [*October*] message to Pétain<sup>24</sup> supported the Marshal in his decision to oust Laval, and marked a turning point in French policy, economic support now of French Africa will strengthen Weygand's determination to resist Axis aggression. Translated into action it would mean small shipments immediately of automotive gasoline, kerosine and gas oil to Dakar and Casablanca under whatever guarantee we wish. Such shipments

<sup>21</sup> Pierre Laval was dismissed as Vice President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs on December 13, 1940. See telegram No. 1135, December 14, 1940, noon, from the Chargé in France, and following documents, *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 421.

<sup>22</sup> Gen. Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French.

<sup>23</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan, French Minister of the Navy.

<sup>24</sup> See telegram No. 636, October 25, 1940, noon, to the Chargé in France, *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 475.

would go far to counteract German propaganda and would stimulate all those in French Africa working for eventual independent action. [Murphy.]

PELL

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740.00112 European War 1939/2216

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the  
Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Villard)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 15, 1941.

Mr. Guerin<sup>25</sup> stated that he was very much discouraged by recent developments in the British attitude toward trade between the United States and French North Africa. He said that the latest information to reach him on this subject was to the effect that the British were letting no shipments from the United States through the blockade and that their policy was more, rather than less, inflexible than before. As evidence of this, Mr. Guerin said that the British authorities had cancelled the permission they had previously granted for the shipment of a quantity of coal for the use of the Moroccan State Railways.

Mr. Guerin explained that for the last fifteen years the agricultural economy of North Africa had been practically entirely dependent on the use of tractors and motor trucks. The agricultural system in Algeria and Morocco in particular had been geared to these modern methods and it was therefore impossible to handle crops or produce without lubricating oil and gasoline. Beginning in March a crisis would be reached, since this was the season for planting, and the movement of trucks and tractors is now at a standstill owing to the lack of petroleum products.

Mr. Guerin said that he feared the most serious consequences if no steps were taken to relieve the present shortage and a collapse took place of the North African economic system. In addition to the possibilities of native unrest and exploitation of the situation by the Germans, there was a likelihood that the French Government would be forced to run the blockade with naval vessels. This would probably result in unfortunate clashes with British naval forces, which was exactly what the German Government desired.

Mr. Guerin said that his Government was prepared to give any kind of guarantees or assurances that might be desired in regard to the ultimate destination and consumption of American products imported into North Africa. He said that he was confident a satisfactory system could be worked out which would result in close control of the imported products. For example, he suggested that an unofficial American observer under the auspices of some private organization might

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<sup>25</sup> Paul Guérin, representative of the French Moroccan Railways, temporarily in the United States, attached to the French Embassy.

be detailed to accompany each shipload of products and supervise its distribution and use in North Africa. He said the French Government would be prepared to establish any sort of control system in this respect that would be satisfactory to the American Government.

I asked Mr. Guerin whether he had been in touch recently with the British Embassy on this subject. He replied that he had discussed the matter on several occasions with Mr. Helm,<sup>26</sup> who had indicated that the Embassy was expecting a declaration of policy from London on the question of permitting shipments from the United States to pass the blockade in the African colonies. Mr. Guerin said that the British officials here were disposed to be cooperative and that the chief difficulty lay with the Ministry of Economic Welfare [*Warfare?*] in London. It was his understanding that the navicerts which had been issued for the coal shipments to Morocco had been revoked on orders from London. In his opinion, therefore, the only method of approach to the problem was to deal as directly as possible with the authorities in the Ministry of Economic Welfare [*Warfare?*].

Mr. Guerin said that it was difficult to understand the assistance extended by Great Britain to Spain in an effort to keep that country away from the Axis when British policy in North Africa was calculated to drive the French colonies straight into the arms of the Germans. He said that the situation was growing more critical every day and that the matter of supplies was urgent. While Mr. Guerin did not make the outright request, he intimated that his Government looked to the United States Government as an intermediary in approaching the British with a view to lifting the blockade in North Africa for essential imports of American products under a satisfactory and suitable system of guarantees.

I said that we also had been in touch with the British Embassy and were awaiting the arrival of a declaration of policy from London. Until that arrived it would be impossible to make any definite statements on the subject. I said we had received a copy of a memorandum<sup>27</sup> prepared by General Weygand's economic experts outlining the immediate needs in North Africa and that our most recent information was to the effect that these considerations had also been laid before Ambassador Leahy by Marshal Petain and Foreign Minister Flandin. Mr. Guerin said that he was one of several voices speaking for his Government but they were all stressing the same point, namely the urgent necessity and desirability of maintaining the economic system in French North Africa.

I said that consideration was being constantly given to the matter in the Department and that if any developments should occur we would get in touch with him.

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<sup>26</sup> A. K. Helm, First Secretary of the British Embassy.

<sup>27</sup> Not printed.

740.00112 European War 1939/2085: Telegram

*The Minister in Portugal (Pell) to the Secretary of State*

LISBON, January 16, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received January 16—3:33 p. m.]

16. For the Under Secretary from Murphy. At Rabat, General Weygand and Monick spoke to me about the forthcoming visit to Lisbon of two French representatives, Marchal<sup>28</sup> and Marjolin,<sup>29</sup> who plan to meet here with Eccles,<sup>30</sup> representing Sir Frederick Leith-Ross,<sup>31</sup> for a discussion of the blockade question as it relates to French Africa. The French intend to present to the British a detailed plan of French Africa's economic situation with a description of what they would like urgently to receive from the United States, Great Britain and Portugal.

I saw Marchal and Marjolin both at Rabat and Tangier on the way to Madrid. They were proceeding there on the pretext of a periodical discussion of the Franco-Spanish clearing agreement in order to throw the Germans off the scent. They hope that their meeting with Eccles can be kept secret.

Weygand and Monick suggested that you might want to have me remain here for several days for the purpose of listening in on these conversations (without of course making anything in the nature of a commitment) in order that they might be accurately reported to the Department thus avoiding any misunderstanding on our part of the position taken by the two parties. Please instruct by telegraph. [Murphy.]

PELL

740.0011 European War 1939/7711: Telegram

*The Minister in Portugal (Pell) to the Secretary of State*

LISBON, January 17, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received January 18—9:40 a. m.]

19. For the Under Secretary from Murphy. General Weygand told me that one of the greatest handicaps he had to overcome in his effort to organize French Africa is a certain type of broadcast over British and American networks. He gave me a compilation of sev-

<sup>28</sup> Léon Marchal, Director of Commerce and Industry, French Zone of Morocco.

<sup>29</sup> Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary General, French Zone of Morocco.

<sup>30</sup> David Eccles.

<sup>31</sup> Director General, British Ministry of Economic Warfare.



eral broadcasts and I think it well to quote two or three to illustrate the point:

"London, December 18, 7:20 G. M. T. In French. Pétain will not leave France but certain of his collaborators can find refuge in North Africa under the authority of General Weygand. The latter openly regrets having stopped fighting so soon and having been deceived by reports to the effect that a revolution was imminent in France."

"Boston, December 19, 8 p. m., G. M. T. In French. When [*What?*] will General Weygand say? From present indications Oudry, representing Free France in the United States, declares that he has no doubt that North Africa will resist.[""]

"London 9 [apparent omission] In English. In the event of the occupation of French ports by the Germans, North Africa will arise against such a state of affairs. General Weygand is actively consolidating the position of France in the colonies."

General Weygand said that he would be most grateful for any influence the Department might bring to bear on the subject of radio broadcasts. He would be the happiest man in the world if his name would never be mentioned; almost every time it is mentioned there is a back-fire from the Germans thus rendering his task doubly difficult. As I reported in another telegram the Germans asked for his recall in December. General Weygand realizes, of course, that there is freedom of the press and radio in the United States but he thought that it might be possible to suggest to the British Embassy in Washington that the British censor is doing their cause more harm than good in permitting the use of General Weygand's name in such broadcasts, and in effect continually warning Germany that French Africa is preparing to fight Germany. [Murphy.]

PELL

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740.00112 European War 1939/2085: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Portugal (Pell)*

WASHINGTON, January 17, 1941—7 p. m.

27. For Murphy from the Under Secretary. Your 16, January 16, 5 p. m. I think it would be highly desirable for you to remain in Lisbon until the conversations mentioned in your telegram have been concluded. Please inform the Department by telegram of the results.

The information contained in your telegram of January 14 <sup>31a</sup> has been exceptionally valuable to the Department and we are most gratified with the results of your trip. [Welles.]

HULL

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<sup>31a</sup> Telegram No. 14, p. 206.

851T.48/7

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] January 18, 1941.

The French Ambassador<sup>32</sup> called at his request. He brought up the question of cooperation by this Government in furnishing relief for North Africa in the form of sugar, gasoline and oil, et cetera. I replied that we were giving this matter attention each day and had accumulated most of the facts we desired as a basis for a final decision. I added that there was nothing I could say until we had obtained and developed all the facts, which should be very soon. He seemed to be satisfied with this.

In connection with the foregoing he handed me the accompanying statement (copy attached)<sup>33</sup> itemizing goods which are being interrupted in their shipment.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

840.51 Frozen Credits/1216: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, January 25, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received January 26—9:45 a. m.]

104. The Foreign Office states that a telegram has been sent to Ambassador Henry-Haye to approach the Department in an endeavor to obtain the unblocking of French funds to permit the purchase of a tanker load of petroleum products in Mexico. It was explained to the Embassy this afternoon that this petroleum was needed most urgently in Morocco and was destined solely for Morocco. Supplies of kerosene for lamps of the natives and gas oil for tractors will be exhausted in a month's time. This was one of the problems which the Foreign Office had hoped to settle with the British in [apparent omission] at Madrid. However with the departure of Eccles from Madrid and from other indications (Embassy's telegram 88, January 21, 9 p. m.)<sup>33</sup> it appears that at best these negotiations will be subject to delay and long drawn out. Since the French, therefore, cannot obtain navicerts, says the Director of Commercial Relations at the Foreign Office (Arnal), and since the problem is of such urgency for Morocco the French desire to send a tanker now at Martinique to Mexico to load there with oil purchased with these unblocked funds and sail for Casablanca.

Arnal stated that he is fully aware of our policy of complete cooperation with the British on blockade matters but that he hopes,

<sup>32</sup> Gaston Henry-Haye.<sup>33</sup> Not printed.

since this isolated shipment is of such urgency since it is destined solely for consumption in Morocco and since it would seem likewise to be in the British interests, that it can be carried out.

Whether it would be "preferable" for us to inform the British and obtain their acquiescence or whether it would seem more practical merely to close our eyes to the operation was a question, he said, which the Department could determine better than the French in view of their lack of direct contact with the British and their uncertainty as to British policy. But the Foreign Office hopes, however, for our cooperation in unblocking the necessary dollars. (Since some ships are freely permitted to pass Gibraltar where others with the same destination and cargoes are being stopped and held, the French are completely in the dark as to British intentions. In fact, French Admiralty circles would appreciate guidance from the British in order to restrict their sailings accordingly.)

Arnal said that instructions have been sent to Admiral Robert at Martinique to discuss with our representative in Martinique both the question of the tanker's departure for Mexico and the shipment of gold to New York in an amount equivalent to the dollars unblocked.

Since it would seem obviously in line with our policy to strengthen Morocco at this time, I hope that the Department will find it possible to assist the French in this instance.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/7644: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Portugal (Pell)*

WASHINGTON, January 28, 1941—6 p. m.

51. Your 14, January 14, 7 p. m. For Murphy. The Department is planning to instruct you shortly to proceed with the least possible delay to Algiers in order to pursue further the conversations which you have had with General Weygand on the subject of economic cooperation with French Africa. Please inform Algiers by telegraph of your contemplated arrival, with the request that General Weygand be apprized of the purpose of your visit.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/8141b: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, February 1, 1941—4 p. m.

106. The British Foreign Office has informed the Department that directions have been given that the British Broadcasting Corporation and, so far as possible the British press, should avoid all mention of

General Weygand and particularly any speculation regarding the possibility that he might resume the struggle.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/8097 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, February 3, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received February 4—1:15 a. m.]

150. Monsieur Flandin<sup>35</sup> informed me today that he has received word from Weygand that Murphy has sent him a message that the Department is envisaging sending him back to Algeria to resume negotiations on economic matters. Monsieur Flandin said that while the Vichy Government is anxious to carry on such negotiations, looking towards the supplying of North Africa, with this Embassy the return of Murphy to that area would be very unfortunate in view of the present critical situation of the Vichy Government. It would be interpreted, he said, by Wiesbaden as an indication that there is in fact a separation between North Africa and Vichy with all its implication. He added that at this time when the Germans are bringing great pressure, which the French are resisting, to send control commissions to North Africa, the return of Murphy would greatly weaken the French arguments.

LEAHY

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851T.48/8

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

[WASHINGTON,] February 4, 1941.

The French Ambassador called to see me at his request. At the outset of the conversation I told the Ambassador that I had hoped to be able to give him a favorable reply this afternoon with regard to the suggested economic agreement between North Africa and the United States which would permit the unblocking of funds held here to an extent necessary to provide for the monthly shipment to North Africa of normal quantities of given commodities very greatly needed in North Africa, provided satisfactory guarantees could be given that distribution would be safeguarded, that transmission from North Africa would be prevented and that the bases for such agreement suggested by General Weygand could be satisfactorily carried out. I said to the Ambassador that, unfortunately, a telegram which I had

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<sup>35</sup> Pierre Étienne Flandin, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

received this morning, reporting that M. Flandin, the French Foreign Minister, had stated that Mr. Murphy's return to North Africa would be embarrassing and would be resented by the German Government, appeared to block the reaching of any agreement at least for the time being. I said that, of course, the French Government must realize, as did we, that unless the United States had a properly qualified agent in North Africa able to negotiate all of the many details involved, it would be impossible under present conditions to conclude an agreement. I said that as the Ambassador knew, it was our desire to render this assistance and to do it as promptly as possible, but that the obstacle placed in the way of Mr. Murphy's return rendered an immediate conclusion of the agreement impossible of achievement.

I told the Ambassador that I discussed the problem in general terms with Lord Halifax<sup>36</sup> who had demonstrated a very sympathetic disposition with regard thereto insofar as the issuance of navicerts was concerned and that I regretted this unforeseen obstacle now interposed by the French Government.

I told the Ambassador that this Government was sending an instruction to Admiral Leahy<sup>37</sup> requesting him to call the attention of Marshal Petain to the fact that the United States was anxious to discuss a commercial agreement between North Africa and the United States but that the inability of Mr. Murphy to return to North Africa placed a material obstacle in the way of the conclusion of any such agreement. I told the Ambassador that we would make every effort to show to Marshal Petain our desire to be helpful and our recognition of the difficult situation with which he was confronted.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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840.51 Frozen Credits/1216: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, February 5, 1941—8 p. m.

118. Your 104, January 25, 10 a. m. The French Embassy has today been informed that funds sufficient to permit the purchase of a tanker load of petroleum products for Morocco will be released immediately. It was explained that the release of these funds was contingent upon the understanding that the petroleum products were destined solely for use in Morocco according to the assurances received from the Foreign Office. It was explained that the further supply of petroleum would be discussed in due course.

The Embassy was also informed that while this Government did not object to the purchase of Mexican oil there were, nevertheless, reasons

<sup>36</sup> British Ambassador.

<sup>37</sup> Telegram No. 112, February 4, 8 p. m., to the Ambassador in France, p. 108.

why, from the point of view of other American considerations, it would be preferable that this petroleum be obtained from other sources in the Western Hemisphere. There is no objection on the part of the American authorities to the use of a French tanker for the transportation. It was pointed out to the French Embassy that the prompt return of this tanker to American waters might facilitate further shipments.

The British Embassy has been informed of the American Government's interest in this shipment and its arrival at its destination in North Africa. No mention of the necessity of obtaining a navicert arose in the course of conversation with the British.

You should inform Foreign Office accordingly.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/7644: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Portugal (Pell)*

WASHINGTON, February 8, 1941—1 p. m.

81. Department's 51, January 28, 6 p. m. For Murphy. In the matter of your return to Algiers the Department has been in consultation both with London and Vichy.

Apparently the British have imagined our negotiations have gone further than is actually the case.<sup>38</sup> However they have been set straight on that point and "agree to the supply of essential requirements to Morocco by the United States provided (1) that excessive stocks are not built up and (2) that steps are taken to see there is no risk of the goods reaching the enemy. For this purpose His Majesty's Government regard it as essential that United States officials should be appointed at ports and on the railways . . .<sup>39</sup> (3) His Majesty's Government would be willing to include Algeria and Tunisia in the agreement provided that guarantees against reexport could be made really effective." The above conditions are *sine qua non* with the British who also attach importance to the fact (4) that in their negotiations "the principal stipulation made by His Majesty's Government was for the release of British and neutral ships detained in Moroccan ports. With the present dire need of shipping this is a vital point. . . .<sup>39</sup> His Majesty's Government cannot be expected to grant immunity to ships carrying supplies to Morocco while the tonnage which they urgently need is detained there."

The Vichy Government has no objection to your immediate return for further conversations with General Weygand in Algiers,

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<sup>38</sup> See pp. 241 ff.

<sup>39</sup> Omission indicated in the original telegram.

but has requested, because of the present difficulties with Germany, that you should not visit Dakar.<sup>41</sup>

Accordingly you are instructed to return for a final visit to North Africa before proceeding to Vichy to report previous to your return to the United States. You may state to General Weygand that the Government of the United States is prepared in principle to proceed with the matter of extending economic cooperation to the North African territories and has in fact informed the French Government of its agreement to the release of sufficient funds in this country that a French tanker may proceed at once to Morocco with petroleum products. You should add that under certain conditions enumerated below, I shall be prepared to authorize the shipment to Casablanca or any other designated port in French North Africa, (and if necessary the unblocking of sufficient funds) of further quantities of petroleum, kerosene, coal, tea, sugar, and such other supplies as are considered to be immediately and urgently necessary to prevent a breakdown of the North African economic system.

We should also be interested in receiving a list of those commodities General Weygand would seek to purchase in this country and likewise any commodities he would under existing conditions have available for export. You will explain to General Weygand that while the question of suitable guarantees in conformity with his statements to you (that goods imported under this arrangement would be solely for local consumption and that equivalent products will not be exported to Metropolitan France) should lie ultimately in agreement between the Vichy and the United States Governments, nevertheless an exchange of initialed memorandum of conversation relating to the guarantees he has personally given to you will be satisfactory for the immediate situation.

I believe that in order to carry out the arrangements which are proposed for trade with French Africa, it would be advisable for General Weygand to appoint a representative in this country who would be authorized to discuss the various details regarding transport and means of payment.

In order to expedite the discussions, General Weygand may perhaps wish to consider appointing in the capacity of his economic representative a person who is already in the United States. M. Paul Guerin, who is now in Washington in the interests of the Moroccan Railways and who has been working in close cooperation with officials of the French Embassy, has already discussed some of these questions with the Department. We are prepared in any event to enter promptly into further discussions with the person named by General

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<sup>41</sup> See telegram No. 164, February 6, 2 p. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 110.

Weygand as a qualified negotiator regarding the trade and economic problems of French Africa.

In the course of your conversation with General Weygand you may wish to refer to the reported arrival in Morocco of several members of a German control commission and inquire whether this would militate against the success of any contemplated trade arrangement.

If your conversations with General Weygand have developed satisfactorily up to this point, you may then refer to the conditions laid down by the British as set forth above. You will realize, of course, that point number 4, while a *sine qua non* of the British position, is one with which we are also sympathetic, but we recognize the difficulties in this connection which are imposed by the requirements of the German Armistice Commission in connection with the movement of ships.

The Department will furthermore expect that during your visit in Northern Africa you will likewise discuss with American consular officers the feasibility of stationing observers at ports and railways in compliance with the British demands referred to above.

You should make every effort to see that any publicity attendant upon your trip makes it clear that your conversations relate only to discussions concerning the supplying from the United States of food stuffs for Northern Africa, and plans providing for the distribution thereof.

HULL

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740.00112 European War 1939/2654

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the  
Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Villard)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 17, 1941.

Mr. Guerin came in to say that he had received private word to the effect that he had been appointed to negotiate with this Government on economic problems in behalf of the French North African territories. The French Ambassador had cabled to Vichy the suggestion that Mr. Guerin be appointed, and a reply had now been received under which it appeared that Mr. Guerin would be named by General Weygand and with Vichy interposing no objection. Mr. Guerin stated that he was prepared to initiate informal discussions immediately in respect to trade with North Africa, pending official confirmation of his appointment.

Mr. Guerin said that the conversations might be divided into four subjects: (1) The Assurances or Guarantees Against Reexport; (2) The Quantities of Supplies to be Imported into North Africa; (3)



Methods of Finance; and (4) Transportation. The following observations were made on these different subjects.

(1) *Guarantees.* Mr. Guerin said that the French authorities were prepared to give any kind of assurances desired by this Government that importations into North Africa would be limited strictly to local consumption and would under no circumstances be reexported to any destination. I said that we would probably rely chiefly on the word of General Weygand for these assurances, and that we expected to hear shortly from Mr. Murphy as to the outcome of his discussions with General Weygand on this point. However I said that the question of appointing American control officials was also under consideration, and that we were giving thought to the possibility of having our consular officers in North Africa exercise a certain amount of supervision. Mr. Guerin suggested the following places as suitable and strategic locations for the supervision and control of imports:

*Morocco.* (1) Casablanca; (2) Petit Jean (an important railroad junction controlling traffic to Casablanca, Tangier, and Port Lyautey; (3) Oudja (a road and rail junction through which must pass all traffic from Morocco to Algeria, and to the important Mediterranean port of Nemours).

*Algeria.* (1) Oran, or a small junction point 12 miles outside of the city; (2) Algiers; (3) Bône, which can be controlled from the junction at Guelma.

*Tunisia.* Probably one control officer at Tunis could supervise the traffic through that port, as well as Bizerte, Sousse, and Sfax.

(2) *Quantities of Supplies.* Mr. Guerin had prepared a list of urgently needed supplies for North Africa from information furnished by cable by the French authorities. He had also obtained a statement of the normal consumption of various commodities through sources in the French Commercial Attaché's Office in New York. I told Mr. Guerin that we would be glad to have a copy of this detailed list, although we expected to receive similar statements from other sources. I remarked that the list prepared by Mr. Guerin showed a very wide variety of products and that while it was impossible to express an opinion without further study, it seemed to me advisable not to present too large a request at the start. Mr. Guerin said that he would limit himself at the beginning to the immediate and urgent needs of French Africa, which could go forward as emergency shipments, details of a regular supply to be worked out later.

(3) *Financing.* Mr. Guerin stated that there were ample funds blocked in this country belonging to the French Government which would take care of all the needs of the North African territories. He said it would be entirely unnecessary to import gold for the purpose. The only question was the matter of unfreezing the necessary funds for each shipment, and I suggested that the best method might be for Mr. Guerin to present us with a detailed statement in the case of each shipment. We could then, if the amounts met with our approval, pass the word along to the Treasury Department to release the necessary funds. The details of purchase would, of course, be worked out by Mr. Guerin with the aid of French Embassy officials.

(4) *Transportation.* Mr. Guerin said that there were immediately available two tankers and four commercial vessels flying the French

flag, which were now in American ports and ready to sail for North Africa whenever cargoes were provided. One tanker could take 10,000 tons of oil and the other one could handle 16,000 tons. Six weeks would be required for a round trip in the case of these tankers. The commercial vessels together could carry about 30,000 tons of general cargo per month.

Mr. Guerin said that he wished to make it entirely clear that he was prepared to cooperate with us in every respect, to give any assurances or guarantees that might be required, and to follow our wishes in every way. He said he would be at our disposal as soon as we were ready to proceed further with the discussions, and that in the meantime he would submit a copy of his list of needed supplies. I told Mr. Guerin that we would let him know as soon as we had further word for him.

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740.0011 European War 1939/8452: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, February 18, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received 2: 24 p. m.]

204. Department's 106, February 1, 4 p. m. A member of the Marshal's entourage said last night that he felt it particularly important at this juncture that nothing be said over the American radio to give any impression that General Weygand is preparing for any eventual possible resistance to any German or Italian aggression in North Africa. He said that, while the BBC had recently maintained a discreet silence, the same had not been true of our radio. The principal reason for his anxiety at this particular juncture is the well-known rivalry and personal antipathy between Admiral Darlan and General Weygand. With the former rapidly concentrating more and more power in his hands—as the Department knows Admiral Darlan<sup>42</sup> took over the important Ministry of the Interior yesterday, thus acquiring control of the police and prefects throughout the country—a suggestion on the part of the Germans that it might be well to move General Weygand from North Africa might be accepted with enthusiasm by Darlan. The Embassy's informant felt that with Darlan's present power and influence he might be able to persuade the Marshal to agree to such a move which he felt, given Weygand's prestige, would mean the end of any possible North African resistance when the time comes.

Major Petit Jean Roger, Weygand's aviation aide, who was in Vichy yesterday, likewise emphasized how unfortunate any reference

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<sup>42</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Navy, and Interior.

to Weygand over the British or American radio is at this time. (The Department will recall the emphasis on this point in Murphy's telegrams and his written report of January 17<sup>43</sup> on his recent trip to North Africa.)

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/2228b : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé at Tangier (Childs)*

WASHINGTON, February 20, 1941—10 p. m.

20. Please deliver the following message to Murphy and inform the Department whether it has been possible to do so:

"In connection with the matter of stationing American observers at ports and railways to supervise the distribution of supplies to North Africa (see Department's No. 81, February 8 to Lisbon), the British authorities are insisting that some measure of control be established with regard to the tanker of petroleum products which is shortly to be dispatched to Casablanca. The British Embassy was informed that in connection with the first shipment of petroleum products to North Africa the Department deemed it well to make some sort of gesture indicating readiness to place credence in the assurances already given by the Vichy Government and by General Weygand and to avoid the appearance from the start of condemning their good faith. It was further stated that the moment you had finished your discussions with General Weygand the Department would be prepared to instruct the consular authorities at Casablanca to be in close touch with the French port authorities in North Africa as to the distribution of this first cargo of petroleum products. It is anticipated that a cargo not exceeding 15,000 tons of motor fuel will be loaded on the French tanker *Frimaire* which is due to arrive at Baytown, Texas, about February 20 for this purpose. A navicert is being required."

Refer to second section of your 32, February 15, 9 a. m.<sup>44</sup>

HULL

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740.00112 European War 1939/2230 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, February 21, 1941—noon.  
[Received February 21—9:05 a. m.]

44. Department's telegram No. 20, February 20, 10 p. m., has been communicated to Murphy. He arrived yesterday morning but expects to leave tonight by way of Casablanca for Algiers.

CHILDs

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<sup>43</sup> Not printed; for Mr. Murphy's telegraphic summary of report, see telegram No. 14, January 14, 7 p. m., from the Minister in Portugal, p. 206.

<sup>44</sup> Not printed.

740.00112 European War 1939/2231a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, February 21, 1941—1 p. m.

161. It is now expected that Murphy will see General Weygand in Algiers possibly on February 23. In the meanwhile you are requested to convey to Marshal Pétain the concern expressed here over reports reaching this Government to the effect that the arrival of German personnel in French North Africa, particularly in Casablanca, would indicate a German infiltration, which if established might, in fact, destroy the basis of confidence on which we are attempting to negotiate the agreement for supplies to North Africa.

You may wish to report the substance of your conversation direct to Murphy, who is today in Tangier.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/8577 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

[Extract]

VICHY, February 24, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 7:37 p. m.]

222. . . .

I told Admiral Darlan that we have information of recent arrivals of German officers and soldiers at Casablanca; that I was bringing the question up solely in view of the adverse effect that their presence in considerable numbers might have on present negotiations for the supplying of North Africa. Admiral Darlan replied that the Germans had gone there to replace the Italian Armistice Commission on the ground that, under the armistice arrangements, German control commissions are to supervise all questions pertaining to the Atlantic and the Italians, those in the Mediterranean. He said he believed the Germans' principal reason for going there was their distrust of the Italians and their desire to ascertain the exact state of French armament. Under the armistice, he said, France had been permitted to retain an army of 120,000 men in Africa and he felt that German investigations should convince them that at present there are only some 80,000. He proposes in one of his next conferences with the Germans at Paris to ask them to withdraw their military commission now that they have ascertained the facts. He said that this recommendation was likewise in accordance with the advice of the German "civilian representatives" (presumably Auer).

As to the Italians he said an Italian General had been present at the Marshal's Montpellier meeting with General Franco at General Franco's request and that he, Darlan, had spoken quite frankly to him as a sailor and not as Foreign Minister or Vice President of the Council. He had told him that the French "were not in the habit of stabbing people in the back" which reference "the Italian obviously did not like" and that since France had pledged her word not to reenter the war, that should be sufficient: the Italians should not therefore continue their irritating policies and suspicious attitude in North Africa.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/8655: Telegram

*The Consul General at Casablanca (Goold) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, February 26, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received February 26—6:45 p. m.]

78. My 63, February 14, 2 p. m.<sup>45</sup> It is now expected that 200 more Germans will arrive in a few days. They are to come in 8 planes, 25 men per plane, and are to control the aviation field.

The Germans here have already demanded control over the radio station. This has been denied and they have been referred to Wiesbaden. They have a transmitter of their own at Anfa.

Repeated to Tangier and Vichy.

GOOLD

740.00112 European War 1939/2274: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, February 28, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 11:50 p. m.]

249. Department's 81, February 8, to Lisbon. Murphy returned from Africa last evening bringing with him the following memorandum of his conversation with General Weygand at Algiers on February 26. The memorandum is initialed by General Weygand:

"The general phases of the supply of French North Africa with commodities essential to maintain the economic structure in that area were discussed. It was emphasized in the conversation that any agreement on this subject would be, of course, for negotiation between Marshal Pétain's Government and the United States Government in Washington.

<sup>45</sup> Not printed.

However, for the purpose of establishing immediately the progress made in the conversations at Lisbon and Tangier on this subject, and to permit the shipment at once of certain goods already ordered in the United States, it was considered necessary to prepare this memorandum, subject naturally to Marshal Pétain's approval.

The proposal of the American Government which General Weygand is disposed to recommend to Marshal Pétain contemplates that the shipment of supplies to French North Africa: (1) will not result in building up excessive stocks of commodities; (2) that steps will be taken to insure that such goods, as well as similar goods, shall be consumed in French North Africa and shall not be reexported in any form; (3) with the foregoing in mind the American Government would be authorized to designate American officials for control purposes at ports and on the railways; (4) in the event of a violation of the understanding that such goods would not be reexported, American economic cooperation with French North Africa would automatically and permanently terminate.

The American Government, it was understood, would be prepared to facilitate the supply of the essential needs of French Morocco, and also Algeria and Tunisia—as well as to unblock adequate French funds now in the United States for the purpose, subject to the foregoing conditions.

It was also thought desirable for the successful operation of this understanding that an economic and trade expert, qualified in French African affairs, would be appointed in the United States. Such expert would be attached to the French Embassy in Washington."

Prior to communicating to Marshal Pétain the concern to which reference is made in your telegram 161, February 21, 1 p. m., over reports that the arrival of German personnel in French North Africa, particularly Casablanca, would indicate a German infiltration which might, if established, destroy the basis of confidence for the negotiation of an agreement for the supply of North Africa and essential commodities, I desired to have the benefit of whatever information Murphy might have obtained on his recent visit to French Africa.

General Weygand gave to Murphy the following statement of the German and Italian Armistice Commission effectives now in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia: (figures below should be grouped under the following four headings: officers; noncommissioned officers; soldiers; civilians)

"Morocco: Italians 22, 10, 18, 7; Germans 12, 16, 14 plus 10 (mechanics), 2 (Auer and Klaubbe); Algeria: Italians 53, 41, 69, 8; Germans 2 liaison officers; Tunisia: Italians 57, 31, 67, 10; Germans 2 liaison officers. ["]]

According to General Weygand there are no German or Italian official representatives of any description now in French West Africa.

Marshal Pétain is on the point of departure for a trip of 2 or 3 days. I plan to see him immediately on his return.

Murphy reports that as a result of his recent visits to Rabat, Casablanca and Algiers he is convinced that we should not be dissuaded from any plan of economic cooperation with French Africa because of the recent arrival of German armistice delegates in French North Africa. General Noguès told Murphy at Rabat that he is keeping closely in touch with every move which the German delegates make; that their initial action relates to a verification of military supplies and that they are engaging in a survey of the mineral resources of Morocco. Noguès is convinced that the German purpose is to keep in close touch with the situation in Morocco, to prevent the development of an hostile French organization there and to study the Moroccan economic possibilities with a view to their future exploitation. Noguès said that most of the German officers are unacquainted with Moroccan conditions and it will be a considerable period before they are qualified for any useful service among the Arab population.

Murphy told both Weygand and Noguès that reports have reached us that the Germans were engaged or were planning to engage in subversive activities among the natives in Morocco. Both said that they had heard these rumors but that they were not substantiated. Weygand said that he was proceeding to French Morocco within several days to make a personal investigation; that if he found evidence of such subversive activities he would make an energetic protest to Marshal Pétain and insist that measures be taken to put a stop to such activity.

Both Weygand and Noguès asserted that British fears regarding invasion of French Morocco by the Germans along Norwegian lines are not justified. They said that should the Germans make such an effort, they were prepared for a stubborn resistance. Noguès went so far as to say that it would take the Germans 20 years to capture Morocco.

Both Weygand and Noguès emphasized to Murphy the urgent need for economic support if the French position in Africa is not to be seriously impaired. They pointed out that obviously the Germans and Italians are opposed to American cooperation because they wish the French position to be weakened.

I am confident that the idea of our economic collaboration with French West Africa is sound; that such cooperation is both in the French and British interest.

In that connection, Murphy has brought with him the text of a draft of a suggested Franco-American agreement for conclusion by an exchange of notes regarding commercial exchanges between French North Africa and the United States. I shall telegraph this text in a separate telegram.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *Infra.*

I should also be grateful if the Department would advise me of the status of the shipment of motor fuel mentioned in the Department's telegram 20, February 20, 10 p. m., to Murphy at Tangier and its probable date of sailing. It would be helpful to me in my forthcoming conversation with Marshal Pétain to be able to give him accurate information in regard to this shipment.

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/2277 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 1, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received March 2—1:51 p. m.]

255. With reference to Embassy's telegram No. 249, February 28, 10 a. m. The following is the suggested Franco-American agreement regarding commercial exchanges between French North Africa and the United States. This draft was prepared by the French representatives after their conversations with Eccles and Murphy at Lisbon and Tangier.

It should be added that Eccles in a letter addressed by him to Murphy proposed a number of conditions in behalf of the British Government such as the release of British and neutral shipping now in Moroccan ports; the reestablishment of British consulates in French North Africa; the right to distribute the *Tangier Gazette* in Morocco, et cetera.

*“Article I.*

The import into the United States of America of products before and after processing indigenous to or coming from French North Africa shall not be subject to any prohibition or restriction unless this prohibition or restriction applies equally to similar products of any origin or from any source.

*Article II.*

1. The Government of the United States of America undertakes to facilitate the execution in the United States of America of programs of purchases for French North Africa with the proviso that these programs should first have been approved by the contracting parties.

2. In particular, the Government of the United States of America undertakes to deliver the licenses required by the laws and regulations in force in their territory.

3. Purchases made by French North Africa in the United States of America shall be paid for in dollars. To this effect when the credits in free dollars which French North Africa has or may have at its disposal have been exhausted the Government of the United States of America shall give permission for the necessary dollars to be unblocked.



*Article III.*

1. The Government of the French State and the Government of the United States of America approve the purchasing program attached hereto which deals with the needs of French North Africa for certain products to be imported during the period from 1st March to 31st May 1941.

2. If French North Africa would view part of these needs by purchases made outside the United States of America or outside metropolitan France the quantities imported in this way shall be deducted from those which are covered by the guarantees given under the present agreement.

*Article IV.*

The Government of the French State guarantees that all goods imported under the present agreement as well as similar goods shall be consumed in French North Africa and shall not be reexported therefrom in any form either *en etat* or after this action except by agreement between the contracting parties.

*Article V.*

1. The Government of the United States of America may appoint one or more representatives in French North Africa who shall settle with the competent local authorities details for the application of the present agreement especially regarding the control of the undertakings laid down in the preceding article.

2. In order to facilitate this control the French North African authorities shall notify to the consular officers nominated for this purpose by the Government of the United States of America, the name and full details of the cargo of all ships leaving French North African ports.

*Article VI.*

The Government of the French State shall have the right to appoint one or more representatives in the United States of America in order to settle with the competent American authorities the details for the application of the present agreement.

*Article VII.*

The two contracting parties shall consult each other again before 1st May 1941 in order to set up and approve a purchasing program for French North Africa in the United States of America for the period beginning 1st June 1941.

*Article VIII.*

The present agreement shall come into force immediately. In the event of a violation of the provisions of article IV this agreement would automatically terminate. The agreement may also be terminated at any time on 1 month's notice by either contracting party."

We have the data mentioned in article III, paragraph 1, which are fairly voluminous but which will be telegraphed if Department desires.

I shall be grateful for the Department's comment on the foregoing and its advice whether the Department is disposed to conclude with the French Government this or a similar agreement. If so I shall appreciate the Department's instructions whether the procedure to be followed would be an exchange of notes here or in Washington.

In accordance with the Department's 81, February 8, to Lisbon, Murphy understands that he is now to proceed to Washington. Please confirm. In my opinion Murphy has detailed information that should be delivered orally to the Department.

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/2281 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 4, 1941—noon.

[Received 9 p. m.]

268. Marshal received me last evening in the presence of Foreign Minister Admiral Darlan. At the suggestion of the Marshal, I was accompanied by Mr. Murphy. I informed the Marshal of the forthcoming departure of an additional American Red Cross ship with a cargo of medical supplies and foodstuffs destined for French children.<sup>47</sup> I also referred to the Department's telegrams regarding the loading at Baytown, Texas, of the French tanker *Frimaire* with not exceeding 15,000 tons of motor gasoline destined for Casablanca.

Marshal Pétain expressed his satisfaction over the interest which the American Government is taking in the welfare of the French people and its growing understanding of French problems. He said that he is confident that as that understanding grows he will be able to count on American economic cooperation, but that he hopes that we will very soon extend our sympathetic cooperation now limited to French children to adults as well. The Marshal talked with feeling of the urgent situation now prevailing in the unoccupied zone regarding the critical shortage of wheat and corn and the adverse political potentialities inherent in such a situation.

I then referred to the interest we are taking in the question of the supply to French North Africa with certain essential commodities for the purpose of avoiding a collapse of the economic structure in that area. I said that the first shipment of gasoline to Casablanca is an earnest of that intention. (Admiral Darlan wondered whether the British would let it pass.) I pointed out, however, my concern on the score of rumored pending deliveries of petroleum products to Italy from Algeria and Tunisia. I told the Marshal that we have learned of an agreement entered into by the French Government on February 2 without reference to General Weygand for the delivery to Italy from Algerian stocks of 5,000 tons of motor gasoline. I said we also have a rumor to the effect that the French Navy Department had agreed or was on the point of agreeing to the release to Italy of 5,000 tons of fuel oil from French naval stocks in Tunisia.

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<sup>47</sup> For correspondence on this subject, see pp. 89 ff.

Marshal Pétain said that he had never heard of any such transactions and asked Admiral Darlan what he knew about them. Darlan, obviously uncomfortable, replied that it is true that France had been required, he thought in January, under the terms of the armistice convention to deliver 20,000 tons of motor gasoline to Italy; that he did not recall that the Italians had specified that 5,000 tons were for delivery from Algeria but that they were to be taken from French stocks anywhere. Darlan said that in any event no gasoline will now be taken from Algerian stocks although that had been considered on the ground that the situation regarding gasoline was even more acute in unoccupied France than in North Africa and General Weygand had objected.

I emphasized at this point that if deliveries of gasoline from French Africa were made either to Germany or Italy obviously my Government would be in no position to ship gasoline there as such action would be in direct conflict with our general policy. Admiral Darlan said that he could assure us that the transaction under reference was a delivery exacted by the Armistice Commission because of an obligation assumed some time ago and that we can be sure that no petroleum products will be delivered from French Africa to Germany or Italy.

Regarding the rumor that 5,000 tons of fuel oil were about to be delivered to Italy from naval stores in Tunisia, Darlan said that the Italians frequently had requested such deliveries but that they had been refused consistently. Darlan said that it is necessary from time to time to deliver to the French Fleet for its own use part of fuel oil stocks in Tunisia and that such deliveries might be distorted into tales of delivery to the Italians. No such deliveries had or would be made as long as he had anything to do with it. Darlan also said that Germany has agreed to the delivery to France of 30,000 tons of Rumanian motor gasoline. He added dryly that the agreement was all right but no delivery date is specified. "When we shall receive the gasoline is quite another matter", he said.

Marshal Pétain said France has made desperate efforts to rehabilitate its transport system. The lack of gasoline is a prime obstacle and in addition the enormous quantity of railway equipment seized by Germany has had a paralyzing effect.

Your telegram No. 161, February 21, 1 p. m. I then said to the Marshal that there is much concern in Washington regarding the arrival at Casablanca of uniformed and armed German officers and soldiers and that we would be grateful for his view of that situation in French Morocco. The Marshal said that the German officers and men in question are simply delegates of the Armistice Commission which the Germans had insisted on sending on the ground that the Italian armis-

tice delegates in French Morocco were not functioning efficiently. The Marshal asked Admiral Darlan to give me what information he had. The Admiral said that as Casablanca is a port to which under the clauses of the Armistice Convention the Germans are entitled to send Armistice Commission delegates there is no ground on which France could support a refusal of the German request. However, he is urging a reduction in the number of German personnel now there (he confirmed that there are 52) and the substitution of civilians for the military. Admiral Darlan said that he had no information to the effect that the Germans are planning to increase the number; that in every case the German authorities have informed France in advance of the assignment of Armistice Commission personnel and there has been no indication of a contemplated increase. Darlan is reasonably sure, he said, that the number will be reduced rather than increased.

Both Marshal Pétain and Admiral Darlan scoffed at stories to the effect that the Germans are planning an invasion of French North Africa. They said that such an action is contrary to Germany's interests at present. The Marshal said he is certain that the Germans would only attempt an invasion of French Africa if they failed in an effort to invade the British Isles. He said with a smile, "So you must make up your minds whether you prefer the failure of an attempted invasion of England followed by an unsuccessful invasion of French Africa, or an attempted invasion of French Africa followed by an unsuccessful invasion of England".

In any event both the Marshal and Darlan insisted that France is prepared to resist an attempt at invasion of French Africa no matter who the invader.

We referred to rumors current to the effect that the German delegates in French Morocco are alleged to be indulging in subversive propaganda among the natives, spending a good deal of money, et cetera. Darlan said acidly that he believes that other nationalities in addition to the Germans are spending money in Morocco saying that he would not be surprised if the Spaniards were doing so as well as the Italians and the British. The Marshal jokingly said he wondered what the Spaniards were using for money. (Previously in the conversation he had referred to the improved relations between France and Spain; how he as French Ambassador to Madrid had been instrumental in extending aid to Spain and adding that though relations between the countries had improved enormously Spain's economic situation remained shocking.) Darlan said that he thought whatever money the Spaniards are spending in Morocco is being spent for the account of somebody else.

I also inquired regarding a current rumor to the effect that General Weygand is being recalled, pointing out that such action might have a disconcerting effect in Washington where confidence in Weygand is an important factor in our plan of possible economic cooperation with French Africa. Marshal Pétain denied that Weygand is being recalled. He said General Weygand will be in Vichy Friday next for consultation and that he hoped to have me for lunch with the General on that day. The Marshal said that Weygand would thereafter return to Algiers to resume his duties as Delegate General to French Africa.

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/2274 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, March 7, 1941—8 p. m.

207. Embassy's telegrams No. 249, February 28, 10 a. m. and No. 255, March 1, 3 p. m. You should obtain from the French Government written confirmation that it accepts the conditions set forth in the initialed Weygand memorandum. When that has been obtained the Department proposes immediately to begin discussions in Washington with the duly qualified North African representative regarding supplies of individual products for North Africa, methods of shipment and payments. It is presumed that M. Guerin will be supplied with the necessary authority for this purpose. Please confirm this latter.

We see no need nor do we consider it advisable at the present time to conclude any other form of arrangement. When the French Government's agreement to the memorandum has been secured Murphy should return to the United States for consultation.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/8915 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 9, 1941—4 p. m.  
[Received March 10—5: 45 p. m.]

284. General Maxime Weygand, accompanied by his aides Count de Rose and Count de Leusse called on me today at my residence. I had been informed previously through Count de Rose that after reflection it was considered more prudent that Marshal Pétain should not invite me to lunch or dinner with General Weygand in order to avoid agi-

tating the Germans who would undoubtedly place an exaggerated construction on such an affair.

I informed General Weygand that I had today received instructions from my Government to the effect that I should obtain written confirmation from the French Government of the conditions set forth in the memorandum regarding economic cooperation with French North Africa initialed by General Weygand at Algiers on February 26, 1941. When that had been obtained, my Government proposed to begin at once discussion in Washington with the duly qualified French representative regarding supplies for French North Africa, including the questions of shipping and payments.

General Weygand, in expressing his gratitude, said he was delighted with the progress which had been made in that direction and that such shipments could not be made too soon. He referred to the native Arab and Berber populations in North Africa, saying that after all those millions of people are not French and that their loyalty to France would diminish as their living conditions became less and less satisfactory. General Weygand said that this situation obviously favored German penetration.

I told General Weygand of the concern which my Government felt over the arrival of armed and uniformed German officers and soldiers at Casablanca. General Weygand, after stating that the 50-odd German personnel have with them very little in the way of arms, said he understood fully our concern because he felt the same way about it. He said that he had no illusions over the purity of German intentions in Morocco, that the Germans are certainly not there at his invitation, and that he is doing his best to control and circumscribe their activities. He said that they are undoubtedly in Morocco to spread propaganda among the native population. One of the best ways in which that propaganda can be defeated, he said, is to have the needs of the native population satisfied. He thought that American assistance in enabling France to satisfy the native's essential needs would constitute the best bulwark against German propaganda. It is obvious, General Weygand said, that if the native is required to go without necessities, he will be much more susceptible of German propaganda and doubtful of French ability to administer the country than if his needs are satisfied.

I inquired about the situation in Syria<sup>48</sup> and the General said that there is another example of the German method. There are in Syria, he said, only two German official representatives, but the Germans have released and helped repatriate a number of native soldiers.

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<sup>48</sup> For correspondence on this subject, see vol. III, pp. 686 ff.

While these soldiers were prisoners in Germany they were coached and encouraged in every way to cooperate with the Germans on their return to Syria. Under the direction of the two official German representatives and their paid agents, these repatriates are undoubtedly responsible, said the General, for the recent disorders in Damascus.

I said to the General that another source of concern is the number of German effectives in Libya and that all these circumstances worked unfavorably against quick progress in the matter of American supplies for French Africa. In reply to my question, General Weygand said that he believes that there are at present between 1 and 2 divisions of Germans now in Libya. He said that their presence there constitutes a grave problem regarding what would happen should the German and/or Italian forces attempt to cross the Tunisian line. General Weygand said that he had his orders to defend French Africa and that should the Germans or Italians attempt to cross the Tunisian line that he would defend French territory to the best of his ability. I believe that he is quite sincere in this intention which has the full approval of Marshal Pétain.

I mentioned to General Weygand the unfortunate effect of the story regarding the order to deliver from Algeria 5000 tons of motor gasoline to Italy. General Weygand said he deplored this matter more than we did. It was an affair handled at Vichy with which he had nothing to do and it concerned apparently an old obligation. In any event, the memorandum of February 26 was the best sort of protection, both of our interests and his own, because he would be enabled, if in the future pressure would be put on him to release goods under similar circumstances, to refuse flatly on the ground that such delivery would endanger the entire French African economic structure.

I asked General Weygand regarding the commodities required urgently in French North Africa. He said that of course liquid fuels are the most important as well as automotive parts, binding twine for the crops, tea and sugar for the native population, et cetera, and referred to the list which is now under preparation by his services. I shall transmit this list by Murphy on his return to Washington.

General Weygand said that the written confirmation of the memorandum of February 26 is now being prepared by the Foreign Office and that I should undoubtedly receive it tomorrow. He said that the French Government approved it.

At departure, Count de Leusse said that he hoped, for obvious reasons, that no publicity would be given the General's visit.

LEAHY

740.00112 European War 1939/2453

*The French Minister for Foreign Affairs (Darlan) to the American Ambassador in France (Leahy)*<sup>40</sup>

[Translation]

C.857

VICHY, March 10, 1941.

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MR. AMBASSADOR: Referring to the conversations which have just taken place between the French and American Governments, with a view to ensuring the supplying of French North Africa with products originating in the United States, I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that the French Government attaches vital importance to the supplying of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco with overseas products. It is therefore disposed to take, in the territories of French North Africa, the measures necessary to ensure the execution of the provisions which, in the opinion of the Federal Government, condition this supplying, that is to say:

1—No accumulation of surplus stocks in Algeria, Tunisia or Morocco;

2—Consumption of the products imported and of similar products in French North Africa, and no reexportation of these products under any form whatsoever;

3—Control by American representatives, in ports and on railways, of the above undertakings.

The French Government, moreover, takes note of the fact that the American Government is disposed to facilitate the supplying of French North Africa with essential products and, for this purpose, to free from French holdings in the United States the sums necessary to finance the purchases which will be effected on the American market in behalf of North Africa.

The French Government believes that its assent to the dispositions indicated above in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, will, within a very short time, permit the effective importation into North Africa of the products which correspond to the most urgent needs of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. These products appear in the enclosure hereto. The French Government therefore would greatly value knowing at what date the first shipment of merchandise corresponding to these needs will be effected.

It would be desirable if negotiations might be undertaken in Washington as soon as possible with a view to deciding upon the modalities which will permit, in effect, the supplying of all of the North African requirements in foodstuffs.

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<sup>40</sup> Transmitted to the Department by the Ambassador in his despatch No. 73, March 11; received April 2.



I should appreciate it if Your Excellency would be good enough to acknowledge the receipt of this letter.

Accept [etc.]

F. DARLAN

[Enclosure—Translation]

LIST OF URGENT REQUIREMENTS OF NORTH AFRICA

1—Sugar	30,000 tons
2—Gasoline for trucks	15,000 "
3—Petroleum	6,000 "
4—Gas-oil, diesel-oil and light fuel	12,000 "
5—Lubricating oil	2,000 "
6—Coal	60,000 "
7—Pitch	750 "
8—Coke	375 "
9—Paraffine	700 "
10—Binding twine	2,700 "
11—Iron wire	1,000 "
12—Spare parts for agricultural machines	300 "
13—Medicaments: according to needs.	

740.00112 European War 1939/2515

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Villard)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 8, 1941.

Mr. Guérin came in to say that the French Ambassador had received a telegram from his Government accepting in their entirety all conditions specified by the Department in regard to the importation of American products into North Africa. Mr. Guérin said that the Ambassador would deliver this message in person, but that, in the meantime, he wished to give us advance notice of the situation.

Mr. Guérin said that the assurances received from his Government covered the following points:

(1) Every facility would be offered to American consular officers in North Africa to assure themselves that cargoes leaving North African ports for metropolitan France contained nothing which had not been authorized by the United States for importation into North Africa;

(2) General Weygand would provide every facility for American officials to receive from the French maritime authorities at Casablanca and Algiers all information desired in respect to cargoes leaving North African ports, their manifests, dates of departure, et cetera; and

(3) no products will be bought in foreign markets outside of the United States over and above the amounts named on the authorized

list of importations without the prior consent of the United States Government.

The French Government furthermore undertook that no mail would be carried on the vessels transporting supplies between North Africa and the United States, that no passengers would be carried in either direction except those approved by the United States Government, and that facilities would be offered for the transportation of American control officers in so far as accommodations were available. Mr. Guérin said that there were accommodations for two officers on the oil tanker *Schéhérazade*, which would be ready to sail from New Orleans within twelve days after permission was given to load. Two men could also be carried on the first freighter prepared to sail, which would probably be within two weeks.

The French Government in return requested (1) that the American control officers be known as attachés of the nearest American consulate in their field of operations, and that no title such as "adviser" or "observer" should be given, though the designation "economic attaché" could be used; and (2) that, for obvious reasons, not too many of the observers should proceed at the same time to North Africa.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2815½

*The French Ambassador (Henry-Haye) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, June 3, 1941.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: Referring to the memorandum initialed at Algiers February 26, 1941, by General Weygand and Mr. Robert Murphy, as well as to the letter sent by Admiral Darlan on March 10, 1941, to Admiral Leahy, I have the honor to confirm to Your Excellency that the guarantees formulated in those documents will apply to the goods listed in the attached program,<sup>49a</sup> which concerns the needs of French North Africa in import products of first urgency.

Accordingly, the French Government undertakes not to build up excessive stocks of the said goods in French North Africa and to take all pertinent measures with a view to assuring that these products and like products will be consumed in French North Africa and will not be reexported therefrom in any form.

The performance of these undertakings will be checked upon by the representatives that the American Government shall have designated for this purpose. The latter will receive all facilities with a view to the carrying out of their mission, the practical forms of the

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<sup>49a</sup> Not attached to file copy.

control could, moreover form the subject of a subsequent understanding, if such is necessary, between our two Governments.

French vessels, stationed in ports of America, which are or shall be assigned to transportation of goods as a result of this agreement, shall be returned to their port of departure in America in case they should cease to be used for such transportation. The return voyage of each vessel to America must be made within the shortest possible space of time after the discharging of its cargo in North African ports.

Moreover, it is understood that the United States is disposed to give all possible facilities for the continuance of this traffic and that it will use its good offices to obtain from the British Government the assurance that no vessel actually employed in this traffic will be seized or held by the action of the British authorities.

Failing such guarantee, the French Government would find itself in the impossibility of carrying out the obligations contracted in these agreements.

The French vessels used for direct transportation of goods between the United States and French North Africa shall not take on board any passenger except with the previous approval of the American Government. They shall not transport any letter or correspondence, of any nature whatever.

A complete list of the cargo of each vessel leaving a North African port shall be communicated, three days before its sailing, to the representative of the United States nearest to the port of departure. Vessels sailing for ports of the United States or other territories of America shall go directly to their destination and they may take on only natural or manufactured products of French North Africa, unless it be with the approval of the American Government, which has been sought in the course of numerous recent conversations.

The settlement for the sums due by American importers shall be made to the credit of the special N. A. account opened in the name of the French Government by the French American Banking Corporation in New York. This account may not be used except in conformity with agreements entered into or to be entered into by the United States Treasury and this Embassy.

The requests made by the Department of State concerning, on the one hand the exportation of a certain quantity of olive oil from North Africa to the United States, and on the other the undertaking not to export ores of cobalt and Molybdenum from Morocco, are now the subject of careful examination on the part of the French Government. I hope to be in a position soon to communicate to Your Excellency my Government's reply on these two points.

In conclusion, I think I must call your attention to the fact that the attached program applies only to the most urgent needs of French

North Africa. It would be highly desirable that a definitive agreement be entered into as soon as possible between our two Governments in order to give to the supply of French North Africa the indispensable scope and regularity and all the value which is attributed to it by the French Government.

I should be grateful if Your Excellency would be good enough to confirm to me your agreement with the terms of this letter.

Please accept [etc.]

HENRY-HAYE

## II. Negotiations With the British Regarding American Economic Aid to French North Africa

740.0011 European War 1939/8525

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Villard)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 23, 1941.

Participants: Mr. N. M. Butler, Counselor, British Embassy  
Mr. Murray<sup>50</sup>  
Mr. Alling<sup>51</sup>  
Mr. Villard

Mr. Butler outlined the steps which the British had taken in respect to the situation at Tangier and explained the present position of his Government. Mr. Murray described the information which we had, on our part, received from the Embassy at Madrid on the same subject and explained the steps we had taken to present our point of view to the Spanish Government.<sup>52</sup> It was pointed out to Mr. Butler that, according to our Embassy at London, the British Embassies at Madrid and Washington had been instructed to communicate fully to us the various developments with respect to Tangier. Mr. Butler said that he had never received such an instruction but that he would be glad to keep us informed. Mr. Murray suggested that a member of the Embassy staff might be detailed to maintain contact with us on this matter, to which Mr. Butler agreed.

Mr. Murray took occasion to tell Mr. Butler that we were concerned at the reported difficulties encountered by the French to maintain the economy of their North African possessions. He said that our information indicated a serious breakdown was threatened and no supplies of commodities such as petroleum products were permitted to pass the British blockade. While Mr. Butler indicated that the policy of his Government was to enforce the blockade as much as possible, he

<sup>50</sup> Wallace Murray, Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs.

<sup>51</sup> Paul H. Alling, Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs.

<sup>52</sup> For correspondence on this subject, see vol. III, pp. 550 ff.

said it was not correct to say that it was being carried to the point of "asphyxiating" or "strangling" the French colonies. He said it was only the policy to exert pressure to a certain point, in the expectation that economic necessity would drive the French colonies away from Vichy and to the support of the British. Mr. Murray said that there were many persons who held a contrary view, and that the effect of the blockade might be to send the French colonies into the arms of the Germans.

Mr. Butler pointed out that the British had no officials in North Africa and were therefore not as well informed as they might be concerning events in the French territories. He said that if we had any specific information, obtained from our own officials, depicting the general economic situation in North Africa, he was confident that his Government would like to consider it. Mr. Butler admitted that there were two sides to the question and that evidence of a convincing nature might well change the policy of the British Government.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2213

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*<sup>53</sup>

MEMORANDUM

On December 18th Mr. Berle raised with Mr. Helm and Mr. Marris<sup>54</sup> the question of Morocco.<sup>55</sup> He explained that while the United States Government were anxious to keep in step, they were in considerable doubt regarding the British Moroccan blockade policy. He therefore requested that if possible a clear statement of this policy be obtained from London.

At the conference with Mr. Berle the Embassy representatives expressed the view that it was the intention of His Majesty's Government to treat Morocco as a separate entity and that their aim was to apply a blockade in principle but at the same time to allow Morocco to obtain certain essential requirements. It was evident that the proposed Anglo-Moroccan barter deal was making slow progress, that the recently signed Spanish-Moroccan agreement was of a minor nature, and unlikely to be treated as a precedent, and that the negotiations over cobalt and molybdenum which might shortly be taking place were probably inspired by the overriding expediency of placing these minerals in safe hands.

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<sup>53</sup> Handed to Adolf A. Berle, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State, by A. K. Helm, First Secretary of the British Embassy, on January 28.

<sup>54</sup> A. D. Marris, First Secretary of the British Embassy.

<sup>55</sup> See memorandum by Henry S. Villard of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, December 18, 1940, *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 632.

Mr. Berle's request was at once referred to London, and the Embassy have been instructed to express to him the appreciation of His Majesty's Government of his assurance regarding the attitude of the United States Government. The Ministry of Economic Warfare go on to say that the explanations given to Mr. Berle by the Embassy representatives were correct, and have instructed the Embassy to supplement them with the following further explanations.

A memorandum on the general policy of His Majesty's Government towards territories controlled by the Vichy Government is being handed separately to Mr. Sumner Welles<sup>56</sup> (a copy is attached<sup>57</sup>). As regards Morocco specifically, the policy of His Majesty's Government is in principle to prevent Morocco from becoming a channel for enemy imports and exports.

In order to avoid the risk of internal trouble in Morocco, His Majesty's Government some time ago decided, as the State Department are aware, to allow the Moors to have limited quantities of green tea and sugar if, in exchange, His Majesty's Government could obtain essential requirements of phosphates and thereby save dollars and the long haul of phosphates from Florida. Apparently owing to German opposition, negotiations in this direction made no progress and the Spanish Government then intervened with a demand for Moorish phosphates which were indispensable to the 1941 harvest in Spain. In the circumstances His Majesty's Government felt obliged to accord Spain the necessary credits for the purchase of green tea and sugar in the sterling area in part exchange for the phosphates she required.

His Majesty's Government are now attempting to resume negotiations with Morocco, but on a different basis from the original scheme, since in the meantime they have covered in Florida their original requirements of phosphates. Further supplies of these are urgently required and shipping to carry them cannot be spared from Britain's existing resources. The Moroccan authorities are debarring British and Allied neutral ships from leaving their ports under the orders of the German Armistice Commission, and the *sine qua non* of the present negotiations is the release of these ships. It is doubtful whether the Moroccan authorities will be prepared to defy the Germans to this extent. They have, for instance, not yet agreed to send a delegate to Lisbon to meet the British representative there, and His Majesty's Government are therefore not hopeful about the outcome of the negotiations.

Mr. Berle said he had learnt that ships and goods were passing freely between Morocco and Europe. The Ministry of Economic

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<sup>56</sup> Under Secretary of State.

<sup>57</sup> *Infra*.

Warfare agree that this is the case, but explain that this movement is taking place neither with their permission nor with their connivance. They are in fact detaining vessels as and when possible, but naval limitations are such as to render these detentions only too few. The fact is that British naval commitments elsewhere, and particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean, render it impossible for His Majesty's Government at the present time to carry out their declared policy of maintaining a blockade off the African Coast and in the Straits of Gibraltar. They hoped that the Embassy's recent approach to the State Department regarding the transshipment of goods at Martinique would enlist the assistance of the United States Government in strengthening the blockade; they attach much importance to this and they earnestly hope that more practical assistance in this direction may be forthcoming.

As has been indicated above, His Majesty's Government are at present treating Morocco as a separate unit for purposes of the blockade. They point out that the situation in Spain, Algeria and Tunis is different from that in Morocco, and that it would in any case not be possible to stop sailings inside the Mediterranean between Algerian and Tunisian ports and Metropolitan France.

His Majesty's Government wish to reiterate that they have no intention or desire to discriminate against United States interests or to operate the blockade unfairly. They have asked the Embassy to emphasize to Mr. Berle that no trade has taken place between the United Kingdom and Morocco since the French Armistice, and that any future trade will depend on the outcome of the present negotiations. Without some corresponding sign of goodwill, His Majesty's Government would not feel justified in negotiating a rationing agreement, and would be reluctant to agree to any imports whatsoever into Morocco. The French population know that they have nothing to fear from a British victory and, if the blockade were to be relaxed unconditionally, would conclude with Latin logic that they had more to gain by maintaining good relations with the Germans than with the British.

Should His Majesty's Government obtain the release of the ships in Moroccan ports they would propose, at any rate in the first instance, to restrict imports into Morocco to tea and sugar and to small quantities of cotton piece goods. Moroccan exports would be restricted to an equivalent value in goods such as phosphates, which His Majesty's Government themselves want, and minerals such as cobalt and molybdenum, which are German deficiencies. If it should be absolutely necessary for them to give further concessions in order to obtain these minerals, they might be prepared to allow small quantities of further imports such as coal.

It would be part of any arrangement that the proceeds of agreed exports from Morocco should not accrue to her in free foreign exchange, since the provision of free exchange would not only encourage her to purchase key commodities, but would indirectly be at the disposal of the Vichy Government.

Finally, His Majesty's Government point out that it would help greatly towards the establishment of a common policy to be carried out in agreement if the United States Government would state what kinds and what amounts of commodities they would like to export to and import from Morocco. For the reasons indicated above His Majesty's Government trust that it would be understood that in the case of Moroccan exports such commodities would be restricted to essential United States requirements. Moroccan imports from the United States on the other hand would necessarily be for local consumption only, it being understood that the importation into Morocco of key commodities could not be contemplated.

WASHINGTON, 24 January, 1941.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2223

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*<sup>58</sup>

MEMORANDUM

1. His Majesty's late Ambassador<sup>59</sup> and Mr. Butler<sup>60</sup> duly reported to London their conversations with Mr. Sumner Welles on various dates in November and December, notably on November 27th,<sup>61</sup> December 23rd<sup>62</sup> and December 27th,<sup>61</sup> regarding the policy to be adopted towards dependencies of the Vichy Government, especially in blockade matters. Mr. Butler has now been instructed to explain to Mr. Sumner Welles the general policy of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in this matter, and at the same time certain difficulties in the way of giving it full implementation.

2. On November 27th Mr. Sumner Welles informed Lord Lothian that it was the aim of the United States Government to increase the probability that, in the event of Germany trying to coerce the Vichy Government into adopting Monsieur Laval's<sup>63</sup> policy, an independent government, perhaps under General Weygand,<sup>64</sup> would be set up in

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<sup>58</sup> Handed to the Under Secretary of State on January 28.

<sup>59</sup> Lord Lothian.

<sup>60</sup> Neville M. Butler, Minister-Counselor of the British Embassy.

<sup>61</sup> No record of this conversation found in Department files.

<sup>62</sup> For memorandum of conversation, see *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. iv, p. 245.

<sup>63</sup> Pierre Laval, former Vice President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>64</sup> Gen. Maxime Weygand, Delegate General of the French Government in North Africa.



Algeria and would attract to it the French fleet from across the Mediterranean. His Majesty's Government appreciate the force of this argument. At the same time they feel that, if anything should happen either to Marshal Pétain<sup>65</sup> or to General Weygand no one can foretell the course of subsequent events. Even if nothing should happen to either of these leaders, were Germany to occupy the rest of France, it cannot be certain that the French forces in North Africa would actively resume the struggle unless they were themselves directly attacked either by Germany or by Italy. His Majesty's Government feel it necessary to have such possibilities in mind in framing their policy.

3. In this the following are the main guiding considerations:—

(a) They naturally are most desirous of avoiding any conflict of policy with the Government of the United States. Their object is, however, also to encourage the French authorities, wherever they exercise control, to feel that the future of France and of the French Empire depends on a British victory, that expediency and indeed honour demand that the French should contribute to that victory, and that therefore they should in the meantime do nothing directly or indirectly to delay or impede its achievement.

(b) The French capacity to resist Germany and Italy is everywhere greatly reduced. In those areas most vulnerable to German and Italian attack or exploitation, care must be taken not to allow the opening of a wide channel for dangerous supplies which might tempt the enemy or which might encourage German pressure on the Vichy Government. Moreover, there is a danger that if the blockade were to be relaxed, the French authorities would be enabled to obtain the best of both worlds by prolonging the *status quo*, and refraining from all further effort. This is particularly true in the case of the French dependencies in North and West Africa and of Syria.

(c) The reconciliation of (a) and (b) is a problem of great complexity, and may seem to involve inconsistencies between principle and practice. His Majesty's Government feel that they must maintain the principle of the blockade, but in practice they are prepared to admit elasticity, varying according to geographical conditions and to the strategical and political exigencies of the moment. For example, the distance of Indo-China from metropolitan France gives it a degree of independence which justifies exceptional treatment. In Morocco, however, the political and strategical situation is entirely different. The policy of His Majesty's Government is to blockade Morocco like any other territory owing allegiance to Vichy, but subject to such relaxations as may be desirable for specific reasons, and always of course subject to the existing limitations of their powers to enforce the blockade with all its rigour. A copy is attached of a separate memorandum dealing specifically with Morocco<sup>66</sup> which is being handed to Mr. Berle who discussed this aspect of the question with His Majesty's Embassy.

<sup>65</sup> Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, French Chief of State.

<sup>66</sup> *Supra*.

(d) It is no doubt well known to United States naval experts that British naval limitations encourage the use of the French West Indies, Dakar, and Casablanca, as entrepôts from which dangerous commodities find their way to North Africa, metropolitan France and thence to Germany. For this reason it is important to stop dangerous commodities at their source in the American continent before they reach any of the entrepôts. His Majesty's Government feel that, if trade must pass, barter arrangements in approved commodities would be preferable, as no question of free exchange would then become involved.

4. His Majesty's Government are bound to admit that, as regards the relaxations referred to in (c) above, the gravity of the present crisis has compelled them primarily to consult their own needs. Within the above framework they would, however, be happy to consider any genuine and specific trade requirements of the United States. Nevertheless they feel it necessary to emphasise that their whole policy would be jeopardized by any flow, particularly of dangerous commodities. This, though not at present very large in quantity, shows every evidence of rapid development and would have a greater moral, political and economic effect than its value would seem to warrant, or than is perhaps fully realised by the United States Government.

5. In placing these considerations before Mr. Welles, Mr. Butler is instructed to invite Mr. Welles's comments in general, and more particularly as regards United States collaboration in stoppage at source of dangerous commodities referred to in paragraph 3 (d) above.

WASHINGTON, 24 January, 1941.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2161½

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

[WASHINGTON,] January 27, 1941.

Participants: Mr. Knox Helm, First Secretary, British Embassy  
 Mr. Ray Atherton, Acting Chief, Division of European Affairs  
 Mr. John Hickerson, Assistant Chief, Division of European Affairs

At the suggestion of Mr. Welles, Mr. Helm, First Secretary of the British Embassy in charge of economic warfare work, was invited to call at the Department this afternoon, and Mr. Atherton and Mr. Hickerson discussed with him the question of the attitude of the American Government toward French possessions in northern Africa, in particular Morocco.

Mr. Atherton referred to a conversation several weeks ago between Mr. Helm and Mr. Berle on this subject, and he opened his comments by stating that things had moved a considerable distance in the United States in respect to this matter since that conversation. He stated that there had been a considerable amount of discussion of Morocco in the Department of State and in the American Government, and that he thought we should tell Mr. Helm that there was evolving an American policy toward Morocco which would involve a resumption in some considerable degree of trade between the United States and Morocco.

It was pointed out to Mr. Helm that in view of the policy of the United States Government of assisting Great Britain in every practicable way in measures short of war, it of course was not our intention to reestablish trade with Morocco on such lines that it would adversely affect the blockade which Great Britain is maintaining against metropolitan France and other parts of Europe. Our feeling is that it is desirable, from the standpoint of the interests of the United States Government, and we would hope not adverse to the interests of the British Government, to endeavor to prevent a disintegration of the situation in Morocco. To that end we feel that it is necessary that some sort of arrangements be made for Morocco to receive from the outside world such imported commodities as will enable the people to carry on their work and lives in as nearly a normal manner as possible. We referred to the fact that Great Britain has herself recognized this and has, according to information furnished us previously by Mr. Helm, arranged to send into Morocco certain quantities of sugar and tea. For our part we have not in mind any large trade in commodities other than the necessities of life. Mention was made of the urgent demand for petroleum products for use in the tractors for plowing at the end of next month. Mention was also made of our feeling that it should be possible to arrange suitable guarantees against the reexportation of any imported commodities either to metropolitan France or to third countries.

Mr. Atherton pointed out that in general our approach to this matter took into account three considerations:

- (1) That the resumption of trade along these lines is desirable in itself and that a failure to arrange for it might lead to a disintegration of the internal political situation;

- (2) There is always the possibility, given the uncertain situation in metropolitan France, that a French Government may move from unoccupied France to Morocco, and a trade policy along the lines which have been mentioned above would not close the door to such a move should it later prove to be advantageous to France;

- (3) There have been recurring rumors in the last few days of the possibility of the Germans launching an effort to occupy Tunis. From what we have learned from General Weygand, the attitude of French

Northern Africa, at the minimum would be "uncooperative" toward such a move on Germany's part, with a strong probability that active resistance might be forthcoming. In our view it is important to make it possible for General Weygand to maintain his position along these lines in northern Africa.

Mr. Atherton stated that with the arrival of Lord Halifax <sup>67</sup> it was thought Mr. Helm might wish to acquaint him with this situation in general, and in particular with the developments in American policy which had been outlined in the present conversation. Mr. Atherton intimated that after that had been done it was quite possible that there might be an occasion for the Ambassador to be supplied with any further information which he might desire from Mr. Welles or the Secretary.

Mr. Helm stated, apropos of the three considerations mentioned above, that the last two were somewhat outside his own particular jurisdiction, but that of course he could perceive considerable logic in them; as regards the first he said that it was his hope that it would be fairly easy to reconcile the views of our two Governments. He said that in theory the British Government was maintaining a tight blockade against French Northern Africa, but that in actual practice they were not enforcing this blockade fully. He said that he did not think there should be any great opposition in London to the shipment of normal quantities of ordinary commodities to French Northern Africa for local consumption in exchange for phosphate and other exports from Northern Africa; he said that there might be some question in regard to certain "key products". As regards exports from Northern Africa he said that the British Government would probably oppose a larger volume than is necessary to pay for absolutely necessary imports; he intimated that the British Government would fear that any excess exports might indirectly redound to the benefit of Germany.

Mr. Helm said that it would be difficult for the British Government to consider the question of trade with Morocco separately from the development of the Marseilles-Casablanca-Martinique entreport trade. He said that the British Government was seriously alarmed over the growing volume of this trade. He referred to the arrival last week in New York of sizable quantities (including 1,000 cases of champagne) of French goods which had traveled over this route. Mr. Hickerson commented that of course Mr. Helm would understand that there is a geographic connection but no other connection between the two problems. He recalled that he and Mr. Helm had discussed this matter on several occasions in the past, and inquired about a suggestion which he had made that if the British

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<sup>67</sup> New British Ambassador.

Government desires to see this trade stopped they endeavor to intercept the vessels off Casablanca. Mr. Helm said that this could not be done because of a lack of ships. Mr. Hickerson then inquired about shipments passing freely through Gibraltar. Mr. Helm said that actually the ships which were now passing through Gibraltar are heavily convoyed and that the British Government "is not in a position" to stop them. He elaborated this by saying that the British Government could not risk another naval incident with France, but he clearly implied that the British feel that they have not enough ships at Gibraltar forcibly to stop these convoys.

R[AY] A[THERTON]

740.00112 European War 1939/2261

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 28, 1941.

Mr. Helm brought Sir Gerald Campbell<sup>68</sup> in to meet me today. I greeted him warmly, having known him for some years while he was stationed as Consul General in New York.

Mr. Helm then observed that he had, at length, an answer to our query of December 18th relating to the Morocco question. He handed me the attached memorandum.<sup>69</sup>

He said quite bluntly that they did not have the naval force to blockade Morocco. Neither did they dare to stop French ships going through Gibraltar. They were already aware that cargoes from France were going to Casablanca; were being trans-shipped to vessels sailing to Martinique; and were arriving thence at New York. He expected that presently they would omit the Casablanca stop; and finally go into straight New York-Marseilles trading. This would be a terrific hole in the British blockade.

He pointed out that the British Government apparently did propose to work out some kind of an arrangement with Morocco; and rather hoped that the United States Government would state what kinds and what amounts of commodities they would like to export to and import from Morocco.

I said that I was exceedingly glad to get the answer. I said that, as Mr. Helm knew from his recent conversation with Mr. Atherton, we had, in the absence of any knowledge of the British Government's policy, gone ahead and talked with the Moroccan authorities, more specifically, had talked with representatives of General Weygand. Our impression was that we could permit a guarded amount of sup-

<sup>68</sup> British Minister.

<sup>69</sup> Memorandum from the British Embassy, January 24, p. 242.

plies to go into Morocco in order to keep the economic structure there intact. I said that naturally we should have to follow a flexible policy in this regard, and that how far we could pursue any such policy would turn on the political and military situation as it developed. I thought there were indications that a very considerable amount of American supervision might be possible.

Mr. Helm inquired whether the goods we permitted to go to Morocco were for African use or were designed for re-export to France. I said that our whole thinking had been in terms of goods needed in Africa; that while no details had been worked out, our present idea was to try to limit shipments to goods which were needed for Africa, and which would neither themselves pass to the European mainland, nor increase the amount of possible exports to France.

As to further exchanges with regard to the Moroccan policy, I said that I would have to consult with my associates before giving him any definite answer. My impression was that undoubtedly we should endeavor to cooperate in our common objective.

I added that I imagined at some time the problem of Syria would come up, since I gathered that we did not see altogether eye to eye with the British Government in connection with shipments to Syria. However, this could wait until a later occasion.<sup>70</sup>

A[DOLF] A. B[ERLE], JR.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2650

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

[WASHINGTON,] February 5, 1941.

Participants: Mr. Nevile Butler, Minister-Counselor of the British Embassy.

Mr. Ray Atherton, Acting Chief, Division of European Affairs.

Mr. Samuel Reber, Division of European Affairs.

Mr. Butler called at his request to explain that last night a French emissary, Mr. Guérin,<sup>70a</sup> had called at the British Embassy to say that the French Ambassador was very agitated as in his conversation with the Under Secretary of State yesterday<sup>71</sup> he had received the definite impression that no further aid either to North Africa or metropolitan France could be expected. While Guérin did not so state he neverthe-

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<sup>70</sup> For correspondence on this subject, see vol. III, pp. 668 ff.

<sup>70a</sup> Paul Guérin, representative of the French Moroccan Railways, temporarily in the United States, attached to the French Embassy.

<sup>71</sup> See memorandum by the Under Secretary of State, February 4, p. 217.

less gave the impression that he hoped the British would intervene to soften the American attitude. Mr. Atherton explained the American position as conveyed by Mr. Welles to Mr. Henry-Haye yesterday and went on to say that far from refusing aid to North Africa at the present time this Government was prepared to release funds to permit a shipment of petroleum products to North Africa in a French tanker on the understanding that the petroleum was destined solely for use in Morocco and would not be reexported. Mr. Atherton stated that the French had not yet been notified of this decision, but would be told that the British Embassy had been informed of the American interest in the release of this petroleum and its eventual arrival at its Moroccan destination.

Mr. Butler then stated that a British memorandum in regard to the entire question of supplies to North Africa would shortly be submitted to this Government. The principal points to be raised in this British memorandum may be summarized along the following lines:

The British Government welcomed the exercise of American influence in North Africa and was willing to support the gamble but did not, however, to any great extent share the confidence in the possibilities of Weygand's eventual resistance. Nevertheless, the British Government was prepared to permit supply of certain goods essential to the maintenance of Moroccan economy by the United States on the understanding that they would not be reexported or in any way reach enemy hands. The stationing of American observers in North Africa to control these shipments would be desirable and it was proposed that the supplies could also be sent to Algiers and Tunisia, if the guarantee against their reexport could be made effective. West Africa, however, was to be excluded on account of British relations with General de Gaulle.<sup>71a</sup>

There were, however, two considerations to which the British Government attached considerable importance. The first of these relates to its concern that the American procedure of negotiating with the Moroccan authorities without consulting Great Britain had endangered similar British negotiations which were also taking place. Mr. Atherton explained that American negotiations had in fact not yet begun and that Mr. Murphy had only been instructed to inform General Weygand that if the question of supplies to North Africa were to be favorably considered by this Government there would have to be a definite understanding that the goods were to be for North African use only and not for reexport to metropolitan France.

The British Government hoped that in any talks which might later take place the American Government would take cognizance of the importance to the British of the release of British and allied shipping

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<sup>71a</sup> Gen. Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French.

now held in Moroccan ports. The British need for this shipping was vital and it was felt that if the North African authorities believed they could get all the supplies they wanted from the United States then they would feel no need to release these ships. The British recognized that the matter presented difficulties in the face of the opposition of the Wiesbaden Commission<sup>71b</sup> but nevertheless attach great importance to some solution of the shipping question before agreeing to permit any supplies to reach North Africa.<sup>72</sup>

R[AY] A[THERTON]

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740.00112 European War 1939/2897

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*

MEMORANDUM

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have considered with great interest the statement regarding United States policy towards Morocco made by Mr. Sumner Welles to His Majesty's Ambassador on January 29th<sup>73</sup> and by Mr. Berle to Sir Gerald Campbell on the same day [*January 28*].<sup>74</sup> They, for their part, would welcome United States interest in Morocco. Although they are not as confident as the United States Government appear to be that General Weygand will enter the war, they are ready to support the United States policy based on this assumption, provided that no serious breach in the blockade is thereby involved. They would consequently agree to the supply of essential requirements to Morocco by the United States, provided that excessive stocks are not built up and that steps are taken to see there is no risk of the goods reaching the enemy. For this purpose His Majesty's Government regard it as essential that United States officials should be appointed at ports and on the railways, and they understand that the French authorities in Morocco would accept their supervision. If desired by the United States Government, His Majesty's Government would be willing to include Algeria and Tunisia in the agreement provided that guarantees against re-export could be made really effective; they cannot themselves hope to control shipments across the Mediterranean in present circumstances. His Majesty's Government are of opinion that it is important to exclude West Africa for the time being, in view of their

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<sup>71b</sup> German Armistice Commission set up to supervise carrying out of the terms of the German-French Armistice Treaty of June 22, 1940; for text of treaty, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. IX, p. 671.

<sup>72</sup> Marginal note by Mr. Berle: "It might be pointed out, sometime, that the British had been quite ready to negotiate in North Africa (via Spain) without bothering to consult us.—A. A. B."

<sup>73</sup> No record of conversation found in Department files.

<sup>74</sup> See memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State, January 28, p. 250.



relations with the free French Colonies, though they would in any event have to consult General de Gaulle on this point. It is assumed that there is no present intention to include French Somaliland or Madagascar.

2. The following, however, is the point to which His Majesty's Government attach the most importance. They confess to some anxiety that the approaches which the United States authorities have made to the Moroccan authorities without previous consultation may have endangered negotiations of their own, some indication of which was given in a memorandum handed to Mr. Berle on January 29th [28th], for a similar agreement.

In these negotiations the principal stipulation made by His Majesty's Government was for the release of British and Allied and neutral ships, detained in Moroccan ports. With the present dire need of shipping, this is a vital point. There will be strong opposition to this release from the German Armistice Commission, and if the Moroccan authorities feel that they can obtain all they require from the United States, the hopes entertained by His Majesty's Government of obtaining the ships will disappear.

3. The United States Government having, as His Majesty's Government believe, gone further than themselves in negotiating with the Moroccan authorities, His Majesty's Government are content that the United States authorities should lead in these negotiations, always provided that His Majesty's Government obtain possession of the detained ships. His Majesty's Government therefore earnestly hope that the United States Government will make this release of these ships an essential condition of their agreement, pointing out to the Moroccan authorities that His Majesty's Government cannot be expected to grant immunity to ships carrying supplies to Morocco while the tonnage which they urgently need is detained there.

4. His Majesty's Government would also hope to secure the return of British Consuls to Morocco as a condition of their approval of the agreements; this though not so important would probably be easier to obtain.

5. His Majesty's Government are also anxious to get some undertakings in writing from General Weygand as to his future attitude before acquiescing or collaborating in economic assistance to North Africa, and they are instructing their Representative to endeavor to obtain such undertakings, if he is able to go to Algeria to see General Weygand.

6. His Majesty's Government would greatly welcome the opportunity to comment on the text of any agreements which may be drawn up between the United States representative in Morocco and the French authorities, and they hope that the United States Government will

await these comments before definitely committing themselves to any draft agreement.

WASHINGTON, 7 February, 1941.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2811

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] February 10, 1941.

The British Ambassador came in at his request. I stated that this Government is going forward with its arrangements to send gasoline, sugar and certain other staple commodities to French Africa, in accord with the agreement with General Weygand. The Ambassador said that they had hoped that we would agree with the British that these shipments be made contingent on the turning over to the British of six or eight vessels in the Tangier-Morocco area. I said that I believed we could be of more help to the British in this matter by pursuing our course of conciliation and offering relief of food and goods than we could by making the turning over of the ships a condition precedent. I added that, of course, the British could pursue their own policy in this respect. The Ambassador said nothing more.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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740.00112 European War 1939/2651

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Villard)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 11, 1941.

When Mr. Helm called on another matter, I took occasion to mention the fact that we had been rather surprised at the implications of the British Embassy's note of February 7 to the effect that this Government had gone much further than the British Government in the matter of economic assistance to French North Africa. I said that far from having undertaken advanced negotiations with the Moroccan authorities for trade assistance, without the knowledge of the British, we had actually been behind the British in the various conversations they had earlier undertaken, especially those initiated by Mr. Eccles,<sup>75</sup> in Madrid and Tangier. I said I thought it would be desirable to set the record straight in this particular.

Mr. Helm replied that the statements made in the British Embassy's note of February 7 were based on impressions he had received in the conversation with Mr. Berle on January 28. On that date Mr. Helm

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<sup>75</sup> David Eccles, representative of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare.

had presented the first reply of the British Government to our request for a declaration of its policy in respect to trade with North Africa. Mr. Helm said that in discussing the subject with Mr. Berle, he had received the distinct impression that our proposed policy of opening trade negotiations had already been given full effect and that arrangements with the Moroccan authorities were already well advanced.

As an example of the impression he had received from Mr. Berle, Mr. Helm said that he had understood arrangements for the installation of American trade control officials in Morocco had already been proposed and discussed with the authorities. Mr. Helm said that he had asked Mr. Berle whether these arrangements for American control officials would apply in the case of all imports into Morocco, or only in the case of imports from the United States. Mr. Berle had replied that he was unable to give an answer as to the extent of American control at this time.

Mr. Helm said that he had, frankly, been shocked and surprised at the extent to which he inferred the American discussions had gone, and that when it became time to draft the Embassy's note of February 7, the impressions he had received from Mr. Berle had been used as a basis for the statements regarding the British assumption that conversations had been carried on by the United States Government without the knowledge of the British Government. I told Mr. Helm that in my opinion there must have been some misunderstanding of our position. Our action in the matter so far had been limited to preliminary explorations, with particular regard to the obtaining of assurances that any commodities sent to North Africa would be solely for local consumption and would not be reexported. In any case we had taken no steps toward the appointment of the control officials as mentioned by Mr. Helm. I repeated that the negotiations which the British had already undertaken had gone much further than ours. Mr. Helm said that he was sorry if a misunderstanding had occurred.

Discussing the conversations which Mr. Eccles had been carrying on with the French representatives for trade in North Africa, Mr. Helm said no real progress had been made and the conversations were on the verge of breaking down. He said that the reason for this was the fact that the British Government, as a *sine qua non* for consenting to the proposed trade arrangements, required the surrender to the British Government of the British, Allied and neutral shipping now in North African ports. I asked Mr. Helm whether he thought there was any possibility that the French would do this, or that the German Port Commissioner in Casablanca would give his permission to the proposal. Mr. Helm said that he did not feel there was much chance and that, therefore, there was not much chance of the trade proposals going through. However, the French were being given this

opportunity to "thumb their noses" at the Wiesbaden Commission, and if they did not take advantage of it the British could do no more.

In reply to my further questions, Mr. Helm went on to say that he thought it was still a great gamble to attempt to strengthen the French in North Africa. He said there was no way of telling whether a strengthened French force in that area might not attack the British, instead of helping them. A large proportion of the products now going to Marseille, said Mr. Helm, were known to be passing into the hands of the Germans and Italians. If it were possible to stop this trade entirely, the British would do so, but they did not have sufficient naval units to accomplish this. Mr. Helm said that his Government was extremely reluctant to take any chances on restoring the economic system in French Africa and that he personally regarded it as a great risk.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2897

*The Department of State to the British Embassy*

MEMORANDUM

The memorandum dated February 7, 1941, in regard to British policy in Morocco, which was left at the Department of State has been read with great interest. It is gratifying to learn that the British Government is ready to support American policy with respect to the establishment of economic relationships with French territories in North Africa.

There appears, however, to be some misunderstanding on the part of the British Embassy concerning American policy in French North Africa and the manner in which that policy has developed. In this connection it will be recalled that on December 18, 1940,<sup>76</sup> officials of the Department of State consulted with representatives of the British Embassy and requested them to ascertain the nature of the British Government's policy in regard to economic aid to the French territories in North Africa. No reply was received to this request, which was renewed early in January, 1941. On both of these occasions, and even prior to December 18 in informal discussions between officials of the Department of State and representatives of the British Embassy, an attempt had been made to explain the manner in which American policy toward economic relationships with North Africa was progressing. It was not until January 28 that a preliminary report was received from the British Embassy,<sup>76a</sup> and this report was amplified in the British memorandum of February 7, 1941. Meanwhile information was received indirectly of a proposed triangular agreement between

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<sup>76</sup> See memorandum by Mr. Villard, December 18, 1940, *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 632.

<sup>76a</sup> Memorandum from the British Embassy, January 24, p. 242.

Great Britain, Spain and French Morocco involving the exchange of certain commodities.

It appears clear, therefore, that the Department of State over a period of several weeks endeavored to explain to the British Embassy the development of American policy in regard to French North Africa but that during that same period little if any information was obtainable as to what policy the British Government was following in regard to that territory. It is, therefore, perhaps justifiable to conclude that the statement made in the memorandum of the British Embassy dated February 7, 1941, to the effect that American authorities had made approaches to the Moroccan authorities "without previous consultation" with the British Government, is inaccurate.

It is desired to point out that no definite arrangements have yet been made by the United States Government in regard to economic assistance to French North Africa. It is, however, the considered opinion of the Department of State that it is urgently necessary to resume trade relations on a restricted basis with French North Africa if there is to be prevented an economic break-down in that area which may have far-reaching and perhaps disastrous consequences. It has therefore been decided to authorize at once the unblocking of the necessary funds to permit the shipment of a tanker of petroleum products to Casablanca. This is the first step in a program which this Government proposes to pursue with a view to furnishing minimum and urgently needed supplies to French North Africa.

WASHINGTON, February 13, 1941.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2897

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 13, 1941.

Participants: Mr. Butler, of the British Embassy  
Mr. Berle  
Mr. Murray

Mr. Berle received Mr. Butler of the British Embassy this morning by appointment and handed him the attached memorandum dated February 13, 1941,<sup>77</sup> in partial reply to the memorandum from the British Embassy of February 7, 1941, regarding this Government's policy toward Morocco and other French territories in North Africa.

Mr. Berle prefaced his remarks to Mr. Butler by stating that we fully appreciated the strain under which the Embassy was working

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<sup>77</sup> *Supra.*

these days and had no disposition to make the burden any heavier. We felt, nevertheless, constrained to make certain observations in reply to statements contained in the Embassy's memorandum of February 7, mentioned above.

Mr. Butler was reminded that on December 18th last we had called officials of the British Embassy to the Department to discuss their North African policy. We had stated our concern over the possible effects of depriving French Africa of the bare necessities of life, and indicated that we felt it to the best interest both of the United States and Great Britain to prevent a complete collapse in French Africa. Accordingly, we wished to know the British policy. We were answered that the Embassy was not informed as to the British policy but would endeavor to find out.

The Department renewed this request early in January, and was advised that no information had yet been received from London. Only on January 28th did we receive a preliminary report, which was amplified by the British memorandum of February 7th under discussion.

On this record, Mr. Berle observed that it was impossible to say that the British Government had not been given ample opportunity to consult regarding any North African economic policy.

Further, and during the period between December 18th and February 7th, we had learned indirectly of negotiations by the British Government looking toward supplying certain commodities to French Morocco. These appeared to be in the nature of a triangular barter agreement between Britain, Spain and Morocco. So far as the Department was aware, this Government had not been consulted in any way, but was being advised that the British policy with regard to Morocco was one of blockade. Mr. Berle pointed out the obvious inconsistency of a policy of limited supplies to North Africa by Britain at the same time that it was maintaining, so far as we were concerned, a policy of blockade.

Mr. Berle also noted that the British Government appeared to take exception to the fact that economic negotiations were now in progress between this Government and the authorities in Morocco. Mr. Berle ventured to point out that this was obviously a misapprehension of fact; that the Government had been informed of the fact that we proposed to enter such negotiations, but that the only work that had gone forward were exploratory conversations with General Weygand and his representatives.

Finally, Mr. Berle made two observations.

First, in principle this Government obviously could not and did not enter agreements with any foreign power limiting its right to undertake independent negotiations regarding economic and other matters

anywhere in the world. Throughout its history, this Government had declined to commit itself in this regard. He noted that the implication of paragraph 6 of the British memorandum seemed to suggest that we should enter such a commitment, just as the entire note appeared to take exception to the fact that any independent negotiations at all were going on. This Government considered itself entirely free to enter such negotiations.

Second, despite the foregoing complete freedom, this Government was pursuing and proposed to continue to pursue a program of parallel action in aid of certain objectives which the British Government and our own considered of common advantage; that this had been of assistance to the British Government and had worked well; and that we proposed to continue the policy.

Mr. Berle observed that in view of the very great difficulties under which His Majesty's Government was laboring, it was natural to expect occasional misunderstandings; but in view of the desire to cooperate in every respect, it probably would assist matters if all misunderstandings were removed. In covering the foregoing points there was no desire to complain, even though it would seem that some of the points made by the note could better be made by this Government against the British. Rather, Mr. Berle's feeling was that by clearing the air of this sort of misunderstanding both in the minds of the British Embassy and in the minds of our own authorities, the way would be paved for more effective parallel action. He hoped Mr. Butler would agree that this was perhaps the best method of procedure.

Mr. Butler promptly said that it was true that the Embassy here had been laboring under very considerable difficulties. He felt that a considerable part of the delay in advising the Department of the British position had been due to the press of the work both here and in London. He agreed that his Government was suffering under a misapprehension as to the extent of the economic negotiations proceeding between Mr. Murphy<sup>77a</sup> and General Weygand's representatives.<sup>77b</sup> This misapprehension, he thought, arose from a cable they had received from Tangier, intimating that Mr. Murphy had signed some sort of agreement with General Weygand's representatives. This, bracketed with the advice which the British Embassy had received from Mr. Welles and from Mr. Berle, had caused the misapprehension. They had now learned that the cablegram from Tangier overstated the situation, and by consequence that part of the British note appeared to be ill-founded. He acknowledged the inconsistency of a policy of blockade vis-à-vis the United States at the same time that barter negotiations were going on as between Britain, Spain and Mo-

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<sup>77a</sup> Robert D. Murphy, Counselor of Embassy in France, on special assignment to North Africa.

<sup>77b</sup> For correspondence on this subject, see pp. 206 ff.

rocco. The Embassy had assumed that this Government had been kept informed, presumably by Sir Samuel Hoare,<sup>78</sup> through Ambassador Weddell in Madrid. He conceded, however, that so far as they were aware, nothing in the nature of a "consultation" or a request for expression of the views of the Government regarding those negotiations had taken place. Generally speaking, he felt that there had been some failure in London to apprehend the situation, and he intimated that the Embassy had called this to the attention of the Foreign Office. He said he fully appreciated the friendly spirit in which we were endeavoring to clear the record.

Mr. Berle observed that it might be useful if the Embassy took steps which would clear the record both in the mind of Lord Halifax and in the minds of the Foreign Office, and Mr. Butler agreed that this would be useful.

Mr. Butler further observed that their people did not have as rosy a view of General Weygand and his probable policy as our people; and that they were somewhat skeptical as to the outcome. Mr. Berle agreed that the future course of the French authorities in Morocco was problematic; that the steps we were taking were experimental; that the policy had to be flexible and that its continuance had to turn on results. Mr. Butler said that according to Léger<sup>79</sup> the acid test would be whether Weygand wished munitions, or merely food. If munitions, it could only mean for the purpose of resisting; if he wished primarily supplies, it might be assumed that they were for re-export to France. Mr. Butler's information was that Weygand wished coal, oil, and also munitions. Mr. Berle said that in these matters we naturally would be guided by the apparent use to which the materials sought were to be put. He appeared to agree that a program of parallel action carried on flexibly and experimentally was the best line to take in the matter.

The conversation was cordial and friendly throughout.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2652

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

[WASHINGTON,] February 15, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me this morning. The Ambassador brought up the question of our pending commercial negotiations with North Africa. He said that the British Government earn-

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<sup>78</sup> British Ambassador in Spain.

<sup>79</sup> Alexis Léger, former Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1933-May 1940.



estly hoped that we were keeping [them?] fully advised of all developments in this regard and that they regretted the fact that we had proceeded in the matter without first obtaining the complete identity of views with the British Government. I reminded the Ambassador that, as had been set forth in a memorandum recently handed to his Embassy, this Government had asked the views of the British Government with regard to this problem and specifically with regard to British policy as far back as the beginning of December and that we had never had any definite answer until the early part of February. I said that it seemed very clear to this Government that it was in the interest of both the British Government and the Government of the United States that North Africa should not be deprived of those products absolutely essential to the normal economic wellbeing of the French North African possessions. It seemed to me that if the French authorities in North Africa were confronted with the situation which would exist if the native populations were completely bereft of food supplies, their control would soon break down and German invasion of North Africa would consequently be a far more likely contingency than would otherwise be the case. To this Lord Halifax emphatically agreed but expressed the hope that the United States would make a point, before any agreement were reached, of insisting upon the release by the French authorities of the merchant ships in the North African ports. I replied that after careful study of the armistice conditions, it did not seem to the Department of State that the French authorities could possibly agree to this condition. I said it seemed to us clear that the armistice specifically prohibited the French from releasing ships which would go to Great Britain. I said that I did not see that any useful purpose would be served by our attempting to insist upon a condition which we knew the French Government and the French authorities of North Africa were not able to grant. After some discussion of this point the Ambassador agreed but nevertheless expressed the hope that we would mention our interest in the release of these ships.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.00112 European War 1939/2211½

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

[WASHINGTON,] February 15, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me this morning. The Ambassador brought up the question of the release of French funds by this Government which had made possible the sending of an oil tanker

by the French to Casablanca. He said that his Government hoped that a navicert would be requested for this shipment in order, as he phrased it, "that the situation might be made tidy". I said that Mr. Atherton had already spoken to me about this question and that I trusted that a navicert would be promptly issued by the British authorities. The Ambassador said this would be done at once. In this connection he expressed the earnest hope that some measure of supervision would be undertaken by the American consular authorities in North Africa so as to make sure that this supply of oil would be consumed in North Africa and that no portion of it could be sent to metropolitan France. I told the Ambassador that this question of supervision was one of the matters which Mr. Murphy was now discussing with the French authorities in North Africa.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.0011 European War 1939/8818

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

[WASHINGTON,] February 19, 1941.

Lord Halifax called to see me this afternoon at his request. The Ambassador gave me an *aide-mémoire* reading as follows:

"On February 17th the British Consul-General at Tangier<sup>79a</sup> reported that he had been informed that additional German officers, non-commissioned officers and men had arrived at Casablanca to join the German Armistice Commission which now numbered about 80. This Commission had as terms of reference 'to control disarmament in Morocco' and perhaps also in Algeria. The members of the Commission were reported to be specialists in the construction of aerodromes and to be inspecting all airfields in French Morocco. Some of the Commission were also said to be preparing certain isolated spots on the coast of the French Zone of Morocco to serve as supply bases for tankers.

"The Consul-General had been informed that later on the Germans intended to ask Admiral Darlan<sup>80</sup> to hand over to them certain Moroccan ports including Casablanca for use as submarine bases.

"The German Armistice Commission had assumed complete control over the French Air Force in Morocco and no machine could fly without first obtaining permission from the Germans who also controlled the supplies of petrol. The British Consul General's informant expressed the view that the arrival of these additional Germans constituted the beginning of serious German infiltration into French Morocco and perhaps into the whole of French North Africa for the purpose of gradually taking over complete control in all

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<sup>79a</sup> A. D. F. Gascoigne.

<sup>80</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Navy, and Interior.

spheres. Furthermore, it was to be anticipated that the recent arrivals would include a certain number of propagandists who would begin to undertake the usual 'fifth column' activities.

"The Consul General's informant thought it likely that the Germans would have acquired control of Morocco and also perhaps of Algeria in less than two months' time. He suggested that if nothing were done to prevent this, with or without the cooperation of General Weygand, it would be too late."

I said to the Ambassador that the information thus given me corresponded to a very considerable extent with information which we had received from our own officials in North Africa. I stated that I considered the information disquieting, but that I still believed that economic assistance on our part, provided it were remitted to North Africa in small shipments and its distribution were effectively supervised, would do much to strengthen the position of General Weygand and his associates and would make it easier for them to resist German pressure of this character. I said, however, that in so far as we had any influence in Vichy, it would be exercised to the fullest extent possible with the hope that the French authorities in North Africa would be authorized to take a stronger stand in opposition to a continuation of this constant infiltration.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.0011 European War 1939/8516: Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, February 20, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received 10:15 a. m.]

42. My telegram No. 38, February 18, 6 p. m.<sup>81</sup> My British colleague telegraphed yesterday to his Government expressing great concern over the situation in French Africa on two counts: German infiltration into French Morocco and the possibility of native inhabitants being stirred up by German agents.

Great doubt is expressed by him over the wisdom of economic assistance to French North Africa without obtaining some commitment defining more precisely its position politically. Both my British colleague and Eccles are very doubtful about the correctness of Marchal's<sup>82</sup> conclusion that Noguès<sup>83</sup> or Weygand will call a halt to the extension of German infiltration should it assume undue proportions.

My British colleague suggests in his telegram three possible ways of dealing with the situation.

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<sup>81</sup> Not printed.

<sup>82</sup> Léon Marchal, Director of Commerce and Industry, French Zone of Morocco.

<sup>83</sup> Gen. Albert Noguès, Resident General in the French Zone of Morocco.

1. Bringing the French authorities to take a firm line;
2. The assumption of authority by the Count of Paris now residing Spanish Morocco; or
3. The introduction of British troops into French Africa by way of Tunisia.

CHILDs

740.0011 European War 1939/8819

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

[WASHINGTON,] February 20, 1941.

Lord Halifax called to see me this afternoon at his request. The Ambassador handed me a memorandum relating to the hope of the British Government that the United States would urgently express its desire to Marshal Pétain that the continued German infiltration in North Africa be stopped.

I told the Ambassador that this matter was already under consideration and that this Government would take further action in this regard.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

[Enclosure]

*Memorandum by the British Embassy*

The information contained in the telegrams sent by the British Consul General at Tangier to the Foreign Office on February 17th, the substance of which was communicated to Mr. Sumner Welles by the British Ambassador on February 19th,<sup>84</sup> together with other information regarding the arrival of German personnel in French North Africa indicate that the Germans are following their usual plan of infiltration and show that unless the French authorities can be persuaded to take some action we may shortly be faced with a situation in North Africa which it may be impossible to retrieve.

His Majesty's Government think it essential that some action should be taken without delay, more especially since Marshal Petain seems to be becoming gradually pushed into the background at Vichy and since the possibility, to say the least, of an understanding between Admiral Darlan and M. Laval with the object of bringing about closer collaboration with the Germans cannot be excluded. General Weygand is himself unlikely to take any vigorous action without orders from Marshal Petain. His Majesty's Government themselves have at present no means of pressure which can usefully be employed.

The United States Government on the other hand are in a strong position for exercising pressure. Petain attaches great importance

<sup>84</sup> See memorandum by the Under Secretary of State, February 19, p. 263.

to maintenance of good relations with United States Government and to presence of United States Ambassador at Vichy.<sup>84a</sup> He is no doubt hoping to obtain United States supplies for unoccupied France as well as supplies for North Africa in regard to which United States Government are at present negotiating with Moroccan authorities.

The activities of German Commission offer such dangerous possibilities that we trust that United States Government will consider it possible to use to the full the lever which they possess. We would suggest that Admiral Leahy be instructed to point out strongly to Petain the dangers involved in continuance and extension of activities of Armistice Commission and to make it clear to him that unless French authorities decide to curtail them, the United States Government will be compelled to break off their present negotiations with Moroccan authorities. There would clearly be only disadvantage in sending supplies to North Africa if they were destined to fall under German control.

A precedent for strong action on the part of French is provided by action of Governor of Senegal who is understood to have firmly declined some time ago to have a German Commission at Dakar.

Please represent above considerations in highest quarters and urge them to take action in the sense indicated. It would be well for United States Government to approach Weygand at the same time as Petain. Pending a satisfactory reply Mr. Murphy might be instructed to stall on his conversations and to let Moroccan authorities know the reason.

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851R.24/8½

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*

MEMORANDUM

1. In view of the anxiety of the United States Government that, for humanitarian and political reasons, supplies should be sent to occupied [*unoccupied*] France and French North Africa, His Majesty's Government have for some time been considering how far and under what conditions this economic assistance could be given. Admiral Darlan's recent threat to convoy supplies across the Atlantic has of course rendered it much more difficult for His Majesty's Government to agree to any offer being made to the French Government, but they are so deeply impressed by the dangers of the present situation that they have resolved to make one last attempt to stop the French Government drifting towards full collaboration with Germany.

2. His Majesty's Government feel that the most immediate danger is the penetration by German experts of French North Africa, which

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<sup>84a</sup> Adm. William D. Leahy.

they know is being actively pursued and which, they fear, will pave the way either for the entry of German troops into French North Africa from Tripoli or for the collapse of Spanish resistance to Germany. His Majesty's Government think that the latter would certainly occur if Spain felt that Germany had succeeded in taking her in the rear, and there are already signs that Spanish resistance to German pressure is likely to weaken if German infiltration into the Mediterranean area is permitted to continue. In such an event the Spanish army would be at one with the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs in thinking that Spain should throw in her lot with Germany so as to make sure of obtaining her share of Morocco.

3. His Majesty's Government believe that the United States Government would be willing to exercise all pressure at their command to prevent enemy occupation of ports in French Morocco and Senegal, and enemy control of the complete Atlantic seaboard of the Continent of Europe.

4. The Department of State have given the Embassy to understand that they do not contemplate the conclusion of any hard and fast agreement laying down the nature and quantity of supplies to be sent to North Africa, but that what the Department have in mind, apart from fixing the general conditions as regards control, etc., on which any supplies would be sent, is something much less formal by which North Africa would be kept on a string and its needs met as circumstances and the occasion might require. His Majesty's Government fear that this procedure would not be adequate to induce the French to accept the conditions which His Majesty's Government feel would have to be attached to any offer of economic assistance. They think that hand to mouth supplies of every consignment which would have to be considered as each request for a navicert was made, would not offer the French Government any certainty that if they were to pluck up their courage and concede the requests made to them the French people would receive solid benefits in exchange.

5. His Majesty's Government would prefer to concert with the United States Government a positive offer to the French Government whereby the latter would be assured reasonable supplies of principal commodities, with guarantees against re-export, and of navicert facilities for 5/8,000,000 bushels of wheat for unoccupied France, a request for which has recently, it is understood, been put to the State Department by the French Embassy. If the French Government were to refuse an offer of this kind, the position would be clarified, and the French people could then be told that their leaders preferred collaboration with Germany to securing bread for unoccupied France, supplies for French North Africa, and the maintenance of the Empire and fleet.

6. His Majesty's Government consider that the following indispensable conditions should be attached to the making of such a far-reaching offer as that described above:—

(a) that Marshal Petain should prevent further Axis infiltration into French North Africa, and in particular the entry of uniformed or armed Germans or Italians.

(b) that an adequate number of American observers should be sent to unoccupied France, and to French North Africa, and that a British observer or observers should be allowed to accompany the Americans sent to North Africa, or alternatively that British Consular Officers should be re-admitted to their former posts in French North Africa.

7. Neither of the above conditions would conflict with the French Government's obligations under the Armistice and supplies would go forward progressively so long as these conditions were observed, but would have to cease if they were departed from.

8. His Majesty's Government would also desire that French naval units now in French metropolitan ports should gradually be sent to African Atlantic ports, e. g. Casablanca and Dakar, and should remain there.

9. Lord Halifax has received most urgent instructions to request the views of the United States Government on this proposal and in doing so to emphasize that verbal assurances from Marshal Petain and General Weygand about German infiltration into French Africa would not be sufficient to remove the deadly menace to the common interest involved in a collapse of our present policy towards Spain and the occupation by the enemy of French African ports. His Majesty's Government feel that if this danger is to be removed the French must be shaken out of their lethargy and obliged to take certain specific measures. It is essential that it be made clear to them that the arrival of supplies will depend on the remorseless carrying out of the steps enumerated above. His Majesty's Government hope that the United States Government would arrange to send the greatest possible number of American observers to French North Africa, and that some of these officials would be of sufficient standing to counteract German infiltration and to discuss with the French the possibility of armed resistance.

10. Finally, His Majesty's Government suggest, if the United States Government agree to the offer being made to the French Government, that it should be indicated to the latter that a definite reply must be received within a week. His Majesty's Government could not afford to let the negotiations drift on while the Germans were consolidating their position in French Africa and increasing their military forces in Tripoli.

WASHINGTON, March 13, 1941.

III. Decision To Proceed With Economic Aid Program After Delay Because of Fears Regarding German Infiltration Into French North Africa

740.0011 European War 1939/9045 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, March 14, 1941—noon.

[Received March 15—5:50 a. m.]

90. Following Germans now Algiers on German Control Commission: (1) Von Schneditz (see my 7, January 4<sup>85</sup>); (2) Dr. Schmidt, Gestapo agent, reported known in Brussels before war as Leduc; (3) Behrens; (4) Major Battre, Gestapo chief, arranged Dollfuss *Putsch*<sup>85a</sup> and head of raid on radio Vienna, most dangerous of all; (5) Kolb; (6) Mohr, Gestapo under Battre; (7) Naval Captain Kreschmer; (8) Hoffman, legal adviser.

All reports here indicate massive infiltration Morocco maximum 6,000 with 800 officers men Casablanca. Apparently no such action here.

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/9098a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé at Tangier (Childs)*

WASHINGTON, March 15, 1941—2 p. m.

31. Telegram dated March 14 from Algiers states "All reports here indicate massive German infiltration Morocco maximum 6,000 with 800 officers men Casablanca." Please comment and repeat your reply to Algiers. Repeat to Casablanca.

HULL

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851.48/271b : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, March 18, 1941—7 p. m.

237. We are sending you another telegram outlining a provisional solution of food supplies to unoccupied France.<sup>86</sup>

While this Government is glad to make this offer it is necessarily concerned by the continued reports of German infiltration into North Africa. The Consulate at Algiers has reported, for example, on March 14, that there has been massive infiltration into Morocco, which however was subsequently denied by the Legation at Tangier.<sup>87</sup> The

<sup>86</sup> Not printed.

<sup>85a</sup> Engelbert Dollfuss, former Austrian Chancellor, was killed by Austrian Nazi rebels on July 25, 1934, when they seized the chancellery.

<sup>86</sup> Telegram No. 238, March 18, 8 p. m., p. 131.

<sup>87</sup> Telegram No. 66, March 17, 8 p. m., not printed.



French Government will appreciate that this Government is not in a position to recommend any solution of the food problem in an atmosphere of suspicion created by reports of German concentration in French Colonies and uncertainty with respect to this situation.

You should seek an early opportunity to bring these considerations personally to the attention of Marshal Pétain.<sup>88</sup> You should state, moreover, that this Government fully appreciates the situation imposed by the Armistice terms on the French Government which we hope also appreciates our desire to be of assistance. We are confident that the Marshal will understand, furthermore, that in determining the extent of the assistance we can grant his Government and people we shall necessarily be influenced and restricted should the French Government accede to German demands for cooperation over and above the obligations assumed under the Armistice terms. In the negotiations which are at present under way in regard to relief the situation would also be greatly assisted if the French Government could gradually transfer its naval units to Atlantic ports in North Africa from the Mediterranean.

The activities of the Germans in North Africa as well as their infiltration into that country are a matter of such importance to the Department that you should continue to keep its preoccupations in this regard before the attention of the Vichy Government. Please maintain close contact with the Consuls in North Africa as well and endeavor to check their reports.

WELLES

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740.00112 European War 1939/2490

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 20, 1941.

MR. WELLES: M. Paul Guerin, who, as you know, is attached to the French Embassy to carry on the discussions regarding economic collaboration with French North Africa, called at the Department today to leave a list of the supplies most urgently needed. At the same time he left a memorandum concerning the proposed means of financing these supplies.<sup>89</sup>

During the course of the conversation it was mentioned to M. Guerin that reports regarding the entrance of German agents into French Morocco were making difficult the success of the discussions regarding the proposed plan. M. Guerin said he thought it would be possible for the French Government, through the Ambassador here,<sup>89a</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, French Chief of State.

<sup>89</sup> List and memorandum not printed.

<sup>89a</sup> Gaston Henry-Haye.

to give the Department official assurances that no more German agents would be permitted to enter North Africa. He inquired whether such an assurance, which he said could not of course be made public, would help toward a solution of the matter and toward the successful conclusion of the negotiations. He was told that the question would be explored and some indication of the Department's views would be given him as soon as possible. Meanwhile he said that he would explore the matter with the Ambassador and upon learning that we would welcome such assurances he would be glad to let us know what form they might take.

I should be appreciative if you would let me know whether you consider it desirable to obtain such assurances. My own point of view is that they would be very helpful and would be particularly welcome by the British.

WALLACE MURRAY

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740.0011 European War 1939/9360

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray)* <sup>90</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] March 20, 1941.

You will recall that several weeks ago a decision was taken to go forward with the plan for economic cooperation with French North Africa, and the British Ambassador <sup>90a</sup> was so informed. On February 8 the British Ambassador here brought in a note <sup>91</sup> stating that, although the British Government was not as sanguine as we were in regard to eventual cooperation by General Weygand, <sup>92</sup> it was prepared to work with us on our plan. At the same time, the British expressed the hope that, in return for this economic cooperation, the French could be induced to release certain British shipping held in North African ports and permit the return to Morocco of British consular officers. These suggestions were passed along to Mr. Murphy, <sup>93</sup> who was then about to confer with General Weygand. Apparently the return of British shipping is out of the question, since such action would not be permitted by the Germans. Furthermore, since that time the British ships in North Africa have been seized by the French in retaliation for the action by the British in seizing certain French

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<sup>90</sup> Addressed to the Adviser on Political Relations (Dunn) and the Under Secretary of State (Welles).

<sup>90a</sup> Viscount Halifax.

<sup>91</sup> Dated February 7, p. 253.

<sup>92</sup> Gen. Maxime Weygand, Delegate General of the French Government in North Africa.

<sup>93</sup> Robert D. Murphy, Counselor of Embassy in France, on special assignment in French North Africa.

ships. The question of the return to Morocco of British consular officers is discussed below.

In a memorandum of March 13,<sup>94</sup> the British Embassy suggested further conditions to be imposed before proceeding with the plan of economic cooperation. These were as follows:

(1) That Marshal Petain should prevent further Axis infiltration into French North Africa.

(2) That an adequate number of American observers be sent to French North Africa.

(3) That a British observer or British observers accompany the American observers or, alternatively, that British consular officers be readmitted to French North Africa.

So far as item (1) is concerned, Admiral Leahy has received assurance from Marshal Petain that he will do his utmost to prevent further German infiltration into French Morocco. Despite numerous disturbing rumors and reports of infiltrations of large numbers of Germans into French Morocco, we have been able to establish definitely that there are only fifty-three Germans in that territory. It is true that Germans in small numbers have recently entered the Spanish Zone but, naturally, the French cannot be held responsible for that development, nor for the reestablishment of the German Consulate in Tangier. On the contrary, we know that these German activities in the Spanish Zone are resented by the French. Parenthetically I should mention that, in calling at the Department today, M. Paul Guérin, who is carrying on discussions here regarding economic cooperation with French North Africa, stated he felt it would be quite possible for the French Government to give us an assurance that no further German agents would be permitted to enter French North Africa.

As for the British proposal that an adequate number of American observers be sent to French North Africa, we have the definite assurance of the French that they will permit such observers. I should add here that, upon instructions from Mr. Berle,<sup>95</sup> we recently discussed with the War and Navy Departments whether it would be possible for them to send persons to North Africa to act as control officers. Both Departments are greatly in favor of such a move and I would anticipate no difficulty in working matters out along those lines. This would also meet the British suggestion that the control officers "be of sufficient standing to counteract German infiltration and to discuss with the French the possibility of armed resistance".

As to British observers accompanying the proposed American observers, I believe that this would be a very difficult matter for the

<sup>94</sup> *Ante*, p. 266.

<sup>95</sup> Adolf A. Berle, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State.

French to agree to in view of the terms of the armistice with Germany. Moreover, I do not see the necessity for such a move since our own control officers would presumably furnish us with adequate information which we could in turn pass on to the British if that course were thought desirable. I would see no harm in mentioning to the French that the British would like to return their consular officers to Morocco but here again I do not believe that this should be made a condition precedent to the extension of economic cooperation.

In connection with this whole problem, I have gained the impression that, during the past few weeks, some doubt seems to have arisen as to the desirability of going ahead with the program of economic cooperation. The North African program appears to have become confused with the problem of food supplies to unoccupied France<sup>96</sup> and there appears to be some disposition to make the realization of the North African problem contingent upon a satisfactory solution of the other question. I am inclined to believe that this confusion has come about largely as the result of the tendency of the British Embassy here to treat the two problems as if they were one. I am convinced that it is erroneous to treat them as one, and I believe that we should take steps as soon as possible to handle them separately, not only in our discussions with the British but for other purposes.

It seems to me that, even if it should be decided not to go ahead with the shipment of foodstuffs to unoccupied France, it does not follow that we should abandon the plan for economic cooperation with North Africa. Indeed I would say that it would be all the more imperative for us to proceed with the African plan so as to emphasize the distinct character of that region. In other words, whatever may happen with respect to France, all of the original arguments in favor of economic cooperation with North Africa hold good and daily grow stronger. If the French are to resist German efforts to penetrate further into Morocco, I believe that we should at once commence our program of economic collaboration. If General Weygand is not going to receive the assistance which we have led him to expect, he surely will not be strong enough to resist German demands. On the other hand, if he receives some concrete evidence of our intention to proceed with the program, he will be encouraged to maintain his position of defending his territory against the Germans and possibly at some later date to take an active role.

M. Guérin, the French representative from North Africa, has now given us a definite list of the products most urgently needed and has proposed a means of making payment. It would therefore be highly

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<sup>96</sup> For correspondence on this subject, see pp. 89 ff.

desirable to reach, in the immediate future, a definite decision whether we are going to proceed according to our plan or whether we shall abandon the program and let North Africa drift as best it may.

If it is decided that we should proceed according to plan, I believe that we should at once so inform the British Embassy here. I think it would also be desirable, in our discussions with representatives of the British Embassy, to endeavor to avoid treating the question of economic collaboration with North Africa and the question of food supplies for unoccupied France as if they were part of one and the same problem. It would perhaps assist toward this aim if the British representatives, when raising questions regarding North African matters, could be referred to this Division, which would of course maintain close contact with the Division of European Affairs. I believe that this separation of the two problems between the two Divisions would go far toward bringing the British to realize that the problems are not identical.

WALLACE MURRAY

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740.0011 European War 1939/9193 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, March 20, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received 4:10 p. m.]

94. German bombers based Spanish Morocco now escorting French cargo ships from Nemours en route France. German observers continue to arrive en route Morocco with travel permits signed by Darlan<sup>96a</sup> personally.

Destroyer reported my 79, March 8, 4 p. m.<sup>97</sup> has left.

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/9229 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, March 21, 1941—noon.

[Received 2:23 p. m.]

71. The British Consul General informs me that he has heard from an official source that 250 additional German members of the Armistice Commission are shortly arriving in French Morocco. He hears that they will be distributed with a view to obtaining a firm hold on the country.

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<sup>96a</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Navy, and Interior.

<sup>97</sup> Not printed.

The British Consul General has been informed the purpose of Weygand's present visit to Morocco has been to concert with Noguès<sup>98</sup> to prevent further infiltration. It is considered doubtful by my colleague whether they can. He believes the farthest they will go in their reaction against it will be to resign.

Repeated to Casablanca.

CHILDS

740.0011 European War 1939/9238: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 22, 1941.

[Received March 22—10:05 p. m.]

332. Following from Algiers.

March 21, 5 p. m. Following unofficially from military sources. "Bases given Germany: submarine Casablanca, Tangiers; aviation Kenitra, Larache, Fedala."

Please repeat to Department. Cole.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/9253: Telegram

*The Consul at Casablanca (Stanton) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, undated.

[Received March 22, 1941—10 p. m.]

11. Referring to the Department's 31, March 15, 2 p. m., to Tangier, reports regarding German infiltration of 6,000 soldiers and 800 officers are unfounded; a careful checkup from reliable informants indicates that there are no additional official members of German Commission so that a total of about 56 may be accepted as correct. The total number of unofficial German representatives including mining engineers, newspapermen and Gestapo agents may not exceed a score except for various suborned French, Polish, Czechoslovak, Belgian, Spanish, et cetera, fifth columnists who are working in German pay. However, recent reports indicate that incoming German agents familiar with native conditions have been creating difficulties in the dissident area running east and south of the Atlas Mountains from Oudjda via Tafilet to Agadir where German military prestige has ranked high.

<sup>98</sup> Gen. Albert Noguès, Resident General in the French Zone of Morocco.

A curious side line: a reputed British woman known to the French to be a Nazi agent has been detained by the French theoretically for pro-British activity but actually to forestall the Germans who hardly can demand the release of a British subject.

Repeat to Embassy at Tangier and Vichy.

STANTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/9258: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 22, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received March 23—8: 44 a. m.]

334. Algiers cable March 20, Embassy's 332, March 22 and Department's 237, March 18, 7 p. m., last paragraph. Foreign Office, Defense Ministry and Ministry of Marine sources all deny categorically: (a) that any German bombers are convoying any French ships; (b) that there has been any substantial increase in German observers in Morocco; (c) that any air or submarine bases in French colonial territory have been granted to the Germans: and (d) (with reference to Casablanca's telegram 109 [103], March 20, 5 p. m.<sup>99</sup>) that any French submarines or other French warships are now engaged in convoying.

We called on Rochat<sup>1</sup> this morning and without mentioning the source referred to the foregoing reports. He said definitely that there has been no German request at this time for utilization of French bases anywhere in North Africa and that France has no intention of granting any such bases if asked. He said that to date the French had been unsuccessful in obtaining any reduction of the 54 Germans now in Morocco but that he could assure me that there had been no real increase. To be absolutely sure he would like to say that "two or three" additional observers may possibly have gone to Morocco but if so he himself has no knowledge of that fact. In any event three additional observers constituted the maximum.

Our Naval Attaché has today received similar denials in naval circles from two higher officers whose sentiments are distinctly pro-British. The Military Attaché likewise has received categorical denials from his well-disposed military contacts.

(As the Department is aware from the press, Admiral Darlan has just returned from another few days of negotiations with the German

<sup>99</sup> Not printed.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Antoine Rochat, Acting Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

authorities in Paris. Nothing as yet is known of the nature of his talks or possible commitments. It seems doubtful, however, that he could long conceal any important concessions of the nature indicated.)

I have asked the Consul General at Algiers for further details as to the sources and reliability of his information.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/9610

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Alling)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 22, 1941.

M. Guérin came in yesterday afternoon and, after referring to the discussion which had been held in Mr. Murray's office earlier in the day, said there was one further fundamental matter about which he wished to talk. He said that I would recall he had told me informally and confidentially a day or two ago that he thought it would be possible for the French Ambassador here to furnish the Department, on behalf of the French Government, with assurances that no further German agents would be permitted to enter North Africa. He added that the Embassy had sent a telegram to Vichy about four days ago requesting authority to give such an assurance. He went on to say that the telegram had been very carefully worded in as much as the Embassy was not at all certain of the security of its communications. No reply, however, had been received, and he added that he had come very definitely to the conclusion that no reply would be received because of this insecurity of communications.

He then went on to explain that certain conditions had been required of the French Government in connection with the shipment of wheat to unoccupied France. One of these conditions was that the French Government would not go beyond the terms of the armistice with Germany. He inquired whether the assurance in question would not cover the question of further German infiltration into Morocco. I told him that I did not know the precise nature of the assurances he mentioned but that if under the armistice agreement the Germans were permitted to send an Armistice Commission to North Africa, the question arose whether that Commission might not be increased to almost any size, possibly including hundreds or thousands of agents. M. Guérin did not appear to question this reasoning. He then went on to inquire how much importance was attached to an assurance that



further German agents would not be permitted to go to Morocco and asked whether such an assurance, if given, would expedite a decision regarding the question of economic cooperation. I told him that it seemed obvious to me that such an assurance would be most helpful in bringing about a favorable decision. He then said that it was his personal opinion that such an assurance could be obtained from Marshal Petain by Admiral Leahy. I inquired whether he had any views as to the precise nature of such an assurance, particularly whether it would be oral or written. He said that he thought it would be easier to obtain an oral assurance, but he did not exclude the possibility of a written assurance. He again emphasized the fact that it was because of the insecurity of their communications that the Vichy Government would hesitate to telegraph such an assurance to the Embassy in Washington.

In view of the information contained in telegram No. 71, March 21, noon, from the Legation at Tangier to the effect that the British Consul General has learned from an official source that 250 additional German members of the Armistice Commission are expected shortly in French Morocco, it would appear to be desirable to give consideration to the possibility of obtaining from Marshal Petain an assurance along the line of that referred to above.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2409 : Telegram

*The Consul at Casablanca (Stanton) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, March 26, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received March 26—7:42 p. m.]

117. Referring to our 116, March 26, 5 p. m.,<sup>3</sup> the individual mentioned therein<sup>4</sup> reports an important conversation today; he has received an unconfirmed report from a source which he has always found to be reliable that Algerian authorities are seriously considering shipping 5,000 tons of gasoline from stocks in that country to Tripoli.

He therefore suggests that an American control over petroleum stocks both civil and military in French North Africa be [apparent omission].

Repeated by telegraph to Tangier and Vichy and Vichy requested to repeat to Algiers and Tunis.

STANTON

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<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

<sup>4</sup> A. G. Reed, General Manager of the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company at Casablanca.

740.00112 European War 1939/2417 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, March 27, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received March 28—5:50 p. m.]

84. Monick <sup>4a</sup> has communicated by an intermediary verbally the following:

Signing of Franco-American accord concerning economic assistance to North Africa has given Weygand confidence and assurance which he previously lacked. The omission of any request for guarantees on the part of the United States is greatly appreciated by him. Weygand feels that he let the French people down in June 1940 through no fault of his own. As he does not desire to do so again he is acting with the greatest care in order to act effectively when an opportunity presents itself. For this reason he is counseling patience and prudence. Owing to the revived self-assurance and confidence which the accord has given him his attitude toward Vichy has been stiffened to a greater degree than ever before. In his recent visit to Vichy Weygand deplored their continued yielding to German demands and put his foot down on the sending of more Germans to North Africa.

The foregoing agrees with information received from British Consul General today who states that according to his information Weygand has taken a strong stand against the sending of more Germans to Morocco. The British Consul General has been informed that as a result nothing more is being heard of the arrival of the 250 additional German members of the Commission mentioned in my 71, March 28, 6 p. m. [*March 21, noon*].

CHILDS

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740.00112 European War 1939/2421 : Telegram

*The Consul at Casablanca (Stanton) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, March 29, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received March 30—9:52 a. m.]

124. The following telegram has been sent to Vichy.

Reference our 117, March 26, 8 p. m., to Department, have confirmation Italian tanker arrived Algiers yesterday to load 5000 tons gasoline for Tripoli. Transaction said to have been agreed upon in principle some months ago as repayment loans for amount gasoline from Italy to France. Our informant has reason to believe that Weygand may not approve of this shipment in view recent agreement with United States but that it might be made without his knowledge. Tanker captain said to have given required 48 hours' notice of

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<sup>4a</sup> Emmanuel Monick, Secretary General of the French Zone of Morocco.

loading at 7:10 p. m. last night. Since such notice should be given before 7 p. m. possible loading may be delayed until Tuesday morning. You may wish to repeat to Algiers with appropriate instructions.

Repeated to Department and Tangier.

STANTON

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740.00112 European War 1939/2417

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray)*<sup>5</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] March 29, 1941.

The attached telegram from Tangier, No. 84, of March 27, 3 p. m.,<sup>5a</sup> indicates that General Weygand is taking a strong stand against the sending of more Germans to North Africa, and that in adopting this attitude he is relying to a great extent on the prospect of our economic assistance. Moreover, it appears that the British Consul General, who had previously been the source of reports that 250 additional Germans were coming to Morocco, is now in receipt of information that as a result of Weygand's stand these need no longer be expected.

In view of these developments there would seem to be no important reason why our plans for economic aid to North Africa should not now proceed. I hope therefore that as soon as Mr. Murphy arrives from Vichy and we have had an opportunity to obtain his views, we may give our early attention to the renewal of negotiations initiated some time ago with M. Paul Guérin, authorized representative of the French authorities in this matter.

WALLACE MURRAY

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740.00112 European War 1939/2422 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 30, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received 2:45 p. m.]

366. Admiral Darlan asked me to call at his office at 10 o'clock this Sunday morning and informed me that Italy now demands the immediate delivery of 5000 tons of gasoline from Algeria, that since his promise made to me on March 3d (my 268, March 4, noon <sup>6</sup>) Germany has asked for 10,000 tons of aviation gasoline, 4,000 tons of motor oil and 15,000 tons of fuel oil from North Africa, all of which he has refused to deliver.

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<sup>5</sup> Addressed to the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle) and the Under Secretary of State (Welles).

<sup>5a</sup> *Ante*, p. 279.

<sup>6</sup> *Ante*, p. 231.

He stated to me today for the first time that the agreement entered into by France "2 months ago" requires the delivery of 5000 tons gasoline from North Africa but that he will endeavor to obtain permission from Italy to deliver at Genoa the demanded 5000 tons from continental France.

He does not know whether Italy will approve of this change in source which he will propose today. Admiral Darlan is leaving Vichy for Paris for a 3-day visit.

I told Admiral Darlan that the delivery to Italy of gasoline from Africa would make serious difficulties in the assistance that the United States has planned to provide for the African colonies and that it might even make further American assistance to colonial and unoccupied continental France impossible. He understood that danger and said that the Italian demand was probably intended to make trouble for him.

I do not know whether or not Darlan is party to a plan to make trouble for Weygand in North Africa.

An Italian tanker, the *Laura Corrada* is en route and will arrive Algiers tomorrow to load 5000 tons of gasoline.

While we were discussing this North African gasoline matter, Rear Admiral Auphan, Chief of Merchant Marine, came into Darlan's office with a despatch stating that the British Navy had just stopped four French merchant ships en route from Casablanca to Oran.

The timed arrival of this message may have been staged for my benefit.

Admiral Darlan said: "If those ships are seized, I will provide convoy for our merchant shipping."

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/2426: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 30, 1941—2 p. m.  
[Received March 31—9: 12 a. m.]

367. Embassy's telegram No. 366, March 30, 11 a. m. Knowing how important the question of supplying North Africa is to General Weygand, we discussed this morning with Count de Leusse, his confidential representative in Vichy, the situation resulting from the sudden Italian demand for immediate delivery of the 5000 tons of gasoline from Algiers. He was familiar with the question and characterized the development as most unfortunate. He said that in the first place Admiral Darlan should have informed us on March 3 that a commitment already existed to make delivery of these 5000 tons *from*

*Algeria* but that he "imagined" that Admiral Darlan was not then familiar with the details of the French commitment but believed that at French option the quantity in question could be taken from unoccupied France. He is of the opinion that the Italians may now agree to accept the change and that in view of the French commitment made to us the 5000 tons will probably not be shipped from Algiers.

He went on to say that he feels this demand is just a "further effort on the part of the Germans and Italians to poison French relations with the United States." He pointed out that the Germans were probably well aware of French undertakings to us. He likewise feels that much of the German efforts to increase their observers in Morocco and elsewhere are motivated primarily by the desire to cause us to lose interest in helping North Africa and to bring about further difficulties between the French and British.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/9473 : Telegram

*The Consul at Casablanca (Stanton) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, March 30, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received March 31—2 p. m.]

125. Marjolin, Monick's former Chef de Cabinet, called yesterday to say goodbye and introduce his successor, Manet, who was Monick's assistant when the latter was French Financial Attaché in London. Marjolin has been granted leave to visit the United States on private business and sailed today by way of Martinique.

Mayer<sup>7</sup> had lunch and a long conversation with them. They told him that the situation in North Africa is evolving rapidly and may soon reach a crucial phase. Weygand has become much more resolute and was resisting energetically German attempts to make further inroads here. For instance he was trying to block plan of the Germans to send a General to head the Armistice Commission here and add a dozen more officers and men to its staff. He had given orders that baggage and other shipments consigned to the Commissions should no longer be passed by the customs without examination. However, Vichy was not giving Weygand the support he should have and he might not be able to hold out without moral and material assistance. For obvious reasons he could have no dealings with the British and only the United States could give the support he needs. The shipment of supplies under the recent agreement with us should be expedited. The Department should have a representative in permanent contact

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<sup>7</sup> Ernest de Wael Mayer, Vice Consul at Casablanca.

with Weygand who would have both the General's and the Department's full confidence, someone of Murphy's caliber, Marjolin suggested. We should send more businessmen here; they would be evidence to all that we are interested in the fate of North Africa.

It was intimated that Weygand would even be glad to discuss plans for eventual American military action here should we be willing to go so far.

Marjolin and Manet, who obviously were speaking on behalf of Monick, made it plain that the latter hopes that there may be some prompt reaction to the suggestions they had made.

It is our impression that Monick and his assistants are determined, straightforward, wholeheartedly in favor of the same principles for which we stand.

Repeated to Tangier.

STANTON

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740.00112 European War 1939/2548

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

[WASHINGTON,] March 31, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me at his request. Lord Halifax said that Mr. Eccles<sup>s</sup> had just arrived and that he had spent part of the afternoon talking with him. He stated that the chief difference between the policy which the United States was considering pursuing with regard to North Africa and the policy which the British Government wanted to carry out, was that the British point of view, as expounded by Mr. Eccles, was that before anything at all was done in the way of cooperation with General Weygand and the other French authorities in North Africa, certain fundamental commitments should be obtained from the French Government. These commitments included such matters as the return of British consuls to North Africa, the removal of the entire French fleet from ports of Metropolitan France to North African and Atlantic ports, et cetera. The United States policy appeared to be, the Ambassador said, that cooperation would be undertaken by the United States with the North African authorities provided the distribution of any supplies received in North Africa from the United States was carried out under American control, and provided a sufficient number of American observers could be stationed in North Africa to keep such distribution and consumption under effective supervision, and then to work out the other

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<sup>s</sup>David Eccles, representative of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare.

basic problems in which the British were primarily interested through further negotiations with the French authorities.

I told Lord Halifax that all of these questions were now up for very careful review and consideration. I said that Mr. Atherton<sup>9</sup> was conferring with representatives of the French Embassy and that I myself was talking with the French Ambassador. I said further that Mr. Atherton had told me that he was arranging to see Mr. Eccles and other representatives of the British Government and that Mr. Wallace Murray was likewise undertaking conversations with these latter gentlemen. I said it was clear that many things had occurred in recent days in France relative to French policy which were profoundly disquieting to the United States and which, unless they were satisfactorily solved, would make it impossible for the United States to continue any practical policy of cooperation with the Vichy Government. In general, I said, as Lord Halifax well knew, it was our belief that full cooperation with Marshal Pétain, provided we were completely assured that such cooperation would in no way prejudice the British war effort, would serve a very useful purpose by strengthening the personal position of the Marshal; and by increasing his authority, we believed we could make him refuse any further assistance to Germany beyond the terms of the armistice; and likewise, by remaining on close and friendly terms with him, we could help to avoid friction and misunderstanding between the British and French Governments which might well otherwise tend to provoke actual hostilities between the French and British with all the resultant exceedingly serious detriment to the British cause that such hostilities would create.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.00112 European War 1939/2428: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 31, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received March 31—3:25 p. m.]

375. Embassy's telegram No. 366, March 30, 11 a. m. Admiral Auphan has just telephoned to the Foreign Office to say that word has been received that the Italian tanker will not proceed to Algiers for the 5000 tons of gasoline. The Foreign Office does not know whether this change of plan is the result of Admiral Darlan's representations to Wiesbaden and Turin or not.

LEAHY

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<sup>9</sup> Ray Atherton, Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs.

740.00112 European War 1939/2459 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, April 3, 1941—11 a. m.  
[Received April 3—10:35 a. m.]

112. Leading military economic source states gasoline vitally important militarily for Africa. Army now using reserves thus reducing chances successful defense.

Civil sources state propaganda value ship load hard wheat destined free distribution natives only would be enormous. Points out natives losing faith England after Nemours.<sup>10</sup> United States would serve as bridge. Suggested importation low priced receiving sets capable getting United States. Believe both last suggestions worth study.

COLE

740.0011 European War 1939/9873 : Telegram

*The Consul at Tunis (Heisler) to the Secretary of State*

TUNIS, April 10, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received April 11—8 a. m.]

42. Reliably informed that three Italian destroyers have taken refuge at Sousse; that Tunisia is furnishing the Italian forces in Libya with ammunition and supplies and that Italian vessels are proceeding to Tripoli through Tunisian territorial waters.

HEISLER

740.00112 European War 1939/2539 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 14, 1941—3 p. m.  
[Received 9:28 p. m.]

439. The Embassy has received a note from the Foreign Office expressing its anxiety concerning the economic situation of French West Africa. It points out that in view of its undertakings to us that colony cannot be supplied from North Africa by products similar to those imported from the United States in Algeria, Tunis or Morocco. It adds that it is exactly those products in which French West Africa is most deficient and that its trade with bordering colonies under present circumstances is potentially inexistent.

The note proceeds to state that the French Government at the present stage of Franco-American negotiations relative to the supplying of the unoccupied zone and other parts of the French Empire has

<sup>10</sup> Anglo-French naval incident between Nemours and Oran, March 30, 1940.



no intention of requesting our Government at this time to enter into discussions with respect to free passage for overseas products indispensable to French West Africa though it may do so at some later date.

There is one particular point which the Ministry on behalf of the Ministry of Colonies does not [*now?*], however, wish to bring to our Government's attention, namely, the position of the Air France commercial service at Dakar which for lack of fuel will beginning next month be compelled to stop operations. That company serves "for exclusively civilian commercial and sanitary needs", air liaison between West Africa and France (service twice weekly from Dakar; two weekly branch services between Dakar and Cotonou and various civilian services organized at the request of local governments extending throughout French West Africa from Zinder to Port Etienne). The note points out that the suspension of these services will have disastrous consequences, particularly from the sanitary point of view. The Ministry maintains that air travel is about the only means for shifting surgeons and doctors and medicines around or removing the sick from isolated points.

The Ministry therefore requests that these facts be brought to the Department's attention with an indication that the requirements of Air France at Dakar per month are approximately 220,000 liters of aviation gasoline of 90/92 octane and 2,000 liters of 100 octane; and that the supplying agency for Air France is the Vacuum Oil Company. Emphasizing the importance which is attached to maintenance of these air communications the Foreign Office urges our Government to authorize a "test" shipment of aviation gasoline to Dakar "which will be destined exclusively to the aforesaid French company". It adds that the most strict control may be exercised over the consumption of this gasoline both by our Consul at Dakar and by representatives of the Vacuum. Furthermore the tanks of Air France at Dakar would only be filled from month to month so that each new shipment would not be unloaded except after approval by our Consul and the Vacuum representatives. The Ministry requests as early a reply as possible to this note.

In discussing the note orally the Embassy pointed out that while we have no knowledge of what the Department's reaction to the proposal may be, since both the Department and the Embassy are well aware that Belgian gold is being shipped by airplane from Dakar in every commercial plane that leaves that port for delivery to the Germans, such a fact might, aside from any other consideration, dampen any enthusiasm for furnishing the means for helping to continue such service. The Foreign Office representative replied that

he could well appreciate this argument and suggested that if we are otherwise willing to supply the gasoline we should as a condition to such supply require an undertaking that no gold will henceforth be shipped from that area. The French would he thinks (though he may be unduly optimistic) be able to obtain German permission to stop such deliveries. (He has no knowledge of how much Belgian gold still remains at Dakar or Kayes.)

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/9873 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Tunis (Heisler)*

WASHINGTON, April 16, 1941—2 p. m.

21. Your 42, April 10, 7 p. m. Department would be interested in any further information you may be able discreetly to obtain regarding extent to which supplies are reaching Libya from Tunisia or through Tunisian territorial waters.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/10515

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Robert D. Murphy*<sup>11</sup>

[WASHINGTON, undated.]

[Participants:] The Secretary  
 Lord Halifax  
 Mr. David Eccles  
 Mr. Atherton  
 Mr. Murphy  
 Mr. Reber<sup>12</sup>

The British Ambassador called at his request, accompanied by Mr. Eccles.

The Secretary used the opportunity to outline briefly to Lord Halifax the recent steps taken by the Department to emphasize to Marshal Petain our apprehension that members of the French Government might be inclined to grant concessions to Germany beyond the minimum obligations of the Armistice Convention; our preoccupation over a report of the possible return to Toulon from Mers-el-Kebir of the *Dunkerque*; and our active interest in the stories of German infiltration into French Africa. The Secretary informed the Ambassador that he had requested Ambassador Leahy to bring these and

<sup>11</sup> Mr. Murphy was Counselor of Embassy in France on special assignment to French North Africa, temporarily in Washington for consultation.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Reber, Division of European Affairs.

other phases of the situation in France to the Marshal's personal attention, reiterating the confidence which our Government felt in respect of the Marshal himself, and in General Weygand in French Africa.

The Secretary referred to the pending shipment of two cargoes of wheat flour to unoccupied France from the United States as a gift of the American Red Cross.<sup>13</sup> He emphasized that in our approach to the French regarding this and similar shipments both to the unoccupied zone and French Africa, every precaution had been taken to avoid any appearance that our policy conflicted in the slightest with the views of the British Government, or that the American Government entertained any desire to force the hand of the blockade authorities. The Secretary said that it would be exceedingly unfortunate if an impression were created through the press or otherwise that American pressure was forcing the issue of French relief contrary to British wishes. Mr. Hull hoped that the British Government would take measures to inform the public that it was completely in harmony with the American Government thus giving evidence of a solidarity of view and purpose which would facilitate the task in this country and have a happy effect on the French people. The Secretary stressed the importance of bolstering and molding French public opinion as an aid to the Marechal in strengthening his resistance to German exigencies.

The Secretary declared that apparently there are only two key personalities in French public life today who we believe it worth while to support, namely Petain and Weygand. They appear to constitute the only bulwark against elements such as the Laval<sup>13a</sup> and Darlan groups. Unless Petain and Weygand are given support, they very possibly will fail and be replaced by elements more prone to total collaboration with Germany.

The British Ambassador expressed himself as generally in accord with the foregoing.

The Secretary suggested that he would be glad to hear from the Ambassador his views of the prevailing situation in French Africa. The Ambassador referred to the presence of Mr. Eccles, just arrived from London after recent visits to Tangier and Spanish Morocco, saying that he preferred to have Mr. Eccles give the Secretary the benefit of any information he might have on the subject.

Mr. Eccles stated that opinion in London had undergone considerable evolution in the past month. Before that time Mr. Churchill had come round to the notion that some things should be done for the

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<sup>13</sup> For correspondence on this subject, see pp. 89 ff.

<sup>13a</sup> Pierre Laval, former Vice President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

French. This was a long way from the earlier slogan of "De Gaulle <sup>13b</sup> or starve" effective immediately after the armistice. However, the past month had witnessed a radical change in the military situation in the Eastern Mediterranean, and also the arrival in Libya of two to three German divisions. The question arose whether the program of economic cooperation envisaged for French North Africa is adequate under the circumstances, and whether a further urgent effort should not be made to induce immediate staff talks. If General Weygand would not yield, why then an effort should be made to find among the younger officers in Weygand's organization some one who would have the courage to undertake such conversations. Mr. Eccles referred to the preoccupation in London over the possibility of a German invasion of French Morocco through Spain, the danger of an attack on Gibraltar and the resultant closing of the western Mediterranean. He also referred to General Wavell's <sup>14</sup> low opinion of Weygand as a fighting man, saying he was too much of a staff officer.

The Secretary said that it was precisely these and other factors which had led the Department to undertake a study of what might be done to support the French administration and eventually enable it to ward off aggression in French Africa, even possibly looking to a resumption of hostilities by the French. He felt that for this purpose we might have to envisage supplying many things to the French, both economic and even military.

In reply to the Secretary's request for comment, Mr. Murphy stated that in his opinion the primary consideration is the immediate establishment of a basis of confidence upon which we can eventually build. Under our agreement with General Weygand we have the authorization to establish a comprehensive control organization in French Africa which can be developed to extend Anglo-American influence and it may blaze the trail to the objectives which we know are close to the British heart. It is however capital that a start be made and it is likewise obvious that everything cannot be done at once.

Mr. Murphy was confident that General Wavell's opinion of Weygand might be classified as curbstone because we know that at the end of January when Algiers was informed through Vatican circles of a rumored attack by German-Italian forces of Tunisia General Weygand immediately flew to Tunis, ordered the mobilization of his air force and made preparations to defend French territory. He informed his associates that he fully expected to be killed in the undertaking. The attack did not materialize but it served to demonstrate that Weygand has not lightly given his word that French Africa will be defended to the extent of his ability against aggression by anyone.

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<sup>13b</sup> Gen. Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French.

<sup>14</sup> Gen. Sir Archibald P. Wavell, Commanding General of the British Forces in the Middle East.

Mr. Murphy also referred to the rumored French desire to move the *Dunkerque* from Mers-El-Kebir to Toulon for the completion of repairs stating that in his opinion that it should not be inferred without good evidence that this contemplated the eventual surrender of the ship to the Germans. The *Dunkerque* could be moved out of Toulon or scuttled in the event of a German attempt just as could the *Strasbourg* and the other naval units now in port at that place. He said also there was some justification for the French statement that even though they could obtain Wiesbaden's permission to move their fleet from Toulon to West African ports, the latter in their already overcrowded condition would hardly accommodate the additional vessels.

Mr. Murphy also thought that it would be futile to attempt to induce immediate staff talks. At the present stage it would amount to official suicide for Weygand to undertake them.

The Secretary concluded the interview by saying that he hoped that Mr. Eccles would work with the competent services of the Department in outlining the essential details of the program of economic cooperation with French Africa so that valuable time might not be lost. He desired to be kept informed of the progress made.

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740.0011 European War 1939/10039 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 17, 1941—1 p. m.  
[Received 8:40 p. m.]

455. At 7:30 last evening we learned from the person mentioned in the Embassy's telegram 378, April 2, 8 p. m.<sup>15</sup> that the French Government the day before had formally agreed to accept a German demand that a general and 200 German officers and men be sent to Morocco in addition to those Germans already there; that the Marshal with the greatest reluctance and fears for future increases in numbers accepted this demand. We called on Rochat immediately and pointed out the importance of this decision and the adverse effect it would have on our plans to supply North Africa. He admitted, as he has in the past, that the Germans have been bringing considerable pressure to increase their numbers in Morocco but said that he thought the figure they are asking for is an additional 135. He said that he had no information that the French had yielded to the demand but that this did not imply that it was not correct as "the Embassy frequently received word of developments before the Foreign Office was told about them." He promised to inquire immediately and let us know whether the report was true today. (We have since received con-

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<sup>15</sup> Not printed; it stated that the information was given by "a French prefect, a close friend of ours". (851.00/2264)

firmation of this decision from an entirely separate source, likewise have an additional report that the Germans have requested a substantial reduction in French armed forces in North Africa.)

Furthermore, our Military Attaché was informed in strict confidence by a high official in the French Air Ministry that Germans are leaving for Morocco every day, proceeding through occupied France and Spain on authorizations signed in Paris by De Brinon <sup>16</sup> without approval of Government authorities in the unoccupied zone.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/10076 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 17, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received April 18—10:35 a. m.]

456. Embassy's 455, April 17, 1 p. m. Rochat confirmed to Matthews <sup>17</sup> this afternoon that the French Government has agreed to German demands to send between 130 and 140 additional members of their Control Commission to North Africa to supervise the "reduction in effectives" and to "control war industries" in that area. Ostensibly they are to replace the Italians but he said "a few" of the latter will remain. He said that the Germans based their demand on articles 6, 8 and 12 of the Armistice Convention and that this, with the original 60 already in North Africa, of which some 20 were officers, would bring the total of the German Control Commissions in that area to some 200. He admitted that the great majority of them will reside at Casablanca. Of the new members he said the number of officers would be "relatively small" and the remainder would be orderlies, chauffeurs and crews of the "liaison airplanes." He stated that the French have constantly called the attention of the Germans to the special "political conditions" obtaining in that area, and the usual angles involved in the application of the Armistice Convention to North Africa but apparently without much success. They had succeeded, however, he said, in obtaining a German "promise" that the activities of the Commission would be strictly limited to inspection and control of military organization and installations. We told him of the extremely unfortunate impression this will create in the United States at the very time when we are embarking on the plan for supplying North Africa. He frankly admitted that the Control Commission was in his opinion "larger than necessary" and suggested that we should, in view thereof, keep a closer

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<sup>16</sup> Fernand de Brinon, Delegate General of the French Government for the occupied territories at Paris, with rank of Ambassador.

<sup>17</sup> H. Freeman Matthews, First Secretary of Embassy in France.

watch on the destination of supplies from the United States for that region as well as of German activities; but he begged that we take no drastic action such as cancellation or curtailment of the program.

He emphasized that the quantities involved will permit no accumulation of stocks. To our remark that a somewhat better impression would have been made had the French Government frankly told us of its acceptance of the German demand before we learned of it elsewhere, pointing out the general lack of frankness which has been displayed at times in the Government's dealings with the Embassy since last summer, he replied that the final details have not yet been settled and that the French Government is still arguing with the Germans with respect to certain minor details. He held out little or no hope, however, of any reversal of the decision to admit the additional Germans.

We asked if he really believes that the Nazis intend to limit their personnel in North Africa to this 200 and he merely shrugged his shoulders. To our remark that their mere presence there and interest in reducing French effectives in Africa seems a sure sign of ultimate designs to obtain by one means or another control of French North Africa, he replied that while the French, Noguès in particular, are considerably worried, that they can hardly go against the provisions of the Armistice.

We referred in conclusion to the reports that through De Brinon Germans are obtaining authorization to go directly from occupied territory to Morocco without reference to Government at Vichy. He said that he likewise has heard these reports and is making prompt inquiry of De Brinon with the object of stopping any such procedure if it does in fact exist.

I have asked for an interview as soon as possible with Marshal Pétain alone to discuss the question and likewise the points raised in the Department's telegram 291, April 3, 5 p. m.<sup>18</sup>

Repeated to Casablanca.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/10039 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*<sup>19</sup>

WASHINGTON, April 18, 1941—6 p. m.

332. Your 455, April 17, 1 p. m. Your telegram has naturally given rise to very serious concern on the part of this Government. You are

<sup>18</sup> *Ante*, p. 142.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in telegram No. 91, April 18, 6 p. m., to the Consul General at Algiers with instructions for the Consul General to see Chatel, Secretary General of the Delegation General, and give him the same message for General Weygand; also quoted in telegram No. 105, of the same date to the Consul at Casablanca with instructions to send Vice Consul Mayer to Rabat to converse with Monick, Secretary General of the French Zone of Morocco, along lines of the message to Vichy.

requested to seek the earliest possible opportunity to see Marshal Petain, alone if possible, and to state that, as the Marshal fully realizes, the Government of the United States, inspired by good will and friendship for him and for the people of France and with the hope that it might find a way notwithstanding existing conditions to assist the civilian population of unoccupied France and of French North African possessions in their present distress, has made every practical effort to further that objective. In that spirit this Government has been cooperating with the French representatives in the United States and with the British Government in regard to the North African situation and arrangements are on the point of being concluded to permit economic assistance to North Africa to go forward without delay. As the Marshal is informed, all of these negotiations on the part of the United States were undertaken on the basis of specific commitments and agreements made by Marshal Petain or by his authorized representatives in the name of the French Government. Among these was included the condition that the French Government would not agree to any further increase in German infiltration into North Africa.

You should state that your Government has now received information which would seem to indicate without shadow of doubt that the French Government is agreeing to further infiltration of German officers and agents into North Africa.

Marshal Petain and the French Government will necessarily understand that if the French Government is not in a position to carry out the commitments made to this Government, the Government of the United States will not be able to carry out its share of the agreement relative to North Africa which was on the point of conclusion nor to continue its efforts to find a practical way of assisting the French civilian population in unoccupied France provided of course that such assistance would result in no benefit, direct or indirect, to the German war effort.

You should state that your Government is sending this message through you to Marshal Petain with full recognition of his difficulties and with the most friendly regard and respect for him, but that unless the French Government is in a position to abide completely and in every detail with the preliminary agreements into which it entered with this Government covering the proposed economic assistance, the Government of the United States cannot of course continue its efforts in that regard.

Please telegraph the result of your conversation.

HULL



740.0011 European War 1939/100894: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*[Extract]<sup>20</sup>

VICHY, April 18, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received April 19—4 p. m.]

461. . . .

He [Marshal Pétain] then of his own accord brought up the German demand to increase the personnel of their Control Commissions in North Africa to 200 (my telegrams no. 455 April 17, 1 p. m., and 456, April 17, 7 p. m.). All his efforts to prevent this had been of no avail; he is helpless. I said that his very question was object of my visit and told him frankly of the effect that such increase of German personnel in that area might have on our plans for supplying North Africa with its vital needs, as well as for the unoccupied zone. He said that he had obtained from the Germans a promise that the number would not be increased above the 200. How long they would keep that promise judging by the past he did not know but told them frankly that if they did not keep it, there was no reason for him to continue his efforts to get along with them. He has reason to believe, he said, that they have troubles enough elsewhere, in the Balkans, for instance, and their uncertainty as to Russia's attitude; in every country Germany has occupied, feeling is rising. He does not know whether there will be peace this year but if there is, all the conquered peoples will cause them trouble. If the Germans break their promise and raise their Commission numbers to over 200, he said he will let me know. In any event he is sending a "more energetic officer" to Morocco as Resident General. Weygand is doing a very good job but does not always get along with all his subordinates so Noguès is to be removed. (He did not mention the name of his successor. Nor do I know yet the full significance of the change.)

I spoke to him about the reports, that De Brinon is issuing visas to Germans for North Africa in Paris. He replied: "Of course it's true. It's difficult to stop it. He is completely the Germans' man. However, I have one hold over him: he does not want to lose his job. I have now insisted that he telephone Vichy before he issues any visas."

He seemed discouraged but genuinely pleased to see me and to talk over his troubles. Only twice did he evince hope for the future: Once when he spoke of French unity behind him, and again when he talked

<sup>20</sup> For first part of this telegram, see p. 151.

of the United States, and of our growing strength; and of our chance of saving Europe from the famine which will come next year. He did not speak of a German victory but he did say that he thought England would be "demolished" by air attack.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/10089¼: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 18, 1941—8 p. m.  
[Received April 19—6:04 p. m.]

462. My telegram 461, April 18, 7 p. m. I have given the question careful thought in the light of all the possible consequences and do not feel that this new development—the increase in the number of Germans in North Africa of some 140—should of itself cause the cancellation or curtailment of the Department's plans for supplying North Africa or tentative plans for sending wheat to the unoccupied zone. The obvious arguments in favor of such plans, of which the Department is now well aware as I am, seems will hold true. The limited quantities to be supplied and the timing of shipments should serve adequate guarantee against any accumulation of stocks or any aid to Germany. In the next few weeks' time we shall learn whether there is a real infiltration of Germans into North Africa sufficiently grave to imply the impending loss of that territory—and any large infiltration should be very difficult to conceal. If so, we can, and in my opinion should, reverse our policy, frankly informing the Marshal of our reasons therefor. The Marshal certainly does not stand for defiance to German encroachments; but he does definitely represent a brake to full military "collaboration"; he will try to save the fleet from German hands and we cannot fairly say that North Africa is yet lost.

Even in the event, however, that we terminate our North African program, I feel that we should continue our Red Cross shipments of milk and vitamins for children. Aside from the humanitarian aspect of such a policy, it will go a long way to offset the campaign of calumny which may well be launched against us here if our present policy is changed. As long as we feed the children in this zone, it will be hard to make the population of unoccupied France lean toward collaboration; and as long as this public opinion holds, both the Marshal and his Government must and will be sensitive to it.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/10154

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] April 19, 1941.

The British Ambassador called today at his request. I showed him a copy of my despatch of yesterday to Ambassador Leahy<sup>22</sup> in which we very earnestly protested against German infiltration in Africa. The Ambassador expressed his appreciation for this despatch. He added that the situation was not looking good and referred to the single incident of the rubber that was landed at Casablanca and was being sent across for shipment to Marseille.

He re-read a letter from Churchill in which he appeared mildly optimistic about the North African situation. I said that I was very deeply concerned about it and I am looking for even still more reassurance.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

740.0011 European War 1939/10156

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] April 19, 1941.

The British Ambassador called today at his request. I said that if Petain should yield to the pro-Hitler influences in his Government there might be left three courses for this and the British Government to pursue: (1) Either we or the British protest strongly; (2) We or the British take definite action with the use of force to establish ourselves at Dakar or Casablanca, to which he added a supposition that neither of us was in a position to do that; (3) An attempt be made to get General Weygand to invite the British or some other force to come in and aid him against German invasion. I remarked that General Weygand has softened considerably towards the British-American viewpoint and that Mr. Eccles for the British Government and Mr. Murphy for my Government have had full and more or less effective personal conferences with General Weygand on this question of resistance against outside attack; that he has repeatedly said that he would fight Germany if she came in; that he has not only requested cooperation with us by the sale and shipment of certain staple commodities to French North Africa for local use, but he has earnestly requested the sale and shipment to him of certain munitions in order that he might more effectively resist outside invasion by Germany, or by any other country.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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<sup>22</sup> Telegram No. 332, April 18, 6 p. m., p. 292.

740.00112 European War 1939/4670

*Memorandum by Mr. David Eccles of the British Embassy*

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, FRANCE AND  
THE UNITED KINGDOM—20TH APRIL, 1941

1. Anglo-American policy towards France has been vitiated by an overestimation of the French Government's liberty of action. It was useless to beg, bribe, bully a government to exercise an authority they did not possess. It was equally useless to starve a sick people in the hope that they would crawl back in a still more miserable condition.

2. The Germans wrote the Armistice as a temporary document in the belief that the bases they were securing would be adequate swiftly to defeat England. This calculation proved wrong. So they are now forced to demand the French Navy and for bases in French North Africa. If Pétain refuses these demands, Hitler will use force. He is preparing to do so.

3. The Vichy Government does not represent the French people. The Government feels the full force of German pressure which is concealed from the public. Pétain's bargaining power, always doubtful, is fast disappearing. The overwhelming presence of German troops, the need for food, and the critical position of the French prisoners of war made it impossible for him to resist the demands for economic collaboration. The French Fleet and the French Empire were the only weapons at his disposal.

4. The Fleet has lost its value as a bargaining counter. It is dependent on the will and ambition of a man who believes Germany must win the war.

5. The African Empire, less dependent on personal whim, was Pétain's only card; but the arrival of German troops in Tripoli and German experts in Morocco have destroyed its value. Weygand is no longer capable of carrying out his instructions to defend North Africa against all comers.

6. This is the present position. Nothing can save Metropolitan France. The Germans are masters there. The Fleet is doubtful. The French African Empire—at least the vital ports of Casablanca and Dakar—can still be saved. All the rest is already lost.

7. The degree of collaboration which France will concede to Germany is governed by one permanent and one fluctuating factor. First the Germans could occupy the whole of France at any time they wish. Second the belief among the French people that Germany or England will win the war varies with the military situation. Public opinion in France is the only restraint upon the pro-German inclinations of

a government—Pétain and Weygand excepted—which is convinced Germany will win.

8. Anglo-American initiative must concentrate its entire effort on North Africa. The French Empire is so tightly controlled by the Vichy Government that independent action by Weygand is not to be expected. The Vichy Government will only at this eleventh hour be moved to accept the consequences of military intervention by England or the United States in North Africa if French public opinion is electrified by the hope that Germany can be defeated. Only direct action by the United States in North Africa will provide this shock.

9. Economic assistance to Metropolitan France or to French North Africa is no longer adequate inducement to Weygand to resist the German demands. He must invite, or be forced to accept, British or American troops.

10. If the appraisalment of the situation given above is accepted the choice lies between asking Pétain to receive British or American troops and sending an unheralded expedition to seize Casablanca and Dakar. If it is thought that Pétain or Weygand would communicate to Darlan our request to be invited into North Africa then action must be taken without warning. It is possible that Pétain, knowing that his end is near, would have the courage to open the door to our troops before the curtain falls.

DAVID ECCLES

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740.0011 European War 1939/10144 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, April 20, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received April 21—8: 10 p. m.]

106. Noguès in stating he wished to be perfectly frank with us, and to place himself in our confidence, informed me in Rabat he had received word from Weygand within the last few days that notwithstanding the most energetic protests on the latter's part the additional German members of the Armistice Commission who had been slated to come to Morocco were expected to arrive in two or three planes very shortly.

Noguès explained that when there had been a short while ago [indication?] of possible additions to the Commission he and Weygand had gone to Vichy to protest. Darlan and Pétain had both protested to the German Armistice Commission he said and he and Weygand had returned to North Africa under the impression Germans would be permitted to come.

It is Noguès' understanding that the Germans are coming to replace the members of the Italian Commission. I asked him if the Italians

did not number about 100 and he replied that there were something more than that number (from another source I was told there are some 75 officers plus a clerical personnel bringing the number to slightly over 100). I asked him if this meant that 100 additional members of the German Armistice Commission might be expected. He replied this was his understanding adding that some might also be sent to Algeria.

I remarked I thought this possibility most unfortunate from the point of view of our economic aid to French North Africa, pointing out that as he knew, the subject of German infiltration had caused particular uneasiness to the British and that I felt sure Washington would be, to say the least, concerned. I added that as he no doubt was aware anything that related to the use of Northwest Africa as a possible military or naval base was of particular concern to the defense branches of the United States Government. He replied that as a military man he understood this perfectly.

I asked him if he could furnish me with any more specific information. He replied he could not because he did not know more, that the last communication from Weygand on the subject was that he would shortly receive instructions from him.

During our extended conversation Noguès did say he had been officially informed the German Armistice Commission at Wiesbaden had issued strict instructions to the German Armistice Commission in Morocco not to engage in propaganda. This was in answer to a protest of Noguès.

I asked him what he thought the immediate aims of the Commission in Morocco were. He said he did not think they were to prepare for a German landing as in Norway as the Germans had not sent as far as could be determined anyone to speak of outside the Commission. He said he had refused, on the score that France was still at war with Germany, several requests of the Commission to permit German merchants to enter Morocco. Noguès said that the only other Germans in French Morocco apart from the Commission as far as he knew were former members of the Foreign Legion and Jewish refugees. Some may have passed over the Spanish Zone frontier unobserved but these could not have numbered many in his opinion.

I asked Noguès for his opinion concerning the Spanish threat to Morocco. He said the Spanish would only act if pushed by Germany. He considers the possibility still "a danger".

I said I had heard French North Africa was very short of war matériel. He confirmed this, adding "the British must not be impatient". A Moroccan friend he said had spoken to him the day previous and had said very pertinently "we must not become a second Yugoslavia".

Noguès said there were two currents of opinion in the German Wiesbaden Commission: <sup>22a</sup> The Economic Section was not opposed to American aid to North Africa but the Military was suspicious of it for the added prestige it would give the United States there.

The German Commission in Morocco in Noguès' opinion is extremely nervous and exercised over a possible British landing in Morocco. He asserted with great positiveness that there had been no demand by the Germans for bases or ports in Morocco. He thought all the Commission wanted was to survey thoroughly the military ground and to know what was going on.

Noguès said of course these months would be the most critical for Britain. He was not sure whether Hitler would make an all-out attempt against England or not as it might represent too much of a gamble for him: It would be all or nothing. If North Africa could be kept going through this year, the time might come when it could play a role but it was folly for the British to think that in its present state anything could be attempted now.

In my conversations with Noguès and other high protectorate officials, I was impressed by a more favorable feeling toward the United States and Britain and by their heightened morale in comparison with 6 weeks previous. Our willingness to give them economic aid has greatly encouraged them.

Noguès did not so state but Monick informed me Weygand is still fighting against the substitution of Germans for the Italian Commission or at least to minimize it.

Repeated to Vichy.

CHILDS

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740.0011 European War 1939/10149 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, April 21, 1941—noon.  
[Received 4: 50 p. m.]

107. I was informed by Meyrier, the principal assistant to Noguès in Rabat, that Hitler had said privately recently the following in substance: "I know what is going on in French North Africa. That does not disturb me. I know precisely how many tanks and planes the French have there and I can crush in 3 days any movement that raises its head there."

CHILDS

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<sup>22a</sup> German Armistice Commission set up to supervise carrying out of the terms of the German-French Armistice Treaty of June 22, 1940; for text of treaty, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. IX, p. 671.

740.0011 European War 1939/10150 : Telegram

*The Consul at Tunis (Heisler) to the Secretary of State*

TUNIS, April 21, 1941—1 p. m.  
[Received April 22—2:25 a. m.]

43. Department's 21, April 16, 2 p. m. Reliable private sources state that about six Italian ships per day convoyed by destroyers are proceeding daily to Libya through Tunisian territorial waters and they can often be seen only a few hundred yards from shore. A few days ago five of the supply ships were sunk by the British Navy and some wounded German and Italian soldiers are now at Sousse. It is further understood that tanks, trucks and armored cars are being reconditioned in this country and with various supplies are going to Libya though the present extent of such traffic is not known.

HEISLER

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740.0011 European War 1939/10189 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Chülds) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, April 21, 1941—5 p. m.  
[Received April 22—10:50 p. m.]

108. I dined with Monick after lunching with Noguès, the former having been acquainted by the latter with our conversation. Monick said Noguès had asked him whether he should speak to me about the possible arrival of additional German members of the Armistice Commission or wait until more definite information concerning them had been received. According to Monick he had informed Noguès he must show the most complete confidence in us and accordingly Noguès had given me all the information he had on the subject.

Monick said Weygand and the French Army in Morocco were now apprehensive of an attack on two fronts, namely from Tripoli and from the Spanish line. They were most worried he said about the latter. He suggested the Germans might create incidents on the Spanish-French frontier in Morocco and use them as an excuse for coming in and assisting Spain to establish order.

Earlier when I had discussed with Noguès the possibility of a German thrust through Spain and had asked him how it was likely to be effected, he remarked that the distance between the Spanish peninsula and Morocco was much shorter than that between Sicily and Tripoli and if the Germans had been able to move important shipments of men and material there under cover of darkness they could probably do it even more readily here. He thought the factor that had so far stood in the way of a German drive on the Straits of Gibraltar was the fact of provoking a political upheaval in Spain.



Monick suggested that we give earnest consideration to a program of economic aid to the Spanish zone with a view to realizing the same objectives in that area that we had in mind in French North Africa. I suggested that economic and political conditions in the Spanish zone were so different from those of French North Africa in relation to the protecting power as to make it difficult to do anything with the Spanish zone. I added that there was no Weygand in the Spanish zone. He agreed but stressed the great importance of Morocco to the defense of the Americas and hoped that something might be done. He thought Beigbeder<sup>23</sup> in particular might be receptive.

I asked Monick in what French North Africa was chiefly lacking from a defense point of view. He said the man-power situation had much improved in the last 3 months and further improvement was expected in the next 3 months. I understand that Moorish police are being secretly organized and armed ostensibly as police but actually to serve with the armed forces. Monick said the Germans could not object to the organization of adequate police protection in Morocco. He added that in material the greatest need was in tanks, airplanes and bombs. He urged that among our observers sent to Algeria, there should be included military and economic experts who could discuss with Weygand his particular needs in North Africa.

Repeated to Vichy and Madrid.

CHILDS

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740.0011 European War 1939/10190 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, April 22, 1941—3 p. m.  
[Received April 22—2: 48 p. m.]

158. Your 91, April 18.<sup>24</sup> Message conveyed as instructed. Chatel's<sup>24a</sup> reaction: Warning strengthens Marshal's hands as well as Weygand's. Vichy informed.

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/10191 : Telegram

*The Consul at Casablanca (Stanton) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, April 22, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received 7: 45 p. m.]

149. Mayer went to Rabat yesterday and conveyed to Monick the sense of the message to Marshal Pétain quoted in the Department's

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<sup>23</sup> Juan Beigbeder, former Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>24</sup> See footnote 19, p. 292.

<sup>24a</sup> Yves Chatel, Secretary General of the Delegation General in French Africa.

105, April 18, 6 p. m.,<sup>25</sup> (the second section of which was received only yesterday morning).

Monick was distressed but not surprised; he seemed to have expected some such reaction to the news of the increase in the membership of the German Commission. He said it was too bad the message had not been sent sooner; had it been delivered in time, he thought the German demands in the premises might have been refused. He insisted that Weygand and Noguès had done everything they could to prevent acceptance of these demands and added that he had hoped that the agreement with us would have given Weygand more influence in Vichy.

Monick was to leave for Algiers this morning. He would, of course, discuss with General Weygand the situation created by the message and as he was going on to Vichy he would be able to convey personally to the authorities there the General's opinion in the matter.

Monick confirmed that some of the new German Commissioners had already arrived. With regard to the report that Germans are coming to Morocco on authorizations signed in Paris by De Brinon, he said that he knew of four who had come with such permits. In addition, there was also a German who had come on a visa issued by a French Consul in the Spanish Zone.

Incidentally, Monick would be glad to learn through the Embassy at Vichy if Marjolin has arrived in Washington (our 141, April 12, noon<sup>26</sup>).

Repeated to Embassy at Tangier and Vichy.

STANTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/10240 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, April 23, 1941—4 p. m.  
[Received April 24—3:35 a. m.]

159-163. General Weygand sent for me at 2:00 this afternoon and said in regard message contained your 91, April 18<sup>25</sup> that if agreement therein referred to should fail he would be disconsolate ("désespéré") for two reasons (first) because from material viewpoint North Africa must live and (second) because of larger general political considerations involved, as to which, he added, the United States Government was able to reach its own conclusions.

After Weygand I saw Monick, Secretary General Morocco, and Chatel together. The former urgently insistently demanded Depart-

<sup>25</sup> See footnote 19, p. 292.

<sup>26</sup> Not printed.

ment take no action in matter until Secretary or Under Secretary had listened to special messages carried by Marjolin who arrived United States Monday 21st and stated that this interview must be had apart from and entirely dissociated from any officials belonging French Embassy at Washington.

Monick made following three statements which he pointed out desired make with maximum brevity and force.

“(1) Weygand has done all he can prevent infiltration over above replacement Italian Armistice Commission by Germans and done in forcible as possible way and has been overridden. German Commission of which will be 141 members has been limited strictly to arms control only. Only five De Brinon Germans now in Morocco. Here Chatel added, two from De Brinon have been refused admission, sent back to France.

[(2)] Question now not of simple agreement but of far-reaching counter collaboration. American responsibility already engaged. France (North Africa) not begging for supplies but taking long look into future and United States must now accept its responsibilities therein as regards entire west coast of French Africa. Was message to Marshal Pétain warning shot only or ultimatum? So much already accomplished why let all go for a little? Will United States continue or surrender west coast Africa now?

[(3)] United States having gone so far should join issue with Germany over Morocco peacefully combatting Germans by sending Americans under control scheme and by presence Americans in North Africa force average Frenchman and high French officials in North Africa choose definitely between Germany and United States.”

He is proceeding Vichy Friday or Saturday, returning Algiers one week later. Communicated Vichy by copy by airmail.

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/10286 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

[Extract]

VICHY, April 23, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received April 24—1:50 p. m.]

476. Lagarde,<sup>27</sup> Chief of the African and Near Eastern Division, this afternoon made no attempt to conceal his disappointment over the increase in the number of the German Armistice Control Commission in Casablanca and frankly said that French policy several months ago of trying to reduce the number of Italians had been a strategic error: “Better any number of Italians”, he said, “than the Germans”. However he felt that we should not take “too tragic” a view of the situation for the present. The Germans have agreed to limit the number to 200

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<sup>27</sup> Ernest Lagarde.

and the French will do what they can to prevent the number from being exceeded. Noguès is keeping them under close surveillance.

Furthermore, he said no visas issued by De Brinon are being honored in Morocco and a new system has been installed which will preclude issuance of a visa to Morocco without a number specifically authorized by the Sûreté Nationale at Morocco. Cancellation of our program for supplying North Africa at this time he said would merely be playing into the Germans hands and would certainly be misunderstood here. It would he felt but further strengthen the hands of the collaborationists.

The Italians, he said, under the new arrangement will still have control of the area near the Moroccan-Algerian frontier.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/10280 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, April 24, 1941— 6 p. m.

[Received 7:48 p. m.]

115. The British Consul General<sup>28</sup> is informed by a trustworthy French source in the French Zone that 18 German military members of the Armistice Commission arrived in Casablanca on April 18 and 19 in two German Heinkel-112 machines. The party is said to have included a colonel of aviation and quite a number of aviation officers. A considerable further number is expected momentarily.

The French authorities are stated to have requisitioned four villas for their accommodation at Anfa and have also taken over a large hotel, the Miramar, at Fedalla.

The same source reports that the Germans are furious at the idea of supplies arriving from the United States and that they are taking measures to obstruct their distribution.

Repeated to Casablanca and Vichy.

CHILDS

851T.48/14

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Robert D. Murphy*

[WASHINGTON,] April 24, 1941.

The Under Secretary today received Messrs. Atherton, Murray and Murphy. Mr. Welles informed Mr. Murphy that it had been

<sup>28</sup> A. D. F. Gascoigne.

decided to go forward with the plan of economic cooperation with French North Africa. Mr. Murphy would be instructed to return there shortly for the purposes of (1) Maintaining contact with the competent French authorities and especially General Weygand; (2) supervision and direction of the American control organization which will be established under the plan for the control of exports and imports from French North Africa; (3) supervision of the activities of American consular establishments in French Africa; (4) reporting to the Department all matters of political, economic and military interest and making such recommendations as may occur to him. Mr. Murphy would travel to such points in French Africa and metropolitan France as he may in his discretion consider necessary.

Mr. Welles said that of course Mr. Murphy's activity would be under the general supervision of Ambassador Leahy but that the former would act somewhat as a High Commissioner for French Africa.

There was a discussion of the gravity of the military and political situation in the Mediterranean area and the possibilities of the immediate future. The Under Secretary recognized that it was late in the political day to essay bolstering the French administration in the hope of enabling it temporarily, at least, to resist Axis penetration and possible invasion. However, he felt that the United States took little or no risk in such an undertaking. On the other hand, there are definite advantages to be gained.

Mr. Welles understood that the French funds in this country necessary for the purchases of commodities urgently needed in French North Africa were being released by the Treasury.

The Under Secretary also said that the question had been discussed of sending Mr. Murphy to Casablanca as Consul General. After discussion and consideration of the various phases of the matter, it was decided that there should be no change of title and that the officer would return as Counselor of the Embassy at Vichy authorized to inspect and supervise the consular establishments in French Africa and conduct the work relating to the operation of the economic plan above.

At this point Mr. Welles also received Mr. David Eccles, Counselor of the British Embassies at Madrid and Lisbon and special representative of the Ministry of Economic Warfare who, it is understood, has been designated by the British Government to carry on discussions here regarding French African matters.

Mr. Eccles told Mr. Welles that he thought his Government would now be quite willing to include French West Africa in the present plan of economic cooperation. There had been a time some months ago, he said, when any such suggestion would have been hooted down in London, but he thought that sentiment had changed in this respect.

He saw no good reason for any present distinction between French North and West Africa. In fact, as matters stood, there seemed every argument in favor of cooperation with French West Africa especially as it would mean the introduction of American economic control officials at Dakar. Mr. Welles referred to the recent telegram from our Embassy at Vichy which transmitted the urgent request of the French Government for reconsideration of the French African question and the recommendations made by Murphy after his visit to Dakar last December. He said that the suggestion made by Mr. Eccles seemed very sensible and that if the British Government agreed, there seemed no good reason why French West Africa should not be included in the present plan of economic cooperation with French North Africa. It was understood that Mr. Murray and Mr. Atherton would act on the matter accordingly.

Mr. Eccles reviewed briefly his activity in Spain and gave Mr. Welles a picture of conditions in that country as he saw them. He said that even in the case of a German invasion of Spain fully fifty per cent of the Spanish generals would fight the Germans and that guerilla warfare on the part of a large section of the Spanish population, especially the former Republicans, could be relied upon. He felt that it was about 11:55 in respect of economic cooperation both with Spain and French Africa but he felt that straw and carrots should be held out for what they were worth. He was certain that the negotiations which he had conducted for months in Spain had resulted in the Spanish staying neutral, and that was no mean result. At any rate, we should try to gain the friendship of those in the country who could be helpful if things went badly. Mr. Eccles felt certain that the Germans would sooner or later endeavor to gain control of Casablanca and Dakar. The plan of economic cooperation is very good as far as it goes, but it, of course, does not go far enough.

Mr. Eccles mentioned that he didn't think it well for the Spanish to depend entirely on Brazil for cotton and on the Argentine for wheat. He thought the United States would be well advised to work out a barter plan of some sort under which we would take some olive oil and cork from Spain enabling her to obtain other edibles in this country, especially some wheat. Mr. Welles referred to the consideration which has been given a possible \$25,000,000 loan to Spain and Mr. Atherton pointed to the furore which occurred every time any publicity was given to such a matter. Mr. Murray doubted that there was real opposition in the country as he thought the opposition was limited to a few newspaper people and some Leftists. Mr. Welles directed that a résumé of the situation be prepared and a further study made of the possibilities along this line.

Mr. Eccles also said that he thought we should be more firm in insisting with the French on the export to the United States of definite quantities of certain commodities such as olive oil and cork both of which are needed in this country. This would obviate any possibility of such quantities going to Germany. Mr. Welles said that he thought this was being done and it was agreed that the list of commodities to be exported from French North Africa be carefully reviewed with Mr. Eccles' suggestion in mind. Mr. Murray said that this was now in process.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2605a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, April 24, 1941—noon.

98. You are requested to inform General Weygand through Chatel of the following decision on the part of this Government:

In view of the assurances given by General Weygand at Algiers on February 26, 1941 and subsequently confirmed by the French Government at Vichy, negotiations regarding the purchase in this country of supplies urgently needed for French North Africa have been proceeding between French North African, American and British representatives. A preliminary schedule of urgent purchases has been approved and funds will be released by Treasury license to permit these purchases. These supplies will go forward in vessels provided by the French authorities with the transit of which the British Government will not interfere, and their distribution will be under the control of an American organization set up in French North Africa in pursuance of General Weygand's agreement.

This Government is glad to offer these facilities because it believes that this method presents the possibility of preventing the economic disintegration of French North Africa and of preserving the French administrative control in that area.

This Government has also welcomed assurances from General Weygand and the French Government that they will in every way endeavor to check the spread of German influence in these territories. It will, of course, be understood that should there be any infiltration of Germans into North Africa sufficiently serious to imply impending loss of control of the territory, this Government will no longer be able to continue its program of assistance and will be under the necessity of so informing the French and British Governments. General Weygand will, of course, appreciate that this arrangement has been concluded with the full knowledge and agreement of the British Government freely given.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/2613 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, April 28, 1941—5 p. m.  
[Received April 28—2:46 p. m.]

177. Following received from General Weygand:

"The General wishes to express his sincere thanks to the United States Government for its communication contained in your 98, April 24, and to express hope that [it?] will be possible carry out agreement covering 'commercial exchanges' under the terms approved by the United States Government."

COLE

#### IV. American Observers in French North Africa To Supervise and Control the Economic Aid Program

740.00118 E. W. 1939/201

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 13, 1941.

MR. BERLE: With Mr. Berle's approval arrangements were made through U-L<sup>30</sup> for representatives of the War Department and the Navy Department to call at my office to discuss the possibility of assigning Navy and Army officers to certain posts in Morocco. Colonel Smith of the War Department and Captain Bode of the Navy Department called to discuss this matter. I showed Colonel Smith telegram no. 51 of March 1 from Tangier,<sup>31</sup> a copy of which had already been sent to the Navy Department, and I gave each officer a paraphrase of the Tangier Legation's telegram no. 53 of March 5.<sup>31</sup>

I then went on to point out for the strictly confidential information of these officers that the Department was considering the possibility of extending economic cooperation to the territories in French North Africa, i. e. Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. This plan, if adopted, would envisage the stationing at key points in those territories of American officials whose duty it would be to see that goods imported from the United States were not reexported to any third country and were not built up into large stocks. I explained that it seemed doubtful whether the necessary personnel to carry out these functions was available in the Foreign Service, and I inquired whether either or both the War and Navy Departments would be interested in furnishing such personnel who could, in addition to their control

<sup>30</sup> Liaison Office.

<sup>31</sup> Not printed.



duties, prepare such reports on their observations as might be of interest to the War and Navy Departments. Both officers expressed the opinion that their Departments would be greatly interested in furnishing such personnel. In order that they might explore the situation further they asked that a brief memorandum be furnished to them through U-L stating the situation and indicating as definitely as we could the ports and control points at which officers would be required. It was again emphasized to both officers that no final decision had been taken as to economic cooperation with North Africa and that the matter was in any case to be regarded as strictly confidential.

WALLACE MURRAY

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740.00112 European War 1939/2477½

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Liaison Officer (Wilson)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 7, 1941.

MR. WILSON: In accordance with instructions from Mr. Welles,<sup>32</sup> I have spoken on the telephone to General Miles<sup>33</sup> in regard to the assignment of Army officers for the purpose of controlling the shipment of American supplies to North Africa, concerning which, you will recall, General Miles recently requested a more definite written statement. I informed General Miles that it was the desire of this Department that the necessary observers proceed almost immediately to North Africa, and that all necessary arrangements should be made now in order to avoid delay later.

General Miles explained that the War Department would require a minimum of about three weeks before properly qualified men could be inducted into the Service and could prepare themselves for sailing to North Africa. Among other things, the candidates for this assignment must undergo medical examination. In view of the time required for this preparation, it is felt that the War Department should proceed at once in the matter of selecting and commissioning the officers who are to be assigned to this duty, and I would appreciate it if an appropriate communication could be addressed to the Secretary of War as promptly as possible in that sense.

I understand from General Miles that the War Department proposes to send ten officers to North Africa at this time, which would meet with our approval. Certain questions regarding their transportation expenses and allowances have also been raised, as you know, but it

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<sup>32</sup> Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State.

<sup>33</sup> Brig. Gen. Sherman Miles, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Intelligence, War Department.

is suggested that these matters might well form the subject of informal discussions which are being arranged between officers of this Department and the War Department.

WALLACE MURRAY

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740.00112 European War 1939/2514

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Villard)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 7, 1941.

Participants: Lt. Comdr. J. L. Riheldaffer, Navy Dept.  
Lt. Cranwell, War Dept.  
Mr. Robert Murphy<sup>34</sup>  
Mr. Villard

A conference was held today with representatives of the War and Navy Departments in regard to the stationing of control officers in North Africa for the purpose of supervising the distribution of products sent from the United States. The contents of this Division's memorandum of April 7 were discussed with the officers present and a list was furnished them of the places in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia suggested by Mr. David Eccles<sup>35</sup> as the most suitable for the exercise of control. Mr. Robert Murphy concurred in this list and made suggestions in regard to living conditions.

Lt. Cranwell stated that the War Department intended to assign a military attaché to the Legation at Tangier in the immediate future and that it would therefore not be necessary to station a control officer at that point. He said that the War Department had in mind five candidates to send to Africa, who, however, still had to pass their physical examinations. It was pointed out that our understanding from General Miles was that ten officers were to be available and that, in view of the recommendation by Mr. Eccles that officers operate in pairs wherever possible, it might be necessary to assign even more personnel to this work.

Lt. Cranwell inquired who was to pay the transportation and subsistence allowances of the officers going to Africa. He stated that the War Department would pay their salaries but had no other funds available until after July 1. He was informed that this matter was being discussed in the Department and that a reply would be conveyed as soon as possible.

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<sup>34</sup> Counselor of Embassy in France, on special assignment to French North Africa, temporarily in the United States.

<sup>35</sup> Representative of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare at the British Embassy in Washington with primary responsibilities for North African matters.

The question arose as to how the officers were to reach their assigned posts. It was pointed out that the easiest means would be to travel on the French vessels carrying the first cargoes of supplies, to which the French had already agreed. The point remained of obtaining the authorization of this Government to travel on a belligerent vessel to a belligerent zone, which, however, could be taken care of as soon as we knew the names of the officers. Mr. Murphy suggested that two officers should proceed as soon as possible by Clipper plane in order to make preliminary arrangements and as evidence that we mean to go ahead as rapidly as we can.

Both the War and Navy representatives requested that written communications be addressed to their respective Departments making formal request for the selection and assignment of the control officers. Lt. Cranwell pointed out that background information is lacking on which to base instructions to the officers selected and which would be necessary to guide them in their duties. It was agreed that before the officers left for Africa they would be given an oral outline by a representative of the State Department as to the object of their service.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2683

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Villard)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 18, 1941.

Participants: Brigadier General Sherman Miles and Lieutenant Cranwell, from the War Department;  
Colonel Benson and Mr. Eccles, from the British Embassy;  
Mr. Wallace T. Phillips, of the Navy Department;  
Mr. Robert Murphy;  
Mr. Murray, Mr. Alling,<sup>36</sup> Mr. Villard.

Before proceeding with discussion of the functions of control officers proceeding to North Africa, it was explained that a telegram had been received from the Embassy at Vichy indicating that a total of 200 Germans might shortly be expected to be stationed in the French North African territories.<sup>37</sup> While official confirmation was still lacking, it appeared that the French Government had agreed to permit this infiltration of Germans. Mr. Eccles stated that his Government would be definitely opposed to countenancing the shipment of any

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<sup>36</sup> Paul H. Alling, Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs.

<sup>37</sup> See telegrams Nos. 455 and 456, April 17, from the Ambassador in France, pp. 290 and 291, respectively.

supplies to North Africa and would not be able to participate further in the plan under these circumstances. Further discussion of this subject was deferred pending the receipt of confirmation from Vichy.

Lieutenant Cranwell raised the question as to the status of the control officers in the event of hostilities between the United States and Germany. He pointed out that if they were acting in a civilian capacity but were found to be commissioned officers on active duty with the American Army or Navy, they would be subject to treatment as spies. In view of the risk these men would run, General Miles said that he would prefer to have them proceed with their full title set forth in their passports. (On questioning the French Embassy in regard to this later in the day, the reply was received that the sending of officers to North Africa with military or naval titles would cause the entire plan to break down.)

Various administrative problems were discussed in this connection. It was brought out that while an officer on active duty would automatically receive a salary from funds available, there were no funds available if the officers should proceed in a civilian capacity without being ordered to active duty. The question was also raised as to the source of funds for office space, clerical help, and local transportation.

It was made clear that any reports to the War or Navy Departments made by these officers were to be transmitted through the nearest consulate, and that all the control officers were to operate under the supervision of American consular officers and would report directly to the latter.

Mr. Eccles asked if information as to all types of suspicious cargoes leaving North Africa could be transmitted by the control officers to a central point such as Tangier in order that the British authorities at Gibraltar might be promptly informed. Since this would embrace products not included in the authorized lists of imports from the United States, it would involve an extension of the control plan which had not been envisaged. Further discussion of this point was reserved for a later date.

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740.00112 European War 1939/2743

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Liaison Officer (Wilson)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 19, 1941.

MR. WILSON: In view of certain administrative difficulties in assigning commissioned Army and Navy officers to perform the proposed control work in French North Africa, it has been decided to send these men in a civilian capacity and to obtain funds for their salaries, trans-

portation, and other expenses from the President's defense fund. The officers will thus be under the control of the Department of State and the funds to be used for their expenses will be administered also by this Department. It is planned, however, to use the men selected for this service by the War and Navy Departments, provided the respective records of these officers meet with our approval.

In as much as several of these officers are understood to have been commissioned and already ordered to active duty, it will be necessary to disenroll them from the active lists and return them to the status of reserve officers. The Navy has requested that a communication be addressed to it in this sense, pointing out that the men are to proceed to North Africa in a civilian status. I should appreciate it if you would forward such a communication to the Navy, and while the War Department is proceeding in this matter on the basis of a direct telephone message, it might be desirable to send a similar communication to that Department as well.

WALLACE MURRAY

125.233H3/161 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, June 10, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 5 : 55 p. m.]

235. From Murphy. Your 129.<sup>88</sup> The Vice Consuls in question may appropriately be used for courier service.

Vice Consuls King, Knox, Boyd, Canfield, Woodruff, Rounds, Utter and Knight have arrived here for consultation. Subject to the Department's approval and assuming that the economic plan is not to be abandoned the following temporary distribution of this personnel is being made: Algiers, Knox and Boyd; Casablanca, King and Canfield; Oran, Rounds and Knight; Tunis, Utter and Woodruff.

Vice Consuls Wilkes and Reid remain at Casablanca and it is suggested that Bartlett, if and when he arrives, also be detailed to Casablanca.

Whatever may become of the plan of economic cooperation (and I remain convinced that we should prosecute it) it is respectfully suggested that the above personnel should be used to the best advantage as long as it remains practicable to do so. The French African situation contains elements of value to us which we should exploit.

I was told by General Weygand's <sup>89</sup> diplomatic officer this morning that there is no objection whatever to the presence of this personnel. Quite naturally, should the economic plan fail, their activity along

<sup>88</sup> Not printed.

<sup>89</sup> Gen. Maxime Weygand, Delegate General of the French Government in North Africa.

some of the lines contemplated originally would be curtailed but opportunities for useful services could be developed. Investigations of the question of German infiltration in this area could well occupy the time of several officers.

[Here follow recommendations regarding allotments for courier service, travel allowances, etc.]

[Murphy]  
COLE

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125.283H3/161 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, June 11, 1941—8 p. m.

134. Your 235, June 10, 4 p. m. For Murphy. The Department fully approves the disposition you have made of the Vice Consuls. In view of the statement made to you by General Weygand's diplomatic officer, they should devote themselves, pending the entry into effect of the economic plan, to such matters as investigating the situation with respect to German infiltration. Reports on this and related subjects would be of great interest to the Department.

Your suggestions concerning the courier service will be dealt with in a separate telegram.

HULL

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125.283H3/166

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] June 11, 1941.

MR. WELLES: The Vice Consuls who have gone to North Africa in connection with the economic plan were fully instructed in regard to the manner in which they would submit such information as they might be able to obtain in regard to political matters within the field of their operations. They were informed that they should transmit to the nearest American consular officer any data they might receive concerning such subjects as German infiltration, the political sentiment of the native population, the French attitude with respect to current developments, and related matters. The consular officer receiving this information would assemble the data from various sources, evaluate it, and transmit it directly to the Department under his own signature. The information would then be made available to the War and Navy Departments.

This procedure was understood and agreed upon not only by the Vice Consuls themselves before their departure but by the appropriate War and Navy officials.

In order to evaluate the work of the various Vice Consuls for the purposes of their efficiency records, it is planned to have Mr. Murphy or the consular officials in North Africa submit separate confidential reports on their work.

WALLACE MURRAY

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740.00112 European War 1939/3076 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, July 23, 1941—3 p. m.  
[Received July 24—3:01 a. m.]

346. From Murphy. During the past week at Casablanca Consul General Russell and I had several conferences with the Consular Control under the Economic Plan regarding methods of operation and reporting. Subject to the Department's approval it was agreed that as the plan relates to North Africa as a whole it would be well temporarily to route all reports relating to the plan through me to avoid this [*the*] confusion which would result from conflicting data reaching the Department from the three territories involved. Military data which the officers may obtain will be transmitted to the diplomatic agency at Tangier in order that they may be checked by our Military Attaché at that place prior to transmission to the Department.

Shipping data will be telegraphed promptly to the Department by Casablanca, Algiers and Tunis.

We find Bentley's <sup>40</sup> technical knowledge and experience most useful. Subject to the Department's approval the control officers will take turns in making the weekly courier trip to Tangier, thus obtaining the benefit of Childs' <sup>41</sup> and Bentley's oral suggestions.

Code text by air mail to Vichy and offices concerned. [Murphy.]  
COLE

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740.00112 European War 1939/3641

*The Delegate General of the French Government in North Africa (Weygand) to the Counselor of Embassy in France (Murphy), Temporarily at Algiers* <sup>42</sup>

[Translation]

No. 50/S.G.P./P.I.

[ALGIERS,] September 16, 1941.

MR. COUNSELOR: Following on the conversations which have taken place regarding the rules governing the American control relating to

<sup>40</sup> Maj. William C. Bentley, Military Attaché at Tangier.

<sup>41</sup> J. Rives Childs, Chargé at Tangier.

<sup>42</sup> Transmitted to the Department as an enclosure to Mr. Murphy's despatch from Algiers, dated October 1; received October 13.

the non-reexportation of the products imported from the United States in North Africa, I have the honor to inform you of the decisions taken by the French Government.

The American control agents will be authorized:

1) To enter the ports for the purpose of verifying the movements of merchandise. Authority to visit the port will be granted on application of the control officers to the Commander of the port which it is desired to visit. The verification will be made of the goods on the dock or at the point where they are being loaded.

2) To go on board a ship, exceptionally, which is about to depart in a case where there is a contest regarding the origin of the goods, or regarding a question concerning whether merchandise destined for Metropolitan France may be considered as a product similar to the products received from the United States. In that case the maritime authority involved should submit the question to the French Admiralty at Vichy.

3) To board all ships engaged in the traffic between North Africa and the United States, whether at the arrival or departure of the ships in African ports. In the case of these ships the American control officers will be authorized locally on their application to board such ships.

I hope that the facilities thus accorded will give you satisfaction in connection with the control work with which you are charged.

Please accept [etc.]

WEYGAND

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740.00112 European War 1939/3972

*The Counselor of Embassy in France (Murphy), Temporarily at Algiers, to the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

ALGIERS, October 13, 1941.

DEAR WALLACE: I take pleasure in referring to that part of the letter of August 22, 1941,<sup>48</sup> which I find on my return to Algiers, addressed by Mr. E. Wyndham White of the British Embassy to Harry Villard stating that Mr. White would be interested in any information available about the way in which the observer corps in North Africa is actually working. The rest of the letter which related to the breakdown of the S. S. *Frimaire* cargo has been answered by separate communication.

You, of course, know from recent telegrams and despatches what the American Vice Consuls, detailed as control officers under the plan of economic assistance, are doing. There are as you know a total of twelve vice consuls detailed to North Africa in that capacity, and one to Dakar. Our North African economic accord does not extend to

<sup>48</sup> Not printed.



French West Africa, but as the Department permitted a small quantity of petroleum products to go to Dakar by the S. S. *Schéhérazade*, an observer was sent along by that ship and has been functioning since July at that place.

The activities of the control officers in North Africa could well be classified under these headings:

1) Actual control work relating to the verification of imports and exports. Thus far the control of the movement of goods received from the United States has not provided a monumental task because only two small cargo ships and two tankers have arrived over the period of more than nine months of discussion and negotiation of this matter. As the population of North Africa is about eighteen millions, the actual deliveries made up to the present have not had a marked effect on the daily lives of the people. However, three additional ships should arrive at Casablanca shortly, and I hope this may revivify French interest in the matter and build up greater confidence. Some of this rather waned with the passage of months during which nothing much was produced as evidence that we really intended to cooperate with these people to an important degree. Some individuals who are friendly began to doubt our intentions, and others who are less friendly said "I told you so".

With very few exceptions our control officers have been well received. It is a delicate business at the best for a foreign consular officer to dig around in ports, government offices, etc., for information regarding shipping, cargos, etc., in times such as the present when the fear of espionage is in the air everywhere, when the French authorities are doing what they can to oppose German Armistice Commission and Italian Armistice Commission control, and with the French Navy in charge of port activities. With regard to the latter I began to believe that naval officers are a class apart endowed with a heavy gift of suspicion which extends not only to foreigners, but more especially to their own army and civilian colleagues. In French North Africa they are no exception. Some of them are not friendly to the British and our officers at times are considered as undisguised British agents. However, when the first shipments actually arrived, as small as they were, I saw some of the incredulity existing on the part of certain naval officers, disappear. I might add in that connection that the incredulity of one Admiral was expressed in a reference he made to the American economic plan for North Africa as a "Trojan horse".

In that connection also it should be remembered that General Weygand's organization is principally army, and it is probably only to be expected that high ranking naval officers might regard his negotiations with us rather biliously. We had some discussions regarding the procedure to be followed by our control officers in the ports. I enclose a copy of a letter from General Weygand, dated September 16, 1941,<sup>44</sup> which outlines the procedure as it now stands. This has the approval of Admiral Darlan.<sup>44a</sup> The procedure is not perfect but I believe that it is satisfactory for the present. As further shipments arrive I am confident that the rough edges will wear off.

<sup>44</sup> *Supra.*

<sup>44a</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Navy, and Interior.

It should not be forgotten that the German and Italian Armistice Commission representatives are watching our men like hawks. We have evidence, however, that the French authorities tell them very little about our activity. Some of the complaints the Germans have made to the French about our men show that their information is distorted. Officially and socially our men are received by the French, entertained, taken on shooting parties, and the like. The Germans and Italians with rare exceptions are left severely alone socially, and kept under strict surveillance officially. There is of course police surveillance of our people. I have been shown one or two of the reports on them. The French ask that they be prudent and not expose themselves to charges of dissemination of propaganda or other activities which would lay them open to German and Italian attack. We are doing our best to cooperate in this respect and thus far, aside from a trivial incident or two, there has fortunately been no complaint.

2) Military, naval and shipping information. I hope the Department is pleased with the volume and character of the data which the men are obtaining under these headings. For one who has not lived in belligerent territory under the peculiar circumstances now prevailing, with a vigilant German and Italian armistice commission personnel in the immediate vicinity, the delicacy of the task of obtaining information of this kind may not be apparent. The French have been obliged for obvious reasons to instruct officials and army and navy officers to be most discreet in their conversation and contact with foreigners. To a great extent this is directed against Germans and Italians but the instructions can't very well specify. As a result many officials simply clamp down the lid in respect of all foreigners with whom they avoid contact. I believe that our men really have done a satisfactory job thus far.

3) The observers naturally try their best to investigate and follow efforts at infiltration by the Germans and Italians. I have been quite frank with General Weygand in this connection emphasizing to him repeatedly that it is in the interest of France to have our men on the ground and able to give to our Government a reliable and accurate account of Axis activity. The data our men have obtained I find useful and interesting, and I hope that the Department is of that opinion. I believe that our officers constitute at present the only really authentic, impartial source of information on this subject. Obviously there is every sort of café rumor imaginable current in this regard. Some rumors have thousands and thousands of Germans and Italians all over the place. I hope that our consular reports have thrown some accurate light on the subject.

The officers also follow as best they can developments regarding shipments of supplies to Libya, and similar matters.

4) Naturally also our observers do their best to promote what might be called "the cause". In other words they emphasize in their conversations, and as tactfully as possible, our belief in a British victory, the aid of the United States, what the President and the Secretary have said publicly, etc. I believe that this is very important. Individuals whose judgment I respect have insisted repeatedly that the very presence of our consular officers is a source of comfort and inspiration to the French. At Oran, for example, we have had two Vice Consuls stationed since last July. Oran, which as you know adjoins Mers-el-Kebir, is an important naval headquarters and shipping center. When

the Vice Consuls arrived they found a good bit of the population wallowing in anglophobia, much of which resulted from the British attack on the French Navy at Mers-el-Kebir on July 3, 1940, during which about fourteen hundred French sailors were killed. I don't pretend that two American Vice Consuls can eradicate that sentiment, but I do believe that their presence and activity have counteracted some of the animosity, and diminished also the conviction which many entertained that Germany could not lose the war. The Vice Consuls have obtained some useful information both at Oran, Nemours and other points in that area.

Contacts with the Arab population are being made tactfully and I believe developed in a manner which is valuable. I have had several of the officers travel as much as possible and two are just finishing a tour of southern Morocco which is considered useful. They have managed to talk to a number of interesting Arab personalities and spread the news of the operation of the economic plan and allied subjects. Our men in Tunisia are also doing good work in this respect.

5) Copies of data on military, naval and other subjects are of course sent to Tangier by courier (we have a weekly courier service by plane Tunis-Algiers-Casablanca, and by automobile Casablanca-Tangier on which the observers take turns) for such use as our Chargé d'Affaires and Military Attaché at that place consider expedient.

I hope that the foregoing will give you a bird's-eye view of the control officers' activity. It should be remembered that these men were new to the service and came from most varied forms of outside activity in the United States. They have developed more satisfactorily than we could have hoped. They are all sincere, conscientious and willing men, all with an excellent knowledge of the French language, and some with a useful knowledge of military affairs. The only disappointment is that among them is not at least one well qualified in naval and merchant shipping matters. Knight <sup>44b</sup> at Oran has made a study of naval affairs as a hobby for some years, and King <sup>44c</sup> at Casablanca has a good working knowledge of some phases which he picked up here and there. The rest of us, I am afraid, might with luck be able to distinguish between the *Dunkerque* and a submarine on a bright sunny day.

I might also add that General Weygand's organization and he himself have played ball with us in all important respects. My confidence in him is not diminished although I am conscious that were he more of a prima donna without the degree of loyalty which he has, we might look forward to more spectacular action one way or another. However, with a less dependable character, the result might be speculative or even disastrous.

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT D. MURPHY

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<sup>44b</sup> Ridgeway Brewster Knight, Vice Consul at Algiers.

<sup>44c</sup> David Wooster King, Vice Consul at Casablanca.

[The voluminous reports of the control officers are not printed. These reports covered such subjects as use of American economic aid, military and naval information, shipping data, and political, social, and economic conditions in North Africa.]

V. Suspension of Economic Aid Program for French North Africa in May 1941;  
Resumption of Program in June

862.24/386a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Casablanca (Stanton)*

WASHINGTON, April 30, 1941—4 p. m.

113. Please urgently request Reed of Socony Vacuum<sup>45</sup> to endeavor to check through his organization a report which has reached the Department to the effect that under German pressure French authorities in Tunisia have advanced for use of Axis forces in North Africa considerable quantities of petroleum products, particularly from French naval reserve at Bizerte, as well as a number of tanks and other equipment.

The subject<sup>45a</sup> of the Department's telegram No. 21 of January 29<sup>46</sup> might also be consulted in this regard.

HULL

851T.48/13 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 30, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 5:42 p. m.]

500. Monick,<sup>47</sup> who is in Vichy for a few days, is greatly relieved at our decision to continue our program of supplying North Africa and naturally considers continuance there of the utmost importance for the future. He is considerably worried over the recent increase in members of the German Armistice Control Commission and likewise over the drift of developments in Spain and Spanish Morocco and reported German pressure in that direction. He has emphasized to us that in his opinion the time has arrived when some declaration of policy towards North and West Africa should be made, preferably all the American Republics, but if this impracticable, at least by the United States. This declaration he feels should take the form of

<sup>45</sup> A. G. Reed, General Manager of the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company at Casablanca.

<sup>45a</sup> Lt. Col. Robert A. Solborg, observer for the Military Intelligence Division, War Department, in North Africa.

<sup>46</sup> Not printed.

<sup>47</sup> Emmanuel Monick, Secretary General of the French Zone of Morocco.

insistence, in as strong language as seems practicable in the circumstances, that any change in the *status quo* in North Africa and West Africa including Dakar would constitute a menace to the security of the Western Hemisphere.

If possible, there should be, in his view, an indication that any threat to change that *status quo* would be regarded as threat to the safety of the American Republics requiring some offsetting action and indicating that acceptance of any such change by France, Spain and Spanish Morocco would alienate the friendship and economic cooperation of the Western Hemisphere which will otherwise be forthcoming.

Monick rightly or wrongly believes that the influence, at least the combined influence, of the Latin American Republics on Spain carries real weight and that such a declaration might weigh in the balance during the critical weeks ahead either with the mother country itself or with Spanish Morocco.

The second benefit which Monick regards as of even greater importance is the encouragement and strengthening effect which such declaration would have on General Weygand.<sup>48</sup> He maintains that Weygand is developing rapidly and that his high sense of duty is bringing him to assume the real position of leadership which he must take if North Africa is not lost to the French.

He states that Marjolin<sup>49</sup> is more or less familiar with his ideas on this particular matter but that they have taken more definite shape since Marjolin's departure, particularly the thought of making the declaration, if practicable, a joint one of the American Republics.

He asked that his views and the importance he attaches to them be brought to the Department's attention.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/10536 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 1, 1941—noon.

[Received 4:38 p. m.]

504. Department's 366, April 28, 4 p. m.<sup>50</sup> High French Air Ministry sources have stated that Axis convoys were proceeding through Tunisian waters and that one such convoy in addition to the one, the sinking of which was also announced on April 16, was recently sunk

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<sup>48</sup> Gen. Maxime Weygand, Delegate General of the French Government in North Africa.

<sup>49</sup> Former Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary General in the French Zone of Morocco, at this time in the United States.

<sup>50</sup> Not printed (740.0011 European War 1939/10150); this telegram asked the Ambassador to obtain from the proper authorities confirmation or denial of report contained in telegram No. 43, April 21, 1 p. m., from the Consul at Tunis, p. 301.

just outside of Tunisian territorial waters. (This information they say was obtained here through intercepting an Italian telephone conversation.) They indicate that these convoys are still proceeding but only at irregular intervals and in no such volume as reported in the Department's telegram. They confirm that some wounded German and Italian soldiers from a sunken convoy are now in Tunis. They deny however that any tanks, trucks or armored cars are being re-conditioned in Tunis for shipment to Libya. (The Embassy will transmit a supplementary report on the question of truck deliveries from Tunis to Italian forces in Libya, of which it learned today from a separate source, following further verification.)

French naval and army officer sources close to our Naval and Military Attachés likewise confirm the foregoing as regards utilization of Tunisian territorial waters for Italian convoys and the negative report with respect to repairs of tanks and armored cars.

Neither of these sources has yet any confirmation of the accuracy of the report contained in paragraph 2 of Tunis telegram 45, April 26, 1 p. m.,<sup>51</sup> as to the extinguishing of navigating lights at Kelibia and Cap Bon.

We have likewise informally requested Rochat<sup>52</sup> to endeavor to check the foregoing and will report what he says in a later telegram.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/10531: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 1, 1941—noon.

[Received 9:03 p. m.]

505. Embassy's telegram 500, April 30, 4 p. m. Monick called this morning following his interview yesterday afternoon with the Marshal.<sup>53</sup> He said that he found the Marshal not unreceptive to his suggestion for an American declaration with respect to the maintenance of the *status quo* in Africa. In fact, he said the Marshal asked him to discuss the question with Du Moulin<sup>54</sup> and to give him a memorandum. The Marshal might, says Monick (perhaps with undue optimism), make some answering statement in support of such a declaration.

Monick has accordingly prepared the following brief outline of what he hopes might be contained either in a speech of the President,

<sup>51</sup> Not printed.

<sup>52</sup> Charles Antoine Rochat, Acting Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>53</sup> Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, French Chief of State.

<sup>54</sup> Henri du Moulin de Labarthète, Marshal Pétain's Chef de Cabinet.

or preferably a joint declaration by the American Republics if we consider that practicable. He requested that this be telegraphed for the Department's consideration :

"The defence of the entire American Hemisphere obliges the American Powers to state in advance and in the clearest manner their position as regards Africa: That is to say, the vital interest which they attach to the full maintenance of the *status quo* on all the west coast of Africa (which implies the *status quo* in all French, Spanish, and Portuguese possessions in West and North Africa). These powers declare, as regards themselves, that far from having any intention of making any change in this *status quo*, they have already given the most definite proofs of the interest which they attach to the maintenance of the economic structure of these areas and of the peaceful stability of the present state of things.

"They declare, in consequence, that if the *status quo* in this part of the world should be disturbed by any foreign interference they would inevitably be brought to consider such an interference as a direct attack on the security of the nations of the American Hemisphere. They would then consider themselves in a state of legitimate defence and would act accordingly.

"Monick likewise feels that while it might be somewhat delicate to include such an indication, it might be feasible to imply without saying so to the extent of offending Spanish susceptibilities that the moment the foreign troops cross the Pyrenees the *status quo* in Africa is threatened. Obviously, he said, once the Germans go into Spain it would probably be too late to 'save' Africa since their minimum objective would certainly be Gibraltar and Spanish Morocco.["]

I am complying with Monick's request that this quoted suggestion be forwarded by cable in order that the Department may be informed in regard to the maximum action by America that the pro-British, pro-American French in North Africa hope for at the present time and in regard to their fears for the immediate future.

The difficulties to be encountered in this suggested action of Monick are easily apparent.

It is generally believed here that as soon as and if Germany can settle its difficulties in the Far Eastern Mediterranean it will move against Gibraltar and North Africa.

Embassy's 500, April 30, 4 p. m., and above message repeated to Tangier and Casablanca.

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/2638b : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, May 1, 1941—10 p. m.

379. The Department is instructing Murphy in his present status of Counselor of your Embassy to return to French Africa for the

purpose of conferring with the competent French officials regarding the execution of the plan of economic cooperation which is now in operation. Murphy will direct the control organization which is being organized. The first members thereof will proceed shortly under assignment as Vice Consuls to several posts in French North Africa.

With reference to your telegram 439 of April 14, 3 p. m.<sup>55</sup> please inform such officials as you may consider desirable that the Department approves in principle application of the plan of economic cooperation to French West Africa as well as French North Africa. We have discussed the matter with British officials here, who have referred the question to London. In the meanwhile and pending further discussion of the matter, we would be disposed to agree as an emergency measure to the transfer to Dakar of a limited amount of the fuel which is scheduled to leave a United States port for Casablanca about May 3. Such a shipment would of course be solely for the use of Air France and would be strictly controlled by Consul Wasson and the Socony representative at Dakar.

In communicating this information to the appropriate French officials you should emphasize that we are actuated by a desire to strengthen the French administration in French North and West Africa thus enabling greater resistance to Axis encroachment. We would appreciate in turn their cooperation with Murphy and the granting of the necessary facilities to him and our consular representatives in that area.

In connection with the general subject of economic aid to French Africa, the British desire written assurances that the French vessels leaving this country with supplies for that area should return unconditionally to an American port. Please endeavor to obtain such assurances as soon as possible and notify the Department by telegraph.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/10597 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, May 3, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received 2:14 p. m.]

130. Repeated to Vichy. My Tetuán colleague a few days ago discussed with his German colleague German policy in French Morocco pointing out the difficulties Noguès<sup>56</sup> had had to face since the Armistice and adding that German policy had tended to aggravate those difficulties.

<sup>55</sup> *Ante*, p. 285.

<sup>56</sup> Gen. Albert Noguès, Resident General in the French Zone of Morocco.



The German Consul observed that the Italian Armistice Commission in Morocco had had no real authority and that the substitution of additional German commissioners for the Italian Commission had been due possibly to the Wilhelmstrasse lack of confidence in the French administration in the French Zone.

My Tetuán colleague replied he thought the Germans were making a mistake, that in French Morocco where France was faced with the problem of exercising authority over a native population it was not possible to admit their authority to share that task. The German Consul allegedly was very pleasant and remarked that as he had observed to the Spanish High Commissioner the Germans could not help the great popularity in which they were held by the Moors.

I was informed that the Germans could not have it both ways in Morocco: They could not enjoy the privileges of both war and peace times. The French could not object to the exercise by the Commission of military and economic surveillance in accordance with the terms of the Armistice but they could oppose the intermixture by the Commission in internal administration and it was for that reason the protectorate authorities were rounding up Moors and other unauthorized persons having dealings with the Commission.

CHILDS

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740.00112 European War 1939/2663 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 6, 1941—1 a. m.

[Received 2: 57 p. m.]

511. Department's telegram 379, May 1, 10 p. m. The Embassy has now received a note from the Foreign Office with reference to the question of supplying French West Africa, the pertinent portion of which reads as follows in translation:

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honor to request the Embassy of the United States:

(1) To express to the Department of State the interest which the French Government attaches to the decision in principle of the American Government, and

(2) To indicate that the two conditions upon which the supplying of French West Africa is contingent are acceptable, that is to say (a) control of imports by the Consul General of the United States, and (b) return of the ships to their port of departure.

The French Government intends to prepare for sailing from an American port which shall be designated by the Department of State a tanker from Martinique with a view to making the first shipment from the United States to French West Africa.

It would be desirable that this first supply of petroleum products (to be shipped on one or several tankers) be made up of the following:

1. 200,000 liters of aviation gasoline of 90-92 octane, and 2,000 liters of 100 octanes;
2. 3,000 tons of automobile gasoline;
3. 5,000 tons of gas oil;
4. 13,000 tons of fuel oil.

The foregoing quantities represent one month's consumption for the civilian population and for the merchant marine for each category of petroleum products at present restricted rationing rates in French West Africa.

The stocks of gas oil and fuel oil of that colony are nearly exhausted.

If this situation should be continued French West Africa could no longer carry on any foreign trade. Furthermore, lack of gasoline at the present time is dangerously isolating the European elements.

In view of the foregoing indications the Minister of Foreign Affairs desires to call the attention of the Embassy to its extreme interest in having the Federal Government give at the earliest possible moment a favorable opinion to the loading of a tanker for French West Africa which could be sent from Martinique to the United States.

The pertinent services of the French Government are preparing, in agreement with General Weygand, a list in order of priority of other food and industrial products indispensable to the supplying of French West Africa."

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/10678: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 6, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received May 7—1:20 a. m.]

514. Department's telegram No. 336 [366], April 28, 4 p. m.,<sup>57</sup> and Embassy telegram 504, May 1, noon. Rochat said this afternoon that he had mentioned to Admiral Darlan<sup>58</sup> himself the report that Italian convoys are passing through Tunisian waters to Libya and the latter had replied, "I suppose they are using our territorial waters for their convoys as the British are mining those waters". (We pointed out that utilization of Tunisian territorial waters for military convoy purposes would seem to be ample justification for the mining of such waters.)

As to the repair of tanks, trucks and armored cars in Tunisian territory Rochat said that Admiral Darlan denied the report completely; Darlan said, however, that navigation lights at Kelibia and Cape Bon (see Tunis telegram 45, April 26, 1 p. m. to the Department<sup>57</sup>) have

<sup>57</sup> Not printed.

<sup>58</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Navy, and Interior.

been ordered extinguished "in order to make navigation in Tunisian waters difficult for everyone."

LEAHY

740.00112 European War 1939/2735½

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the  
Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Alling)*

[WASHINGTON,] May 7, 1941.

Participants: Mr. Neville Butler, Counselor of the British Embassy;  
Mr. David Eccles, of the British Embassy;  
Mr. Atherton;<sup>60</sup>  
Mr. Reber;<sup>61</sup>  
Mr. Murray;<sup>62</sup>  
Mr. Alling.

Mr. Butler said that the Embassy now had instructions from the Foreign Office regarding the proposal for the extension of economic aid to French West Africa. The Foreign Office agreed that economic pressure against French West Africa was not enough and that it was now desirable to proceed with economic assistance subject to certain conditions. The first of these was that American observers and control officers should be stationed in French West Africa, particularly at Dakar. The Foreign Office also called attention to the fact that French West Africa had an annual exportable surplus of approximately 450,000 tons of ground nuts. This surplus amounted to approximately 150,000 tons of edible oil and of this amount the British Government understood that some 60 per cent or 90,000 tons was going to Germany through unoccupied France. The Foreign Office felt that it was essential to eliminate or in any case to reduce this large quantity of edible oils going to Germany.

The Foreign Office also pointed out that if economic aid was extended to French West Africa, there would be certain repercussions in French Equatorial Africa and in the Cameroons territories which, as we knew, were controlled by General de Gaulle.<sup>63</sup> The Foreign Office, therefore, expressed the hope that it would be possible for the United States Government to extend aid to these de Gaulle territories. It would be preferable that such aid be extended prior to the time that aid was given to French West Africa but in any case aid to the de Gaulle territories should be given not later than simultaneously to that with French West Africa. Mr. Butler expanded upon this

<sup>60</sup> Ray Atherton, Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs.

<sup>61</sup> Samuel Reber, Division of European Affairs.

<sup>62</sup> Wallace Murray, Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs.

<sup>63</sup> Gen. Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French.

proposal by pointing out that unless the de Gaulle territories received such aid their leaders, who after all had shown their bravery and their sympathy with the Allied cause by separating themselves from Vichy, might conclude that their action was ill-advised and that they might better have continued to serve the Vichy Government.

Mr. Atherton pointed out that the Department would of course be glad to consider any proposals which the British might wish to make with regard to assistance to the de Gaulle territories. At the same time he pointed out that under our present practice the de Gaulle territories were free to purchase in this country any supplies they desired except those actually needed for our own defense. These supplies could, moreover, be carried to French Equatorial Africa in American ships and it was, therefore, not quite clear why General de Gaulle needed economic assistance. Mr. Eccles stated that the problem resolved itself into a question of payments. He pointed out that supplies for the Vichy controlled territories could be paid for by the French with the large sums which the French Government had available in the United States. Obviously these funds were not available for the purpose of making purchases for use in the de Gaulle territories. It appeared that what was necessary in the case of French Equatorial Africa was the extension of economic aid apparently with no thought of payment unless, indeed, it would be possible for the United States to purchase additional amounts of goods from Equatorial Africa. In this connection the suggestion was made that importers in the United States might be able to take certain supplies of hard woods understood to be available in Equatorial Africa.

Mr. Eccles also pointed out that it would be desirable for the United States to have consular representation in the de Gaulle territory. It was pointed out to him, however, that we already had a Consul at Léopoldville, Belgian Congo, and that the latter was in touch with the French authorities who maintained their headquarters at Brazzaville which was directly across the Congo river from Leopoldville.

Mr. Atherton again repeated that the Department would be glad in principle to consider any definite proposals which the British might have with respect to French Equatorial Africa but that it was his feeling that the question of supplying that country with commodities was not directly connected with the present proposal to furnish supplies to French West Africa.

Discussion then centered about the proposal to send goods to French West Africa. Mr. Eccles pointed out that it would be quite impossible to agree to furnish that territory with large supplies of fuel oil which would only be used to bunker French merchant ships. In that connection he stated that his information showed that the French had

in their African territories only 100,000 tons of fuel oil. A certain proportion of this, say 50,000 tons, would have to be held in reserve for possible use of the French Navy. At the present rate of consumption by the French merchant fleet of 25,000 tons of fuel oil per month, the French apparently had only sufficient fuel to keep the merchant fleet running for about two more months. He pointed out that it would obviously be difficult to convince his Government that now was the appropriate time to give additional fuel oil to the French merchant fleet particularly when it was known that French vessels were carrying such dangerous commodities as edible oils for the use of Germany. Mr. Eccles, therefore, regarded it as a *sine qua non* that the transport of ground nuts and edible oils to Germany by French vessels be eliminated or reduced before the British could agree to supplying fuel oil and other petroleum products to West Africa.

After some further discussion it was finally agreed that telegraphic instructions should be sent to Mr. Murphy at Casablanca directing him, at his next interview with General Weygand, to point out this situation and ask for the General's suggestions as to a possible solution. Specifically Mr. Murphy would be instructed to state that it would obviously be difficult, if not impossible, for this Government to agree to supply petroleum products to French West Africa as long as those products were being used to convey large quantities of edible oils for German use. Furthermore, it was agreed that a telegraphic instruction should be sent to the Consul at Dakar asking him to report upon the intimation contained in telegram no. 511, May 6, 1 a. m., from the Embassy at Vichy, that a lack of gasoline in French West Africa was dangerously isolating the European elements in that colony.

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740.0011 European War 1939/10747 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, May 8, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 5:03 p. m.]

188. Local authorities again protest against broadcasts from American stations such as reported in telegram of Murphy from Lisbon January 28 [*February 1*].<sup>65</sup>

Program of Boston on April 30 quoted letter from "high government official" appearing in *New York Evening Post* pointing out timeliness [and?] feasibility of armed American intervention in North Africa and pro-British, pro-American sentiments Sultan of Morocco. They consider that action dangerous with results exactly contrary to desired effect. They repeated injunction that at the present time no

<sup>65</sup> Not printed.

attention should be called to North Africa particularly with any indication of American interest in military assistance to support supposed dissident movement which they claim will only result in increased German pressure and/or occupation.

COLE

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740.00112 European War 1939/2725a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Casablanca (Stanton)*

WASHINGTON, May 10, 1941—8 p. m.

122. For Murphy. The Embassy at Vichy has received a note from the Foreign Office expressing interest in the proposal to supply commodities to French West Africa and indicating that the two conditions upon which such supplies are contingent are acceptable, that is to say (1) control of imports by the consular authorities of the United States and (2) return of ships to their port of departure. The French Government proposes that this new plan be initiated by the shipment of certain petroleum products which would be carried by one of the tankers now at Martinique. The French Government would submit subsequently a list of other products including foods and industrial materials which are indispensable to the economy of French West Africa.

This whole question has been discussed with the British Embassy which has now received instructions from London. While the British are prepared in principle to go ahead with the plan for economic cooperation with French West Africa, they point out that it would be impossible for them to agree to supply that territory with fuel oil and other petroleum products which would be used by the French merchant marine to transport to unoccupied France, for eventual shipment to Germany, large quantities of ground nuts and edible oils. In view of our own policy of extending all possible aid to Great Britain we naturally take the same view. It is desired, therefore, that at the earliest opportunity you discuss this problem with General Weygand and ascertain whether he has any suggestions which might be helpful.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/10844 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, May 12, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received 1:10 p. m.]

192. Doolittle<sup>66</sup> saw Colonel Truchet, many years French head Native Affairs Tangier, now Weygand's staff here, who returned from

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<sup>66</sup> Hooker A. Doolittle, Consul at Tunis.

Vichy Friday. He developed same theme as Monick with one important change.

"Sole hope North Africa, American intervention with 500 tanks, 1,000 planes and strong naval forces. However, no declaration should be made about our interest in African coast until forces are ready to land as such declaration would precipitate German action. German divisions now reported massing in Pyrenees, presumably for move through Spain.

He also stated presence Abd-el Krim <sup>67</sup> in Fez would be worth two divisions against Spanish and further that French Navy rapidly turning towards United States and like Army would gladly work with us."

On way from Morocco Doolittle learned new Germans there are settling in large groups at Fedala, Port-Lyautey, Boulvant, all oil installations. He reports Spanish friends informed him German action expected North Africa before end May. If so, situation appears hopeless unless effective aid available now.

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/11600

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Alling)*

[WASHINGTON,] May 14, 1941.

Participants: M. Marjolin, former official of the French Moroccan Government;  
 Mr. Acheson; <sup>68</sup>  
 Mr. Atherton;  
 Mr. Murray, Mr. Alling.

Mr. Acheson received M. Marjolin, who had recently arrived in the United States from French Morocco. M. Marjolin until recently was First Assistant to M. Monick, Secretary General of the French Moroccan Government. M. Marjolin is well known for his pro-Ally sympathies. As a matter of fact he stated in confidence that he was now en route to England to join the movement of General de Gaulle.

M. Marjolin was quite frank in advocating immediate American military intervention in French Africa. He felt that only through such action could French North Africa and French West Africa be kept from coming under the control of the Axis Powers. He was asked what would be the attitude of the French military and naval authorities toward British or American intervention in North Africa. He replied, quite frankly, that any attempt by the British to land in

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<sup>67</sup> Moroccan Nationalist leader who led Riff uprising against Spain, 1920-24.

<sup>68</sup> Dean Acheson, Assistant Secretary of State.

North Africa would be met with all-out resistance by the French naval and military forces. He felt that French naval forces would probably offer almost equal resistance to American military intervention but that the French Army in North Africa would not oppose an American landing as vigorously as it would a British landing. He urged that any military intervention by Britain and the United States should be led by American forces, which, as pointed out above, he felt would not meet as much French resistance as would British forces. M. Marjolin was asked what would be the attitude of the French naval and military authorities toward a German attack and he replied that under existing circumstances the French Navy and Army would offer no resistance.

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740.0011 European War 1939/10967: Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, May 15, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 2:55 p. m.]

152. Monick informed me at Rabat that upon his return to Algiers from Vichy on May 5th he had had a long, and for us, highly important conversation with General Weygand:

1. Weygand stated to him that he was thinking day and night of the responsibility he would have to take and that he would take. While he could not discuss in advance those eventualities with American representatives he was anxious to know in the most precise terms concerning the help he could count on from the United States. Weygand stated that in his mind the timetable of the help he was to receive was as important as the help itself.

2. I understand from the above that while Weygand does not desire to have discussions or negotiations with representatives of the United States concerning which he would feel obliged to render an accounting (the Department will recall in this connection the action Weygand felt obliged to take with respect to the first communication made to him by us last year), nevertheless, he is most anxious for the preparation of his own plans that he should be acquainted through those of his staff most in his confidence with a definite plan of what the United States may be able to extend to him for the day of action. It must be emphasized that what is in Weygand's mind in this respect according to Monick is a concrete plan in all its possible details capable of being applied systematically from the moment that zero hour is reached.

3. Monick informed me he attached the utmost importance to the foregoing as it is the first occasion in his many talks with Weygand



since the Armistice when the latter has gone so far as to commit himself so definitely to the possibility of undertaking a decisive stand under given circumstances.

4. I asked Monick if my Government was in possession of all necessary information concerning French North Africa's military needs and he stated that it was.

5. The Department will no doubt be aware that the British Government has repeatedly approached Weygand with the suggestion of staff talks and that he has consistently ignored these approaches. This is information I have had from my British colleague.

CHILDS

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740.0011 European War 1939/11006: Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, May 15, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received May 16—9: 40 p. m.]

154. General Noguès informed me in my conversation with him at Rabat on May 13 that the German Armistice Commission had now ceased its propaganda among the natives in French Morocco and was confining itself to the functions of the Commission as defined by the Armistice.

I asked if this was in answer to his [protest] (see my 106 of April 20, 10 a. m.<sup>70</sup>) and was told that it was.

He then told me the point of view he had expressed on this subject to the German Armistice Commission. It is not repeated here as it was that set forth in my telegram 130 of May 3, 11 a. m., as having been made by the French Consul in Tetuán who it now appears was merely repeating observations Noguès had made to the Armistice Commission.

Noguès was at particular pains to emphasize to me that only 5 German bearers of De Brinon<sup>71</sup> visas had attempted to enter French Morocco. One of these had been granted a visa inadvertently by the French Consul at Tetuán but had subsequently been compelled to leave. The other 4 who had made application in Tangier (see my telegram 120 of April 26, 5 p. m.<sup>72</sup>) had been refused visas by him. He would be glad to have their names supplied to me but I declined to take advantage of the offer as I considered that to do so might indicate we are not satisfied with his explanation. Noguès stated that he had been surprised that there had not been any German counter-pressure in the face of his strong stand in the matter of these visas.

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<sup>70</sup> *Ante*, p. 298.

<sup>71</sup> Fernand de Brinon, Delegate General of the French Government for the occupied areas at Paris, with rank of Ambassador.

<sup>72</sup> Not printed.

I said I had heard that most of the new German Commissioners had arrived and that they now numbered about 140. He said that was approximately correct but he hoped we would not entertain false notions about them. A large number were not officers but mostly personnel, the officers being only in the proportion of about 1 in 5 or 6. The new head of the Commission, General Schulteis, had not arrived yet he added. Later I saw his private secretary and suggested the Department would find helpful a complete list of the former not necessarily according to names but according to their rank and he promised to endeavor to obtain this. He showed me a list being circulated of the latest arrivals from which I ascertained that of 13 Germans only 1 was an officer, a captain, 2 were telephone operators and the balance sergeants and corporals.

CHILDs

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740.0011 European War 1939/11035a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé at Tangier (Childs)*

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1941—2 p. m.

63. Please endeavor to communicate the following message to Murphy:

"It is assumed that you are endeavoring to see Weygand as urgently as possible. In your conversation with him you should refer to the President's statement of last night sent you in my No. 61 to Tangier,<sup>73</sup> and ask whether the 'collaboration' with Germany determined by the Vichy Government is to extend Northern African territories. If this is the case, it will, of course, be necessary for this Government to reconsider its position as regards economic assistance to North Africa."

For your own confidential information pending further clarification of the situation, all activities in behalf of France and French North Africa are at a standstill.

HULL

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740.00112 European War 1939/2724 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 16, 1941—10 p. m.

[Received May 17—10:08 a. m.]

566. The following is reported: Rochat requested Matthews<sup>74</sup> to call this afternoon and said that he must, under instructions from Admiral Darlan, say that the French Government "desired that Murphy postpone his trip to Rabat for the time being." We inquired

<sup>73</sup> See footnote 69, p. 171.

<sup>74</sup> H. Freeman Matthews, First Secretary of Embassy in France.

whether this meant that the French Government refused to permit Murphy to enter North Africa and Rochat replied that it is not a "refusal" but a "request" that he postpone his trip. We said that we would convey this "request" to the Department. In answer to our further inquiry Rochat said that it is not his impression that Darlan's instruction to him is based on German action.

We said that we did not know in the light of recent events what the future status would be for our plan for supplying North Africa with its vital needs but we had nothing yet to indicate a change in that respect; however, we felt that when this request is received in Washington it will cause a most painful impression and may well result in cancellation of the agreement as Murphy is being sent to direct the necessary system of control. Rochat replied that he would like to make "another effort" to persuade Admiral Darlan not to make the request and asked that we hold up this telegram until 8 p. m. on the understanding that if nothing were heard from him before that time he had been unsuccessful.

At 5 minutes of 8 he telephoned to ask that his request be considered withdrawn. He added that while he had been successful in persuading Admiral Darlan to "reconsider", the fact that we had placed guards on French ships in New York<sup>75</sup> would seem to indicate that in any event they would not be available for shipment of supplies to Africa. We replied that if the plan is continued, presumably the 1 or 2 ships needed would be permitted to be used. He said that the placing of guards on the ships had "caused considerable indignation in French naval circles".

Repeated to Tangier, Casablanca and Algiers.

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/2732 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 18, 1941—noon.  
[Received May 19—1:43 p. m.]

572. Reference Embassy's telegram 511, May 6, 11 [1] a. m. The following is a translation of a further note received from the Foreign Office on May 16th with regard to the supplying of French West Africa.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honor to refer to its note of May 5<sup>75a</sup> in which it informed the Embassy of the United States of the extent of the needs of French West Africa in petroleum products and indicated that it would soon send further pertinent details with

<sup>75</sup> See pp. 526 ff.

<sup>75a</sup> See telegram No. 511, May 6, 1 a. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 326.

regard to the quantities of foodstuffs and industrial products, the importation of which is indispensable to this colony within a brief delay.

In a communication which he has recently sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Weygand points out that on November 19th last, on the occasion of his conversation with the American Consul General at Algiers, he had pointed out the essential interest to French West Africa to receive prompt supplies of gasoline and pharmaceutical products.

During the Weygand-Murphy exchange of views <sup>75b</sup> the General Delegate of French Africa continually envisaged the supplying by the United States of the whole of French Africa including French West Africa.

Mr. Murphy on his side never questioned the necessity of including French West Africa in the general program of supplying French oversea territories and it seems that if up to the present he had not deemed it possible to include French West Africa in the number of French territories benefiting by American supplies it is solely because of the fact that, at the time of the conversations which took place at Tangier in February 1941 between Messrs. Murphy and Eccles, the latter informed the American diplomat that he had not received instructions from the Government at London with regard to the supplying of French West Africa. Since May 3 the Federal Government has decided in principle to authorize the supplying of American goods to French West Africa.

The French Government asked the Embassy of the United States on May 5 to point out to the Department of State all the interest which it attaches to the decision in principle which it has recently taken. Indeed the economic situation of this colony is extremely serious at the present time. The supplying of the population is becoming more and more difficult. Rice which is the basis of the native food can no longer be sent from Indochina in sufficient quantities on account of the irregularity of maritime transportation. On the other hand wheat flour necessary for the diet of Europeans can not be furnished either by the metropolis or by Algeria. Morocco for its part finds it impossible to send the required quantities. Present stocks in French West Africa will therefore be completely exhausted by the month of June. The situation is just as critical as regards numerous other products (condensed milk, potatoes, etc.). It is extremely serious as regards pharmaceutical products.

The same shortage exists as regards manufactured articles: cotton goods used for clothes by the natives are almost completely exhausted; packing cases, wrappings, crates of every kind are lacking. In spite of the extent of present needs, the industrial equipment of French West Africa functions at a rhythm which is clearly insufficient because of the lack of cement, machinery, iron and steel. Lastly, in a country in which the security and economic activity depends principally on possibilities of communication, the railroad traffic operates on a very reduced scale because of the dearth of coal and the situation as regards stocks of gasoline, tires and spare parts has made it necessary to place restrictions which are hardly in keeping with the necessities of the life of a young country.

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<sup>75b</sup> See pp. 206 ff.

Therefore problem of supplying French West Africa is as pressing as that of North Africa. Indeed this colony as well as North Africa exports the entire amount of its production but must as a counterpart import most of its foodstuffs.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will send very shortly to the Embassy of the United States a list of the urgent needs and quarterly import needs of French West Africa and is confident the Department of State will be in a position to assume as soon as possible the importation of the most necessary goods before the coming into force of the regular program of supply."

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/11135 : Telegram

*The Consul at Casablanca (Stanton) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, May 19, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received May 21—3:50 p. m.]

198. From Murphy. On arrival at Lisbon I decided to proceed to Rabat by way of Madrid, Tangier and Spanish Morocco for the reason that I found at Lisbon belief on the part of many, especially members of the British Embassy, that there were active preparations in Spain for a military movement directed against French Morocco. I came away from Madrid with the conviction that there is imminent no such military operation. Sir Samuel Hoare<sup>76</sup> said quite bluntly that he felt that some of his compatriots at Lisbon were unduly apprehensive. He said the situation in Spain offered many encouraging phases. The stories to the effect that there were upwards of 60,000 German effectives in northern Spain were he said without foundation and that furthermore the German effectives in the Hendaye-Biarritz area had actually been reduced rather than increased. The Ambassador said that he could find no evidence of the rather extensive preparation which such a military operation would entail.

A visit of 2 days to Spanish Morocco including Melilla and Tetuán leads me to believe that apart from the strengthening of the shore batteries at Ceuta which has been reported by Childs<sup>77</sup> and some improvements in the landing fields the situation in Spanish Morocco is calm and does not suggest an imminent action against the French Zone. According to General Noguès and other reliable sources here this is confirmed by all the information which the French intelligence service in Spanish Morocco and Tangier is able to obtain and that service it should be remarked keeps in very close touch with the Spanish Zone.

I did find that the German propaganda service for French Morocco is now based in Tangier and Spanish Morocco. In this connection

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<sup>76</sup> British Ambassador in Spain.

<sup>77</sup> J. Rives Childs, Chargé at Tangier.

General Noguès and Monick both told me that the German Armistice delegates in French Morocco ceased all efforts at propaganda among the natives about 10 days ago. Thereafter the German effort seemed to redouble in the Spanish Zone from which printed matter in Arabic is smuggled into the French Zone and an incessant radio barrage is maintained. The French believe that the direct German effort in the French Zone ceased because of the urgent representations made to Vichy by both Weygand and Noguès and also because a considerable number of Arabs, including several Caids, who thought to draw a profit from contact with the Germans began to disappear, it is imagined, in the arid southern stretches of the Sahara.

The conclusion I draw from my short visit to the Spanish area is that German action in the western Mediterranean is dependent on the outcome of the action in the eastern Mediterranean and that there is a breathing space in French Morocco of possibly 2 months.

This opinion is confirmed by my conversations at Rabat. At the same time the discouragement here over the recent trend of events should not be minimized nor should the disappointment over American policy be ignored. I found General Noguès as cordial and friendly as ever but dismayed by events in Iraq<sup>77a</sup> and Syria.<sup>78</sup> He said that the reaction in the Arab world resulting from the British attacks against the Iraqis is being fanned by the Germans who hope to arouse a flame of resentment among the Arabs in North Africa by picturing the Germans as the defenders of the oppressed Arabs against the British aggressors. Noguès and others said that the Arabs in Iraq, Syria and Palestine must be regarded as a unit in which opposition to the British has long existed strengthened by the British Jewish policy in Palestine. They said that obviously the developments in the eastern area would inevitably have repercussion in French North Africa but that thus far there is no effervescence here.

On the subject of our economic policy toward French North Africa, Noguès and other officials, of course, are alarmed that the Syrian development would result in American withdrawal from this field. I told them frankly that I thought much would depend on General Weygand and themselves and that I hoped French Africa could be treated as a separate problem (this was prior to the receipt of the Department's 63, May 16, 2 p. m.).

I was also told quite frankly that there was German opposition to my return here, just as there was German displeasure over my last visit. I also note a distinction to my present visit: French officials now avoid meeting me in public.

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<sup>77a</sup> For correspondence regarding the attitude of the United States toward anti-British military coup in Iraq, see vol. III, pp. 486 ff.

<sup>78</sup> For correspondence regarding efforts of the United States to prevent French authorities from succumbing to German pressures in Syria and Lebanon and regarding use of Syrian airfields by German planes, see vol. III, pp. 686 ff.

General Noguès again emphasized the firm stand General Weygand and he have taken against the arrival of German civilians in French Morocco. He decried the credence which the British and Americans had given to what he characterized as the cock and bull story about the arrival of eighteen or nineteen hundred German tourists. He said exactly one by the name of Mertz had arrived and that he had been sent back. Noguès said that the work of the German Armistice Delegation is at a standstill for the moment and that they are indulging in no important activity. General Bethouart, who is the liaison officer attached to the Armistice Commission, confirmed this. It is believed that the German inactivity may result from the necessity of awaiting the outcome of the Darlan conversations. For that reason also it is believed that the arrival of General Schult, he is now at Wiesbaden, who will be in charge of the German Delegation, has been postponed several times. He is now due here about May 21. After his arrival the French expect that an intensive verification of the air, naval and land forces will be undertaken by the Germans.

During the course of my several conversations with the French at Rabat, American policy toward French Africa has been the subject of some reproach and even sarcasm. I was told that so many months had elapsed between my first visit and the present and so little has happened that it seemed doubtful to them that we were at all serious or if we were that apparently our policy at the best was ineffectual. One official said "the Germans at least are able to make up their minds and having taken a decision act without months of delay and procrastination." When I made reference in my conversations with Monick to our major policy of aid to England and our belief in a British victory, Monick advised vigorously that I not waste my time talking about a British victory. He said that I probably did not appreciate that since my last visit British prestige in this area has taken a nose dive. Nobody is interested any more, he said, in the British effort. There is only one question in the French mind,— "what is the United States going to do. If the United States does propose to act, what is the timetable." He asked that I not mistake this as a personal reflection on the British for whom he has the greatest sympathy.

Monick tells me that he now enjoys Weygand's full confidence and is certain that the General is impatient that he has not heard from us details of exactly what military cooperation the United States would be able to afford when the General gives the signal. Monick asserts that the General adheres to his policy of not talking to anyone on this subject outside his immediate entourage but that he understands that certain individuals on his staff have given us at the end of April the necessary basis on which we could if we wished establish a program. Have we done so and why is there so much delay, inquired Monick.

In my conversations with Monick as well as in his last conversation with Childs [I] detect a certain amount of bluff. I believe he hopes that if General Weygand is presented with a detailed program, including details of large-scale American aid, both of matériel and effectives, Weygand might be inspired to act. Monick emphasized several times that Weygand is not interested in British aid, that only American military aid would be acceptable. He and other officials said, "Let there be no mistake, the British are not welcome here. We have only confidence in the Americans. And don't believe also," Monick said, "that shipments of American matériel will be sufficient. The United States will have to send an expeditionary force." In fact, that seems to be the general keynote in French Morocco—a conviction that Britain cannot possibly win the war without direct American participation. Until the French know definitely that we will participate they will take no risks.

I hope to see General Weygand Tuesday or Wednesday.<sup>79</sup> There has been no available plane service to enable me to proceed to Algiers before Tuesday and Weygand plans to visit Morocco this week. Therefore, I may meet him here.

Our friend just returned from Algiers tells me that according to a letter received Friday from Darlan to Weygand the recent conversations with the Germans contemplated no change in French North Africa. Our friend learned from an unofficial but presumably reliable source that the conversations are supposed to have related to the use of Syrian air bases by the Germans in return for the repatriation of 500,000 French prisoners of war from Germany, a reduction of the daily payment of occupational costs from 400 to 200 millions, and a change of the line of demarcation to the line Angers-Emreux and area in the Free Zone. There is, of course, no official confirmation of this story.

I have talked with the appropriate French officials regarding the establishment of the American control organization under the plan of economic cooperation and they state that all facilities will be granted. Admiral d'Harcourt, Naval Commander of Casablanca, said he would grant the necessary authorization for our consular officer to visit the port, which is not accessible to the public. Admiral d'Harcourt said that he thought that the German apprehensions regarding seizure of the port by the British had subsided and that on the other hand the French were reassured on the same score. He characterized as ridiculous the several rumors regarding the use of any French Moroccan ports including Casablanca by the Germans for naval operations. He denied that they had ever been so used or that any suggestions had been made by the Germans looking to such use.

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<sup>79</sup> May 20 or 21.



Admiral d'Harcourt, who is proud of his friendship with General Pershing,<sup>80</sup> said that regardless of the folly of Mers-el-Kebir and Dakar<sup>81</sup> there is no thought in the French Navy of war with England. At the same time it was obvious from our conversation that there is no thought in the Admiral's mind of a resumption of hostilities against the Germans. I expected from the Admiral, who is jealous of French maritime rights, a violent reaction regarding the placing of guards on French merchant shipping in American ports. Much to my surprise he limited himself to a mild inquiry whether this actually meant seizure and expressed no resentment.

Our friend just returned from Algiers also reports that according to a junior French officer, who attended a staff meeting in honor of General Bergeret, Under Secretary for Air, who has now completed a tour of French Africa, Bergeret informed all French air officers that Britain could not possibly win, that American aid would be far too late and that there could be no hope of resumption of hostilities by the French in Africa.

My preliminary opinion is that we should go forward boldly with the plan of economic cooperation establishing our control organization and using it to the best advantage. I should prefer, however, to make more definite recommendations after conversations with General Weygand and additional French officials. I have been careful in my several conversations to emphasize to the French that in this plan we are working in harmony with the British and that the latter deserve full credit for relaxation of the blockade policy in favor of French Africa.

Repeated to Vichy. Also repeated by mail to Tangier, Lisbon and Madrid. [Murphy.]

STANTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/11600

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray)*<sup>82</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] May 21, 1941.

Attached hereto is a memorandum of a conversation<sup>83</sup> held in Mr. Acheson's office a few days ago with M. Marjolin, until recently an official of the French Moroccan Government.

<sup>80</sup> Gen. John J. Pershing, Commander in Chief, American Expeditionary Force, 1917-19.

<sup>81</sup> French warships were attacked and sunk by British warships at Oran and Mers-el-Kebir, Algeria, July 3, 1940. Dakar, French West Africa, was unsuccessfully attacked by British and Free French forces September 23-25, 1940.

<sup>82</sup> Addressed to the Secretary of State, Under Secretary of State Welles, and Assistant Secretary of State Berle.

<sup>83</sup> See memorandum by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, May 14, p. 332.

In this conversation M. Marjolin gave his estimate of the reaction of the French naval and military authorities to American or British military intervention in North Africa.

In connection with the whole question of North Africa, it will be recalled that a month ago an agent of MID <sup>84</sup> in that territory furnished us with information as to the help which the French forces in North Africa would require from the United States in order to make that territory safe from invasion. These requirements are summarized in the attached list.

WALLACE MURRAY

[Annex]

*Estimate of Assistance Required From the United States by the French Forces in North Africa*

[WASHINGTON,] May 21, 1941.

*Group One:*

- 4 armored divisions
- 4 motorized divisions, with following material:
  - 250 armored machine-gun cars
  - 250 medium tanks
  - 500 light tanks
  - 2,300 special vehicles, including armored tractors, radio cars, et cetera
  - 800 antitank guns
  - 350 antiaircraft guns
  - 3,200 trucks
  - 3,600 motorcycles

*Group Two:*

- For modernization of existing units
  - 900 antitank guns
  - 500 antiaircraft guns
  - 400 machine-gun cars
  - Large numbers of automatic rifles, pistols and land mines.

*Group Three:*

- Antiaircraft equipment for bases:
  - 200 antiaircraft guns

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<sup>84</sup> Col. Robert. A. Solborg, observer for the Military Intelligence Division, War Department.

*Group Four:*

## Air force:

200 transport planes

200 fighters

200 bombers

All of above complete with personnel.

300 fighters

300 bombers, without personnel.

*Group Five:*

## Personnel:

armored corps 24,000 men

2,000 antiaircraft personnel

2,000 mechanics

6,000 aircraft personnel

2,000 miscellaneous personnel

Total 36,000 men.

It was the opinion of French military informants that aviation material and fuel should be shipped immediately for assembly at Free-town, Bathurst, Liberia, or the Gold Coast.

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740.0011 European War 1939/11199: Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, May 21, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received May 22—11:30 a. m.]

207. For the Under Secretary from Murphy. General Weygand received me last evening. I gave him a brief résumé of the developments at Washington regarding the plan of economic cooperation with French North Africa telling him that there was under consideration at my departure the possibility of extension of the plan to French West Africa. He expressed his thanks to the President and the Department for their sympathetic interest in his present responsibility.

I then referred to the President's statement of May 15<sup>24a</sup> regarding our relations with France, giving Weygand a copy. He had already read the text in a news bulletin. I said that it would be obvious to him that my Government would no longer be interested in the plan of economic assistance if the situation in French Africa were no longer intact, and especially if the Government at Vichy had entered into any agreement with Germany impairing the French African situation in a fashion similar to that of Syria.

<sup>24a</sup> See telegram No. 411, May 15, to the Ambassador in France, p. 171.

General Weygand said that he was glad to assure me most solemnly that the French African situation was not directly affected by whatever agreements Vichy may have made in connection with Syria or otherwise; that if it was affected he would be prompt to inform us of any change.

I asked for his comment on the several stories to the effect that Tunisia is being used as a base of military operations by the Germans and Italians. General Weygand denied emphatically that German and/or Italian planes were permitted to land and refuel, that troops were allowed passage, that fuel deliveries were made, etc.

He said that the fantastic length to which these stories go is best illustrated by the British airman who, landing on Tunisian soil where he was met by French police, expressed great surprise to find French officials, as he thought Tunisia was occupied by the Germans.

According to Weygand's present information the Germans have only 2 full divisions in Libya. Only 1 brigade of each division is armored with an estimated total of 500 tanks approximately.

I found Weygand not at all discouraged or dismayed by the present military situation but I can safely say that he is unhappy over the political trend in France.

He gave me opportunity to suggest that there had been some informal discussion of the question, should there be a major violation of the Armistice Convention by Germany, such as the occupation of all of France and should the Marechal and he find no other recourse but to resume hostilities, whether in his opinion a call would be made for American aid. He replied dryly that from the trend of things at Vichy such an eventuality would hardly arise. He added that for the moment all he could say is that his policy is that of Marshal Pétain, and that he would do his best to defend French Africa against aggression.

I am certain from my conversations with him and two other key officials here that Weygand has given no subordinate express or tacit authorization to discuss the question of military aid. I also learned in this connection of comment attributed to Weygand to the effect that almost anything told to Americans usually appeared in the newspapers within 48 hours.

Weygand declared that he had met with some success in vigorously opposing German infiltration into French North Africa. He said there is no German infiltration into Dakar or French West Africa. He deplored the presence of 185 German Armistice personnel in French Morocco but said that urgent measures were being taken to stop German propaganda effort among the natives. He declared that the stories regarding hundreds of German tourists and businessmen arriving here are simply untrue.

The General seemed favorably impressed with the small amount of information I was able to give him regarding our national defense effort and our production of military and naval equipment. I am convinced that we should do more to inform the French army and naval officials in French Africa of the volume of our production and activity.

We discussed the western Mediterranean. Weygand does not believe there is imminent a German or combined Hispano-German military operation directed against Gibraltar and French Morocco. He believes the Germans must concentrate on the eastern Mediterranean.

I mentioned to the General, for his personal information only, the personal and unofficial idea of a friend regarding Freetown and Bathurst. It made, I thought, an excellent impression.

My conclusion is that we are justified in proceeding with the economic plan. Its discontinuance at this time, added to their acute depression over the political trend at Vichy, would discourage our friends and greatly reinforce the element which has continuously argued that it is foolish to look for practical cooperation anywhere except Germany.

What is the status of the *Ile de Noir-Moutier*?<sup>85</sup>

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/11217 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, May 22, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received May 23—9 a. m.]

171. There has been considerable private discussion in Morocco for some time past concerning the possibility both of the landing of American troops in this country as well as, more particularly, recently the possible display of American naval power by the visit of American war vessels at Dakar, Casablanca and Tangier. The President's statement of May 15 concerning American-French relations and the statements of prominent personalities in American political life with reference to and interest in Northwest Africa have served to revive discussion in this country concerning the possibility that we may be contemplating some action involving at least the visit of American naval vessels to ports of French Northwest Africa.

The Department will appreciate of course that I am able to view such a possible contingency in the light of only a very few of the many factors involved. Notwithstanding this limitation it has

<sup>85</sup> One of the French ships being used in the economic aid program.

seemed to me desirable to submit certain considerations which may perhaps desire to be taken into account in connection with this general question.

1. The Arab and Moor have the most wholesome respect for force. This psychology is being taken into account by the Germans who are distributing in Morocco an illustrated pamphlet in French and Arabic which has just come to my notice containing a most impressive series of photographs illustrative of the power of German arms. This is the most effective kind of propaganda especially when accompanied by action.

2. The French in Morocco are demoralized as previously reported and they have little stomach for anything but their personal security. The overwhelming majority are sympathetic to the United States and are devoted to the democratic way of life but they are no longer willing to pay a price for the maintenance of their convictions. I have found them in general including both officials and private citizens friendly disposed toward the British cause even when unsympathetic to the British nation and people. Their mental outlook is that of frightened and bewildered sheep. They have felt the power of German might and cringe morally and physically in apprehension of its exercise against them again. They are growing daily more bitter in spirit against the German but this bitterness is most unlikely to translate itself into action in the absence of the fullest assurances that they are not to be offered up again as a vain sacrifice through the mistaken errors and judgments of their military and political leaders.

3. A visit of American naval vessels to any French port would be received, there is every reason to believe, with the utmost enthusiasm by the French people of Morocco. On a number of occasions recently in French Morocco the flag on my automobile occasioned spontaneous shouts from passersby of "long live America." The reaction of officials would probably be one of concern over possible German countermeasures.

4. The native population of Morocco for reasons already stated would be impressed if not necessarily rendered enthusiastic by the presence of American naval vessels in Moroccan ports.

5. However the visit of a few vessels from our fleet unless we were ready and willing in case of necessity to undertake decisive action would in all probability in my opinion result in consequences which we should rather seek to avoid than to provoke.

6. Such a visit if confined to a mere act of presence would tend in all probability to invite the Germans to strengthen their position in Morocco by the sending of additional members of the Armistice Commission if not by the taking of even more aggressive action.

7. Moreover it is reasonably safe to conclude that the Germans would capitalize on the visit of such vessels following their departure to inculcate among the Moors the lesson that while we make a display of force Germany makes use of force.

8. Accordingly the conclusion is submitted that unless and until we may be prepared to prevent the use of French Northwest Africa as a base for attack against the Western Hemisphere by the employment as well as by the display of our power it would be the most desirable part to avoid provoking countermeasures which we may not be prepared to contest. French feeling in Morocco needs no artificial stimulus at present. Its stiffening prematurely might lead to subsequent disillusionment. If it is to be encouraged in our favor this may best be accomplished it is suggested through the presence of American commercial shipping in Morocco rather than naval vessels.

CHILDS

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740.0011 European War 1939/11236 : Telegram

*The Consul at Casablanca (Stanton) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, May 23, 1941—1 p. m.  
[Received 6:15 p. m.]

204. Following official data received from Du Gardier<sup>86</sup> May 19 showing number of effectives in German Commission in French Morocco on May 13: Inspection (in general) 75 at Casablanca; 2d section, petroleum and war industries, 65 at Casablanca; 3d section, army supervision, 20 at Fez; 4th section, air force supervision and 5th section, naval supervision combined, 25 at Fedala; 6th section, 2 representatives of the economic section of the German Commission at Wiesbaden, namely Auer (at present in Germany) and his assistant Klaube. Total 187.

For background Auer has interested himself chiefly in political, economic and propaganda work and Klaube in port work.

In addition Du Gardier's memorandum showed only one German (Walter Mertz) outside of the commission has entered French Morocco during recent months; he entered March 20 but stayed only 2 days; that during April five Germans (Walter Haut, Peter Hans Schulze, Hans Radske, Francois Mawik and Fritz Wellen Reuther) presented passports visaed by the French delegation at Paris to the French Consulates at Tangier and Tetuán but were refused entry by

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<sup>86</sup> Chief of the Diplomatic Cabinet, French Zone of Morocco.

the Residency at Rabat and that there were no further applications up to the date of his report (May 13).

A copy of Du Gardier's data was given to Murphy.

Repeated to Tangier and Vichy.

STANTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/11545

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

[WASHINGTON,] May 23, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me this afternoon at his request.

I gave Lord Halifax to read the report which Mr. Murphy had made of his recent conversation with General Weygand relative to the situation in North Africa.<sup>87</sup> After Lord Halifax had read the message, I said that this Government believed that the expedient thing to do was to adopt the recommendations proffered by Mr. Murphy and to undertake to carry out, at least on a temporary and contingent basis, the agreements made with North Africa in which the British Government had concurred.

Lord Halifax argued the point for some time, presumably in view of the recent instructions he had received from his Government in that regard. After discussing the matter fully and elaborating the various points made in Mr. Murphy's report, I said that the situation, in my mind, could be summarized as follows:

General Weygand said that the situation in so far as North Africa was concerned had not changed and that were any change to take place, he promised to inform this Government; he personally reiterated the assurances previously given that he would do his best to defend North Africa against any aggression; the supplies which we had agreed to make available under the terms of the North African agreement were more urgently needed than ever. Under these conditions, it seemed to me that this Government had nothing whatever to lose, nor did the British Government have anything to lose, by carrying out the terms of the North African agreement until and unless the situation changed in North Africa. I added that I had only today approved the immediate departure of additional American observers to North Africa and that all distribution and control of materials received in North Africa from the United States would be under ample American observation. If this assistance to General Weygand were now with-

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<sup>87</sup> Presumably telegram No. 207, May 21, 9 a. m., from the Consul General at Algiers, p. 344.



held, it would be obvious that General Weygand would consider that no kind of assistance could possibly be forthcoming from the United States, no matter what might happen, and it would be logical to suppose that in that event he would materially change his present attitude. On the other hand, I said, while we had nothing to lose by going ahead with the agreement under present conditions, it seemed to me that we had much to lose by refusing to go ahead with the agreement. If the native population in Morocco and North Africa were deprived of supplies they needed in order to live, there would undoubtedly be local disturbances which the French authorities would have difficulty in controlling and a critical situation of that kind would be exactly what the Germans would desire in order to insist upon increasing their own political and military control in that area, and our refusal to go on with the agreement would have a very serious effect upon the morale of that considerable portion of the French officers and soldiers in North Africa who still believed that their salvation lay in an ultimate British victory.

As a result of the discussion, Lord Halifax, who seemed to agree with my own point of view, said he would telegraph his Government in that sense. He asked if I would also cable Ambassador Winant in London to approach Mr. Churchill <sup>87a</sup> personally in the matter, and I said I would be glad to do so.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.00112 European War 1939/2784a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 24, 1941—8 p. m.

1794. With regard to the proposed plan of economic assistance to North Africa, we have now received a report from Murphy who is in Algiers and who was instructed, in the light of recent developments in France and Marshal Petain's statement, to obtain from Weygand personally a full statement of the position of the French Government in North Africa. From Murphy's conversations it is clear that at least for the present Weygand has not changed his position.

Weygand said that he was glad to assure the American representative most solemnly that the French African situation was not directly affected by whatever agreements his Government at Vichy may have made in connection with Syria or otherwise; that if it were affected, he would promptly inform us of any change. Furthermore, he denied emphatically that German and/or Italian planes were permitted to

<sup>87a</sup> Winston S. Churchill, British Prime Minister.

land and to refuel in North Africa, that troops were allowed passage and that fuel deliveries were being made. Weygand declared that he had met with some success in vigorously opposing German infiltration into French North Africa. He said there was no German infiltration into Dakar or French West Africa. In deploring the presence of 185 German armistice personnel in French Morocco he said that urgent measures were being taken to stop German propaganda effort among the natives.

Murphy reports that following his conversations both with Weygand and other officials he was convinced that Weygand had given no subordinate any authorization, either expressly or tacitly, to discuss the question of military aid. Murphy's report concludes that we are justified in proceeding with the economic plan. Its discontinuance at this time added to their acute depression over the political trend at Vichy would discourage our friends and greatly reinforce the element which has continuously argued that it is foolish to look for practical cooperation anywhere except to Germany.

Please bring the foregoing considerations to the attention of the Prime Minister and tell him that we feel that these assurances are sufficient to warrant going forward without change at least for the present with the proposed limited and controlled economic assistance to North Africa. We feel strongly that it would be advisable to do this in the light of the present circumstances.

Consequently, we have already authorized the departure of a second group of observers who will be charged with the control on the spot of any deliveries and distribution of economic assistance. The matter was discussed yesterday with the British Ambassador who was requested urgently to communicate our views to the British Government and we are confident that the British Government will recognize the importance of an urgent decision in this matter.

HULL

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740.00112 European War 1939/2767 : Telegram

*The Consul at Casablanca (Stanton) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, May 25, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received May 27—12: 15 a. m.]

209. When introducing new vice consuls in Rabat yesterday Monick and Du Gardier took occasion to discuss the seizure of the *Schéhéra-zade*; <sup>88</sup> gloom was dense. They emphasized that this seizure probably

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<sup>88</sup> The *Schéhéra-zade* had been seized by the British and taken to Bermuda.

will destroy the usefulness of Monick's work, on which he said he has been working 8 months, to keep French North African economy going on a provisional basis, to provide a field for American activity both now and after the war and to keep out German influence. They pointed out that chief officials from Weygand down have so far been successful in turning down German proffers of "economic" collaboration solely because American supplies would be forthcoming.

They stated they had no information from Weygand following seizure of *Schéhérazade* but are convinced these territories will have to turn to German economic sphere unless we take immediate steps to supply them. For the time being quantities are much less important than some token shipments.

They added "collaborators" here are jubilant; latter say that seizure of *Schéhérazade* proves our proffers of economic assistance were only talk anyway and there is nothing now to do but accept German proffers.

In my opinion political results of denying supplies urgently needed for harvesting crops would be disastrous, probably most if not all of present chiefs, who are pro-American and to please us help in many British matters, would be superseded, and administration would become unfriendly.

May I inquire whether it is not possible for us to keep our supply for French Morocco with following points in mind:

1. Conditions in Syria and Lebanon (whatever they may be and regarding which the real [*there is*] little accurate information here) should not be permitted to affect our judgment regarding French North Africa at this time.

2. We have here a group of high officials who want to work with us; those who would succeed them, if our economic assistance [should not?] be forthcoming, probably would not.

3. We have here still a good chance to keep this area out of German hands for some time without too strict dependence on Vichy which is quite well understood at Rabat.

4. Merchandise needed here now is insignificant from our viewpoint, from viewpoint of British blockade and even for Germans if it should eventually go to Europe.

5. Maybe reports regarding French Morocco from outside sources are not accurate.

We have not yet had news from Murphy regarding Weygand's reactions nor have we heard results of conversations between Weygand and Noguès this weekend but we submit the foregoing for consideration.

Repeated to Tangier and Vichy and latter requested to repeat to Algiers for Murphy's information.

STANTON

740.00112 European War 1939/2772 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, May 27, 1941—noon.

[Received 5:30 p. m.]

180. I had another long talk yesterday concerning economic aid to French North Africa with Gascoigne,<sup>88a</sup> the British representative here.

He said "We do not wish another situation developing here as in Syria".

I pointed out that the two situations were not analogous, that our policy of economic aid was designed to prevent what was happening in Syria. I added that there was such a thing as pushing people to desperation and that if in nothing else we had a great deal to gain by the presence of American observers in North Africa.

He admitted this but then interposed the argument that the French were not to be trusted, that he was convinced the French had embarked upon a policy of collaboration with Germany from which they were not to be deflected. He did not think an opportunity should be given the French to accumulate goods in North Africa which the Germans would be sure to take.

I said that I did not agree with his premises and that besides nobody as far as I knew was advocating the sending of large stocks from the United States but only enough to keep the economic wheels moving from one short period to another.

He said that what was wanted were firm guarantees from Weygand. I raised the question whether it was possible to offer firm guarantees in return.

I said I thought this argument moved in a vicious circle: He spoke of having no trust in Weygand and Noguès and yet wanted guarantees. The best of guarantees would be worthless in the absence of good faith. Did he mean to suggest that Weygand was playing a double game? He repudiated this suggestion when I pressed him for an answer.

He then referred to the fact that Weygand was very anti-British. I said I thought the question was not a fundamental one whether he was anti-British or pro-British but it was important to establish a community of interest with him with a view to reaching the same common objective towards which we all were striving.

Our conversation was never acrimonious but it was very frank. I left him with the assurance pressed upon me by him that our views were not so divergent as I might have supposed.

CHILDS

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<sup>88a</sup> A. D. F. Gascoigne, British Consul General at Tangier.

740.0011 European War 1939/11490: Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, May 30, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received May 31—9:45 a. m.]

222. From Murphy. General Weygand on his return from Morocco asked me to call. He said that at Casablanca General Schultheis, a comparatively young aviation officer who arrived a few days ago to take charge of the German Armistice Delegation in Morocco, called to pay his respects. Weygand tactfully brought to his attention the fact that he had ordered the execution of two important Arabs charged with treason. The Arabs had been in contact with the German Armistice Delegation. Weygand said grimly: "They will learn I am not playing with them." He also said that there is no material change in the general situation in French Morocco. He is convinced of the loyalty to France of the Sultan and the important native chiefs.

Weygand said that he is anxious to learn developments in Washington regarding the execution of the plan of economic cooperation under the agreement of February 26.<sup>88b</sup> Many stories are current about the reasons for the interception of the *Schéhérazade*. A certain minority element is seeking to capitalize the failure of Weygand to obtain deliveries under the plan as proof of American and British insincerity. That minority is vocal, he said, just as some minorities such as the Lindbergh<sup>89</sup> group are vocal in the United States, asserting that France can only look to Germany for its future welfare.

The General in reaffirming that the French African situation is unchanged, said that he refused to be discouraged over the *Schéhérazade* incident and was confident the United States would see the value of a loyal execution of the economic plan. Obviously he wishes those advantages to flow to the United States rather than some other power. He hopes that as the time element is important that the Department will soon be in position to advise him of its intentions. He plans to leave early next week for a 15-day inspection trip in French West Africa.

Weygand also declared that newspaper reports of his speech at Fez were distorted. He insisted that he did not voice approval or disapproval of present Vichy policy. He has always considered that public criticism of the French Government's policy is not his function.

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<sup>88b</sup> See telegram No. 249, February 28, 10 a. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 226.

<sup>89</sup> Col. Charles A. Lindbergh, aviator, opponent of American intervention in European war.

He does stand for discipline and order in French Africa because in his opinion that is the only way in which anything of a useful nature can be accomplished. In demanding loyalty to the Marshal, Weygand emphasized that Pétain had never suggested that any Frenchman abate his hatred or change his affections.

Weygand then referred to the President's address<sup>90</sup> from which he seemed to derive much encouragement. He regretted that he had not as yet received the full text for study and said that he was in doubt whether the President had referred to the West African ports, especially Dakar, as already German-occupied. I told him that I had listened to the President's broadcast and could assure him that the President had referred to the possibility of occupation by the Germans of such ports and the threat to American security that such occupation would then imply. Weygand expressed satisfaction saying that he fully understood the President's point of view.

I might add that I was in Weygand's headquarters when the news flash of the sinking of the *Bismarck* was received. The elation or rather jubilation which followed was in happy contrast with the acute depression prevailing over the sinking of the *Hood*. It provided an index of the basic sympathy which is noticeable throughout representative elements here. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/11491a: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, May 30, 1941—2 p. m.

120. For Murphy. You should take the earliest occasion to point out to the North African authorities and to General Weygand when available the most unfortunate impression that would be created if in the face of the present aggression which threatens France and its colonies today, any French forces under the authority of the Vichy Government were to be used now to attack any other French Colonial Territory held by fellow Frenchmen even though not dependent upon the Vichy Government. In the view of the world such action would be tantamount to civil war between Frenchmen brought on as a result of pressure by the Germans upon the Vichy authorities.

HULL

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<sup>90</sup> Radio address delivered by the President, May 27, 1941; Department of State *Bulletin*, May 31, 1941, p. 647.

740.0011 European War 1939/11523 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, May 30, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received May 31—1:45 p. m.]

187. Clarac, French Consul in Tetuán, whom I have known for some years, lunched with me today and spoke at length of the North African situation.

He said Noguès was very anti-German (Noguès it must be remembered is an appointee of the Popular Front and is or was a Freemason) and that his one concern is that of preserving Morocco and French North Africa for the French. Noguès and Weygand do not like one another and the reason given me was that Weygand is a soldier, strongly Catholic, with a distrust of politicians while Noguès is very politically minded and knows how to make his way by political combinations.

It was emphasized that both Noguès and Weygand had shown the greatest suppleness in their dealings with Vichy and the Germans. They had been able to obtain the approval of Vichy to the plan for economic assistance on the score that an exchange of goods with the United States is essential to the maintenance of French North African economy. Noguès has successfully resisted hitherto the advent of private Germans and the French Secret Service is now tailing all the members of the German Armistice Commission in Morocco to observe their movements. If the plan for economic assistance falls through all the efforts which Noguès and Weygand have made to use American aid as their shield against Vichy and the Germans will have failed.

I said that I did not know what decision had been reached in Washington on the subject, that there were many factors which would enter into the decision beyond my ken, but that on the basis of those with which I was acquainted I was personally strongly in favor of the continuance of the plan. I pointed out, however, that some of those who had supported the plan had been disappointed by the failure of the French authorities to check the increase in the German Armistice Commission and more recently by the policy of Vichy and events in Syria.

The answer was that France is under terrific pressure from the Germans. There were few Frenchmen who did not hope and pray for a British victory, but France had to live. After all, it was something to France's credit that for almost a year the French colonies had been preserved from the Germans.

I interposed with mention of Syria. The reply was made that might it not be that Germany had deliberately sought to embroil Franco-British relations by landing planes there. That was so evidently the

German game and it was to be expected that Germany would do everything in the way of almost inhuman pressure to force France to accept German conditions which France wished to avoid but could not in its present helpless position. For instance, German planes could easily fly direct from bases in Greece to Iraq.

I said it seemed to me France had to draw the line somewhere, that I thought the Marshal's policy had been one of holding Germany to a strict adherence to the Armistice terms. The answer was that France could not live divided as it was.

Reference was made by Clarac to the unfortunate influence of the French *émigrés* in London. *Émigrés* throughout history had shown themselves unable to appreciate the psychology of their fellow countrymen at home. They were the worst kind of counsellors. Ninety percent of the French wanted a British victory, but that did not mean the same percentage would be willing to risk rising against the Germans at this time under present hopeless odds. It was absurd, he continued, for the British to expect that French North Africa was in a position to take active measures against the Germans at this time or to do more than was being done in the face of all the difficulties confronting Noguès and Weygand. The British should show more imagination and realize that much was to be gained by keeping French North Africa from being used by the Germans, but the Germans could only be kept from making use thereof by the realization of American aid. If that were withheld the arguments Weygand and Noguès had used with Vichy and the Germans in favor of American rather than German collaboration in North Africa would no longer be effective.

Despite the weakness of many of Clarac's arguments (and I assume he is repeating those of Noguès whom he saw a few days ago) there is one consideration which appears of prime importance and that is that our aid should serve to reduce to a minimum German use of French North Africa or at least to delay the extension of such use. It is my opinion that it is worth being continued so long as these important negative results are realizable.

CHILDS

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740.0011 European War 1939/11694

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

[WASHINGTON,] May 30, 1941.

Lord Halifax came to see me at my house this afternoon as a result of a message he had sent me stating that he desired to see me urgently.

The Ambassador desired to request in the name of his Government that this Government bring pressure to bear upon General Weygand



to refrain from permitting French military or naval forces under his control to attack the Free French forces under the command of General de Gaulle.

I said to Lord Halifax that in my judgment a request of this character made by the United States to General Weygand would result in the same kind of statement on the part of General Weygand which had been made to the representatives of this Government in the recent past, namely, that General Weygand would resist any attack upon the territories under his jurisdiction from whatever source such aggression might come, but that he was under the ultimate orders of Marshal Pétain and that he would have to be subject to that authority.

I said, however, that what this Government could and would do would be to inform General Weygand that if the forces in North or West Africa under the control of General Weygand were to attack the Free French forces in central or West Africa, not only would that be tantamount to a state of civil war, but such action on the part of General Weygand would result in gravely impeding the channel of communication through which the United States was giving assistance to British forces in the Middle East, and that, consequently, if such action took place, the United States could naturally no longer continue to carry out the terms of any agreement it had entered into with General Weygand to supply North Africa with material assistance.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.0011 European War 1939/11492 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, June 1, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received June 1—5:28 p. m.]

224. Your May 30, 2 p. m. From Murphy. I have discussed this question with a number of North African officials, including the gentleman mentioned in the Department's telegram. I am informed in strictest confidence (there is little faith in codes and a distinct dread of the indiscretion of the Boston [*British?*] radio prevailing here) that:

1. No attack against French Equatorial Africa is possible before September because of the rainy season which is just beginning, and for other technical reasons.

2. There is no intention or desire on the part of the person in question or his associates to conduct such an operation. He is persuaded that even should he wish to make such an effort, a majority of officers would not follow him.

3. The French intend to conduct a certain amount of counter radio propaganda in opposition to the continuous De Gaulle radio broadcasts from Equatorial Africa which frequently indulge in vicious personal attacks on French West African officials.

The person mentioned in the Department's telegram is postponing his trip to French West Africa until June 7. He would be grateful if the Department could give some hint of what is happening to the plan of economic cooperation. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.00112 European War 1939/3758

*Mr. David Eccles of the British Embassy to the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

WASHINGTON, June 2, 1941.

DEAR MURRAY: London have sent us their comments on the draft letter I was to write to Marchal,<sup>90a</sup> covering our side of the United States-French North Africa trade arrangements, and have also made a number of changes in the schedule of quarterly quotas. Before I give you these in detail I think we ought to examine the general position in the light of the increasing evidence of Vichy's intention to collaborate with the Germans and the Germans' desire to press Vichy to attempt re-capture of the Free French Colonies. Both developments are beyond dispute. They must influence our treatment of Weygand, making us more cold-blooded and open-eyed, and at the same time more careful to safeguard the position in Equatorial Africa.

Lord Halifax was assured by Mr. Welles that Murphy would tell the General that your help to him was contingent on no attempt being made from French North and West Africa to attack the Free French Colonies. Should we go further, and cut the quarterly quotas in half, as a sign not to be mistaken that we are alive to the menace of a German-inspired campaign against Equatorial Africa? The Takoradi air-route is of paramount importance. It is something definite in the conduct of the Middle-Eastern campaign that we cannot afford to sacrifice for the sake of a remote hope that Weygand will resist the German drive to occupy the territories. We might abandon the quarterly quotas altogether, and proceed from hand to mouth as ships are available, but I understand from the French that this would greatly embarrass their purchasing programme and it would certainly lessen our chance of obtaining those guarantees expressed in the draft letter from the French Ambassador to Mr. Hull, and in my letter to Marchal.

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<sup>90a</sup> Léon Marchal, Counselor of the French Embassy in the United States.

It was clear that once the German army had arrived in Tripoli we could not expect Weygand to act as we should wish, unless he were promised definite military support. Unless such an offer is forthcoming now the odds in favour of the absorption and use against us by the Germans of the resources of French North Africa are too great to be ignored. Our situation is now so difficult and dangerous that I cannot see the value of a few shiploads of supplies except as a curtain-raiser to a military drama.

I enclose a memorandum<sup>91</sup> covering the changes which London would like to see embodied in the documents we drafted to cover the proposed United States-North Africa trade. I am not clear where we stand on sending supplies to French West Africa. Would you kindly inform me?

Yours very sincerely,

DAVID ECCLES

740.0011 European War 1939/11611 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, June 3, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received June 3—1:47 p. m.]

621. Weygand arrived at Vichy unexpectedly late yesterday afternoon and was received by the Marshal immediately. It is reported that he is to have an important interview with Darlan this afternoon. While there is much mystery connected with the reasons for his making one of his rare visits to Vichy at this time it is generally understood that he was summoned by the Marshal. Reports have reached us from a number of sources in the past few days that one of the important items of Franco-German collaboration is the question of a French military effort to retake some at least of the dissident colonies in Africa. Darlan's latest talks in Paris are alleged in various circles to have been concerned with this question; they say that German pressure to this end is strong.

Just what the Marshal's views on the prospect of Frenchmen shooting at Frenchmen, with its probable repercussions in dividing the people of metropolitan France, are not known; the views of Weygand on this question are likewise not public knowledge here. There are also reports that Weygand is desirous of ascertaining just what the true situation is in Syria and Darlan's plans for aid to the Axis in that area.

Monick is likewise now in Vichy and we hear that his position is not secure: In the first place his good relations with the United States have made him somewhat suspect in Vichy and in the second place

<sup>91</sup> Not printed.

Noguès is understood not always to see eye to eye with him on internal Moroccan problems.

Repeated to Algiers, Casablanca and Tangier.

LEAHY

740.00112 European War 1939/2807 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Casablanca (Russell) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, June 3, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 8:52 p. m.]

228. Reference Consulate's 209, May 25, 7 p. m. Rouvier, acting for Monick now at Vichy, stated yesterday that it was imperative that French Protectorate authorities be informed as soon as possible whether economic accord is going into effect. He further stated that an answer in the negative was better than none at all. Furthermore he stated that it was advisable that I should be able to inform Monick when I made my introductory official calls at Rabat, which should be made this week. I regret to appear to be in the position of seeming to force the Department's hand but the above absolutely represents the statements made today. Rouvier also said that the Vichy Government had telegraphed to Rabat that it had requested our Government to obtain from the British release of French vessels *Schéhérazade* and *Winnipeg* and to put accord into effect. The above statements were made in the presence of Stanton<sup>92</sup> and the individual<sup>93</sup> mentioned in Department's 21 of January 29<sup>94</sup> as well as myself.

Repeated to Tangier and Vichy with request to the latter to inform Murphy.

RUSSELL

740.0011 European War 1939/11656 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, June 4, 1941—noon.

[Received 3:10 p. m.]

626. Embassy's telegram No. 621, June 3, 2 p. m. Monick called this morning, having seen Weygand last night, and gave us the following verbatim account of yesterday's Cabinet meetings and the vitally important decisions taken thereat.

Weygand was present during the first part of the session yesterday morning at which the meaning and scope of the new policy of Franco-German collaboration was explained to him. It was made clear that

<sup>92</sup> Willard Q. Stanton, Consul at Casablanca.

<sup>93</sup> Col. Robert A. Solborg, observer for the Military Intelligence Division, War Department, in North Africa.

<sup>94</sup> Not printed.

naval and air bases (Monick does not know exactly which) are to be given the Germans in North Africa. Weygand protested with the greatest energy against this decision. He stated that it was entirely contrary to the mission he had been given to defend North Africa for France. He left the Council and the deliberations continued.

It was finally decided at the afternoon session that in spite of Weygand's strenuous objections, France had gone so far along the road of collaboration that the policy must be continued. The Marshal made the strongest possible personal appeal privately to Weygand. He said that he fully understood Weygand's feelings, but that he must not abandon him, the Marshal, at a time when the French public is already turning against him and tearing up his photograph; Weygand's departure, he said, would mean the end of him, the Marshal, and all he had striven to do. Weygand, continued Monick, after hours of "mental torture" decided that his loyalty to the Marshal required that he must obey and follow him to the end. Weygand is this morning making an effort at least to obtain a frank and open declaration of French policy; he is saying, Monick went on: "I cannot lie any more. What you are doing, giving bases in Syria and Africa, is not the policy of the Armistice, but quite the contrary. You must say so frankly. You must make an important public declaration of your policies. You must give your reasons for following the path of collaboration; you must point out that it is in order that France may live. You must make known that you have received 'solemn assurances' from the Germans that France shall keep her empire". Weygand is urging that the giving of bases shall be presented as military collaboration solely to preserve the French Empire; it must be shown that Germany is to come to the aid of France to help her defend her Empire.

Monick described Weygand as a man literally tortured by his conscience but whose loyalty requires him to follow the Marshal, and he feels that he will not turn back. Whether and to what extent "collaboration" calls for military and naval action against the dissident colonies Monick said he does not know. But yesterday's decision he said "means the turning point for France: You should look for no further resistance".

Repeated to Algiers, Casablanca and Tangier.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/11657: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, June 4, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 5:50 p. m.]

627. Embassy's telegram 626, June 4, noon. Monick is much disturbed at the possible effect of such declaration as Weygand advocates

on the French public; if properly presented, he said, it may find considerable acceptance in France today. He said again that as this is the real turning point for France, he must, he feels, do everything he can "up to the last moment" to save the situation. He has therefore prepared a suggested statement—to be made public by our Government—which he has given us written in his own handwriting. He cannot, he says, know whether any such statement is in line with American or British policy, but if it is to be made it must be made quickly to inform French opinion before the Marshal's declaration is given out.

This is the text of what he has written. I pass it along as of possible interest to the Department. It is at least indicative of the views of one intelligent Frenchman who still feels confident of an ultimate Anglo-American victory and it may contain ideas of practical use.

"The United States of America,

Having always profoundly admired what France has accomplished in Africa and the beneficial manner in which she has always administered her possessions and protectorates in Africa, respecting the rights of all races and religions,

And realizing that this humane policy today finds its reward in the loyalty to France, in her present misfortunes of the African populations, in the front ranks of which are their responsible chiefs, the Sultan of Morocco and the Bey of Tunis,

Profoundly desirous of seeing safeguarded for the future and protected from the suffering of war this work of consolidation carried out by France in Africa,

Understanding the difficult position in which France is placed today and the legitimate necessity of preserving at all costs the possession of her Empire, makes the following solemn declaration :

1. The United States has no territorial aspirations in French Africa. It will guarantee the solemn assurances which have just been given in this respect by Great Britain, that is to say, that she likewise has no territorial aspirations in French Africa and will in the future abstain from all action of a nature to prejudice French unity (no encouraging of dissidence in the colonies).

2. The United States desires that French Africa remain neutral for the whole duration of the war. It guarantees the assurances that Great Britain has just given in the most solemn manner that it will not attempt to utilize French Africa either directly or indirectly nor to obtain either land, naval or air bases, on condition that the other powers at war give the same undertaking and respect it.

3. If French Africa is thus neutralized, as the United States so ardently hopes, the latter will contribute on its part to safeguard and maintain its present prosperity, assuring its supply in these goods which are essential to it.

4. In case the neutralization of French Africa thus solemnly proclaimed by the United States should not be effectively assured,

the United States would be obliged to reserve its liberty of action to take such measures as the protection of the Western Hemisphere requires.

The United States hopes that France will understand in what spirit of generosity and fidelity to that policy of traditional friendship between the United States and France which has never been disturbed by any war the foregoing declaration has been made."

Monick did not even imply that the foregoing would have any effect on the French collaboration policy. He did feel, however, that it might have two possible results: (1) There is a *very* slight possibility that since Weygand's action is based on the policy of protecting the French Empire he might thus reverse his decision, and (2) even if unsuccessful in practical effects it will clarify our policy to French opinion and have "a real influence on 40 million Frenchmen". If following the statement events require us "to take action" against French colonies, the French, he said, will understand. Without some such declaration he thinks that a large part of the public here, who are coming more to agree with Laval's policy of "continental Europe" and the necessity to end Franco-German enmity, will "accept" as necessary what the Marshal is doing.

Monick remains fully optimistic as to the ultimate outcome of the war and for this reason regards the present decision as tragic for France. He said that this would probably be "his last communication for us"; that the German Government has for some time demanded his recall from Morocco and he believes it will now come immediately. He added: "You should no longer expect any resistance from the Marshal or anyone else. The germs of vision which found their origin in the Armistice are doing their work. On only one thing is France united: Hope and confidence in the United States."

Repeated to Algiers, Tangier, and Casablanca.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/11700: Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, June 4, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received June 5—9:20 a. m.]

193. The French Protectorate official <sup>95</sup> referred to in my 192, June 4, 11 a. m., <sup>96</sup> has recently returned from Vichy where he heard of offers made by the Germans of economic assistance both for metropolitan

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<sup>95</sup> Juge Montespieu, Director of Commerce and Industry in the French Zone of Morocco, successor of Léon Marchal.

<sup>96</sup> Not printed.

France and French North Africa. He stated that synthetic gasoline in particular had been offered but at a price of between 12 and 15 francs the liter. Other products mentioned in particular were tin, apparently available from stocks in occupied France and pharmaceutical products. It was expected that any deal involving tin for North Africa would require the turning over to Germany in exchange of tinned fish products from Morocco. Another product mentioned was sugar which the Germans are said to be purchasing wherever it can be found.

My informant was told by an officer of the St. Louis refinery in Marseille whom he met while traveling that the Germans have some 2,800,000 metric tons of sugar in reserve or sufficient stocks for 4 years.

The proportion of freight shipments arriving at Marseille diverted to occupied France was estimated at 45%.

In reply to questions the Protectorate official stated that the German offers had been so far rather vague. He set forth the point of view reported in my 187<sup>97</sup> that in the absence of American economic aid for French North Africa this area would be compelled to resort to German economic collaboration however distasteful this might be. He was under no illusions that the Germans were not using their tentative offers of supplies as political weapons. In discussing French policy he stressed that when men were hungry they did not think of principles. He added that he had been informed by his friends in Vichy when there that the Marshal had definitely put the brake last week on Darlan's policy of collaboration. This was disclosed in great confidence.

Repeated to Vichy and Algiers.

CHILDS

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740.00112 European War 1939/2845: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, June 4, 1941—6 p. m.

125. Your 222, May 30, 1 p. m. For Murphy. Please call immediately on General Weygand and inform him that the proposed program of economic aid to French North Africa is to be resumed. Goods on the urgent and immediate list are to go forward as planned, with the exception of two items, namely, green tea and coal-cutting machinery, concerning which further discussions appear to be necessary. Because of a renewed apprehension in certain quarters that stocks may be

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<sup>97</sup> Dated May 30, 6 p. m., p. 356.



unduly built up in the North African territories, the supplies listed on the quarterly quotas may require additional consideration. As matters now stand, it is proposed to send them forward on a reduced scale and in accordance with the availability of shipping for the New York-Casablanca traffic.

Arrangements have now been made for the *Ile de Noir-Moutier* to sail from New York about June 7 with the first cargo of urgently needed supplies. At the same time, the *Ile d'Ouessant* is expected to clear for Norfolk, where it will take on a cargo of coal for Casablanca. The problem of obtaining other vessels for this traffic remains acute, but it is expected that the *Leopold L. D.* and the *Ile de Ré*, now at Marseille, will be ordered to supplement the vessels above mentioned.

We have taken up with the British Government the question of the release of the *Schéhérazade* and hope that this vessel will shortly be permitted to resume its voyage from Bermuda. We have received written assurances from the French Embassy<sup>98</sup> that all ships engaged in this North African trade will return to the United States within a period of 10 days. On our part, we are giving assurances that such vessels will not be molested in American waters.

In as much as the plan of economic assistance is again going forward, you should return to Casablanca as soon as practicable. A total of 12 vice consuls will soon be waiting at that port.

We should like to know whether you have had an opportunity to discuss with General Weygand the proposed extension of economic aid to French West Africa, as outlined in the Department's telegram no. 122 of May 10 to you at Casablanca. Action on this matter is being deferred pending your reply.

HULL

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740.00112 European War 1939/2845 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, June 5, 1941—noon.

127. For Murphy. In view of the contents of Vichy's two telegrams of June 4 regarding Monick's conversation at the Embassy,<sup>99</sup> you should suspend all action on Department's telegram no. 125, June 4, 6 p. m., pending further instructions.

HULL

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<sup>98</sup> See note from the French Embassy, June 3, p. 239.

<sup>99</sup> See telegrams Nos. 626 and 627, from the Ambassador in France, pp. 361 and 362, respectively.

740.0011 European War 1939/11687: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, June 5, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 6:30 p. m.]

634. Governor Boisson<sup>99a</sup> of French West Africa and Admiral Esteva<sup>99b</sup> were called urgently to Vichy, the former arriving last night and the latter expected this evening.

Monick has just sent word (as all our callers are carefully noted by Government agents he doesn't dare call in person again) by a trusted mutual friend—a high official in one of the Ministries—that if our Government finds it possible to make some such statement as he advocated (our telegram 627, June 4, 1 p. m.) time is of the essence. It might, Monick feels, conceivably strengthen Boisson, with whose reported determination to keep the Germans out of Dakar the Department is familiar; and given Weygand's similar views, it might possibly have some slightly restraining effect. In any event it would make it more difficult to hide German utilization of French Africa and bases under the familiar German guise of helping France defend her colonies against threatened British or American aggression.

If some move is not made quickly, said our friend, German submarines may be basing on Dakar in a relatively few days.

Monick is returning to Morocco tomorrow to "wind up his affairs". Repeated to Algiers, Casablanca and Tangier.

LEAHY

740.00112 European War 1939/2825: Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, June 6, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received June 7—6:15 a. m.]

127. Your 127, June 5, noon. From Murphy. Department's 125, June 4, 6 p. m., was received before I was aware of Monick's conversation. In accordance with the instructions contained therein I immediately called on Governor General Chatel<sup>1</sup> at 6 p. m., June 5. He suggested that we convey in Weygand's personal cipher the gist of the Department's message regarding resumption of the economic plan to the General in Vichy. To this I agreed. Chatel, who said that the Department's message was the worst blow to Darlan that could be administered, declared that the information would enormously strengthen General Weygand during the Vichy conversations. Darlan

<sup>99a</sup> Pierre Boisson, High Commissioner for French West Africa.<sup>99b</sup> Adm. Jean Pierre Esteva, Resident General of the French Zone of Morocco.<sup>1</sup> Yves Chatel, Secretary General of the Delegation General in French Africa.

and his clique, he said, have consistently maintained that French Africa would never receive any benefits under the plan of economic cooperation which, according to them, was simply an Anglo-American hoax to deceive Weygand into making concessions to us. The fact that there has been so much delay and uncertainty in the plan's execution supported their view, strengthened the German position in French Africa and likewise discouraged the Anglophile element. That discouragement, Chatel asserted, is also reflected among the Arab leaders in Morocco who have believed that the United States, for which country they have great respect, would see the wisdom of insistence on the establishment of a strong American commercial position in French Africa with all its political implications for the future. With reference to the penultimate paragraph of the Department's 125, during my first conversation with Weygand on my arrival I discussed with him the proposed extension of economic aid to French West Africa as outlined in Department's 122.<sup>1a</sup> Weygand said he was completely in accord with the proposal but he agreed to let the matter go over until the doubt regarding the execution of the North African accord was dispelled.

Weygand is expected to arrive in Algiers June 7th. My plan is to await his arrival before returning to Casablanca. Subject to the Department's approval, six of the vice consuls mentioned have been directed by me to proceed here for work in Algeria and Tunisia.

Repeated Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/11737: Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, June 7, 1941—noon.

[Received 10:24 p. m.]

228. Monick en route to Rabat contacted me in Algeria today requesting that I urgently telegraph to the Department that he had a short conversation with General Weygand before departure from Vichy. Weygand, according to Monick, said "I succeeded in calling a halt to the proposed adoption of the new policy. The Council took no decision on it." Monick admitted that he had been extremely depressed and discouraged when he saw Matthews in Vichy but he said that his last conversation with Weygand had altered his viewpoint. He is now convinced that the game is not lost. He thought the Secretary's statement<sup>2</sup> and Ambassador Leahy's representations had an excellent effect in putting the brakes on Darlan.

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<sup>1a</sup> Dated May 10, 8 p. m., p. 331.

<sup>2</sup> Statement made on June 5; see Department of State *Bulletin*, June 7, 1941, p. 681.

Monick declared also that he was returning to Rabat not "to wind up his affairs" but with his status unchanged. He [apparent omission] that of course nobody could say where he would be a month or a year from now but for the present there is no change in his personal situation. He urged me to insist that the Department should not waver in the prosecution of the economic policy in French North Africa saying that it entailed no risk for the American Government but on the contrary gave us advantages and provided Weygand with a capital point of resistance to Darlan trend.

Repeated to Vichy for repetition to Tangier and Casablanca.

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/11738 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, June 7, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 11 : 38 p. m.]

229. From Murphy. Weygand's principal assistant, who met him upon arrival this afternoon, quotes the General as saying that French African policy had suffered no change as a result of the Vichy meeting. During Weygand's initial conversation with the Marshal the latter made such a strong personal plea to Weygand to agree to a change of policy that the General wavered as reported by Monick to Matthews. The Marshal pleaded that Weygand remained his only hope of any sort of resistance to the Germans; that if Weygand abandoned him he, himself, would retire.

The Marshal talked at length of the disaffection existing on the part of French population which he said was rapidly losing confidence in him as Chief of the French State. Weygand, emotionally affected, at first told the Marshal he would continue to give him his support even if policy of the Government were changed. The following day, however, after agonized reflection he returned to tell the Marshal and the Ministers that he could not and would not support a policy which went beyond the terms of the Armistice.

Weygand said he had participated in many Government crises in the past but never [had] he witnessed one involving the emotional strain of the present. His assistants add that the General has won a clear-cut victory over the extreme collaborationists and emerges the strong man retaining the Marshal's complete confidence. "What the German reaction will be", he said, "is quite another matter. They will undoubtedly renew their efforts to eliminate Weygand one way or another."

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

740.0011 European War 1939/11756: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*VICHY, June 7, 1941—8 p. m.  
[Received June 8—3: 55 p. m.]

654. A friend in the Foreign Office informed us today that he just conversed with General Brecard, who dined with Weygand last evening. According to Brecard, Weygand told him that at the Cabinet of Ministers meeting yesterday he, Esteva and Brisson [*Boisson*] had been most firm in their statements that no action could be taken by them against the dissident colonies and that any further infiltration of Germans would seriously impair their ability to preserve the loyalty of the North African possessions. Weygand is reported to have stated at the Cabinet meeting that the prestige of the Vichy Government and even that of the Marshal had suffered greatly as a result of the policy of "collaboration" and that it was dangerously unpopular so far as North Africa was concerned.

Esteva, according to our informant, had stated that the time had come when the French Government must realize that it could not continue indefinitely with its policy of publishing communiqués which were "utterly false". In connection with the Sfax incident, he is reported to have said that it was not astonishing that the British had bombed Italian ships in Sfax, but rather that the British had been so patient. Esteva went on to say, we are told, that three Italian destroyers called at Sfax and asked to be supplied with fuel oil; that he refused this request on the grounds of insufficiency for his own needs, whereupon the Italian destroyers remained in the harbor until an Italian oil tanker brought them the necessary fuel. These facts, he said, and not the story published by the Ministry of Information were known to the Tunisian population.

According to Brecard, the firmness of the stand taken by Weygand and his two colleagues made an impression in the Cabinet meeting and Weygand received indications that until next November there would be no change in the status of the North African Empire, that no reconquest of the dissident colonies would be undertaken until then, and that there would be no further German infiltration. In November, further decisions would be taken in the light of the evolution of events.

We also had a conversation today with the person mentioned in Algiers telegram of May 17, 11 a. m., to the Embassy,<sup>3</sup> who is known to Murphy. He had had a long talk with General Weygand before the latter left Vichy by air for Africa this morning (accompanied by Esteva and Boisson). He said that he found General Weygand com-

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<sup>3</sup> Not found in Department files.

paratively well satisfied, a feeling which he in no way shared. The meeting yesterday had, our informant said, in no way changed the orientation of the policy of the Vichy Government. It was true, he said, that General Weygand had enjoyed a personal success but Darlan's determination to collaborate to the fullest extent possible with Germany had in no way been altered. The only result, in his opinion, of the firm stand taken by Weygand, Esteva and Boisson would possibly be some temporary slowing down of German penetration into the North African Empire. The Germans would, however, continue their pressure and the present Government would willingly "collaborate".

Repeated to Algiers, Tangier and Casablanca.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/11739 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, June 8, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received 12:40 p. m.]

230. From Murphy. Weygand's aide told me last evening that High Commissioner Boisson had given Weygand able support at Vichy. Boisson, he said, told both the Marshal and Darlan that having defended Dakar against the British last September he, Boisson, had no intention of letting Dakar fall into German hands; that he would fight them if they came and that the Germans would be a very long time taking French West Africa if they dared to try it.

My informant said "It is amusing that Boisson, who has been maligned continuously by the British radio, nevertheless should tell the Marshal that he believed that Britain with American aid could not lose the war."

Repeated to Vichy for repetition to Casablanca and Tangier. [Murphy.]

COLE

740.0011 European War 1939/11740 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, June 8, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received June 9—12:20 a. m.]

231. From Murphy. General Weygand received me this afternoon. In reply to my questions he said:

1. His visit to Vichy had not changed his personal situation in the slightest. He remains Delegate General of the Government for French Africa; he has no direct connection with Syria.

2. At the time of his departure from Vichy the French Government had not changed its policy in respect to French Africa. Whether the British attack against Syria <sup>4</sup> would result in a change of policy he could not prophesy but thus far it had not.

3. He viewed the Syrian situation as grave. The fact remains, he said, that there were no German troops in Syria. He could understand British military necessity but the British assertion of German occupation of Syrian territory he saw only as a pretext. It did not exist. What Vichy's reaction to the British moves would be, General Weygand would not venture to suggest.

4. Weygand said definitely he has no intention of attacking the British and De Gaulle forces in French Equatorial Africa.

He said "Should Vichy suggest such a military operation, my reply is very simple. Such an operation is not practical. The rains have begun. No action would be physically possible until next September. The British stories about the Lake Tchad district are pure invention. I can understand (he said with a smile) that they require that area for their aviation".

5. "I sincerely hope,[""] said Weygand, [""]that nothing will occur to interrupt friendly American relations with French Africa. Those relations are precious; it would be regrettable to discontinue them."

6. Weygand broached the subject of the larger war problem. He said that he would be happy if the United States could succeed in retaining its present status and not become a belligerent. He repeated Darlan's statement reported by Vichy in its 628 of June 4 <sup>5</sup> to the effect that the United States is the only winner of the war thus far. He said "Obviously Germany cannot invade England. On the other hand I fail to perceive how England can invade the Continent. The United States could use its present power to force a peace. With its expanding military strength it would continue to hold the whip hand."

I inquired what he thought of the prospects should we by some chance become involved as a belligerent. He replied "War, I have learned, is a speculative affair. No one can prophesy where America's participation would lead your country or mine."

7. Weygand inquired with a weary smile "what had become of our supply ships for North Africa?" I told him that matters seemed to be in suspense pending developments in the general situation. He said that the good news contained in the Department's 125 of June 4 was heartening. He hoped for the best.

Weygand leaves early tomorrow morning for a 15-day tour of French West Africa.

Repeated to Vichy for repetition to Tangier and Casablanca. [Murphy.]

COLE

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<sup>4</sup> For correspondence regarding the British occupation of Syria, see vol. III, pp. 725 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, p. 185.

740.0011 European War 1939/11816 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, June 9, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received June 10—1 a. m.]

234. From Murphy. Weygand's personal Military Aide asked me to call early this morning. Major Gasser said that the General who left by plane at 7 a. m. for French West Africa instructed him to request me to telegraph urgently to my Government that in his opinion the British would be well advised not to overplay the Syrian campaign. Weygand, according to Gasser, asserted that if the British are content with a reasonable advantage, Vichy can temporize on the grounds of inability to stem the tide. If the British go too far, and Gasser was not certain how far they might, German pressure on Vichy might assume such proportions that a dangerous situation would develop. The General fears that with the limited forces at their disposal and the difficulties of the terrain, the British if over extended may conceivably suffer a serious reverse.

I communicate the foregoing for whatever it is worth because the Department may find it desirable to make some form of acknowledgment even if non-committal to encourage the General to evince a friendly interest in such matters.

Repeated to Vichy for repetition to Tangier and Casablanca. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.00112 European War 1939/2830 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, June 9, 1941—9 p. m.

132. For Murphy. Your 231, June 8, 6 p. m. Although we were much concerned regarding the possibilities that the developing situation in Syria and the meeting at Vichy might seriously affect the plans for economic assistance to North Africa, you may now assure the French authorities for transmission to Weygand that our desire to continue economic aid to North Africa has not changed nor have we desisted from conversations with the British Government regarding the desirability of going ahead with the plan.

You should get word to Weygand, however, that our program for economic cooperation with North Africa is limited by the fact that no vessels leaving this country for French ports are permitted by the Armistice Commission to return to American ports despite official French assurances and despite the fact that such ships as the *Leopold*



L. D. and the *Ile de Ré* are intended for transport of needed supplies to North Africa. It will be impossible to obtain the release of the *Schéhérazade* which we are discussing with the British unless the *Frimaire* is permitted to leave Casablanca for an American destination (see Vichy's No. 650, June 7, 4 p. m.<sup>6</sup> repeated to you). Therefore, unless Weygand may take action to assure the return of these three vessels covered by the previous guarantees, the program of economic assistance with which we are ready to proceed will again "bog down".

As we understand the situation, events are bringing General Weygand's position and ours closer together in keeping the Germans out of North Africa. From the information we have received we are inclined to believe that the Germans will not wish to raise the North African issue at the present because of their plans elsewhere. This does not, however, mean that the Germans will not try to induce the Vichy Government to take some action in North Africa which will be inimical to the preservation of the independence of these territories. This might conceivably take the form of use by the French of their naval units in North African ports. Such action would, of course, have the most unfortunate repercussions upon American public opinion and upon the attitude of this Government, and could not in any way be justified by the present stage of developments.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/12014

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

[WASHINGTON,] June 9, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me this evening at my request. I gave Lord Halifax to read all of the telegrams the Department had received during the last forty-eight hours with regard to developments in Syria, in Vichy, and, in particular, those telegrams which related the opinions expressed to our officials by General Weygand and his associates. I likewise informed Lord Halifax of the general nature of Secretary Hull's conference this morning with the French Ambassador.<sup>7</sup> I further informed Lord Halifax of the nature of the instructions sent this evening to Mr. Murphy<sup>8</sup> in Casablanca [*Algiers*] for communication to General Weygand. With regard to the latter instruction, I said that our whole policy with regard to the North African arrangements as finally approved by the British Government had been premised upon the understanding that General

<sup>6</sup> Not printed.

<sup>7</sup> For memorandum of conversation, see vol. III, p. 732.

<sup>8</sup> Telegram No. 132, *supra*.

Weygand would resist aggression from no matter what quarter against any part of the North African territories under his jurisdiction; that he would oppose, insofar as those territories were concerned, any collaboration between France and Germany in excess of the bare terms of the armistice itself; and that he would oppose and prevent any further infiltration of Germans into North Africa. I said that from the information at my disposal and from the statements now made by General Weygand he had lived up to these promises and had no present intention of refraining from living up to them. I said that under these conditions, provided the shipping difficulty could be adjusted, there seemed to be no moral ground and no reason of expediency which should prevent the United States from carrying out its engagements with regard to the trade arrangement and that I trusted the British Government would take the same point of view. I said it seemed to me in the highest degree desirable, from our own standpoint as well as that of the British, that the conflict which had now broken out in Syria should not extend to North and West Africa and that our assisting General Weygand in the manner proposed and our remaining on close terms with him would seem to me to be of value in trying to attain that objective. Lord Halifax said that he thought the message sent by this Government to General Weygand through Mr. Murphy, as I had outlined it to him, would be of very great value and that he fully shared the point of view which I had indicated. I said it seemed to me that insofar as General Weygand was concerned, he had had practically nothing except promises from the United States for a period of many months and I felt very definitely that the time had now come for this Government either to "put up or shut up."

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

740.00112 European War 1939/2859

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

[WASHINGTON,] June 10, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me today at my request.

I gave the Ambassador to read Mr. Murphy's telegram No. 234, June 9, and likewise the telegram from the American Consul General in Beirut, No. 200, of the same date.<sup>9</sup> I also gave the Ambassador to read the note<sup>10</sup> which the American Ambassador in Madrid<sup>10a</sup> will present to the Spanish Foreign Minister.<sup>10b</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For latter, see vol. III, p. 729.

<sup>10</sup> See telegram No. 531, June 9, 7 p. m., from the Ambassador in Spain, p. 905.

<sup>10a</sup> Alexander W. Weddell.

<sup>10b</sup> Ramón Serrano Suñer.

Lord Halifax expressed the decided opinion that a friendly message from this Government to General Weygand in accordance with the recommendation of Mr. Murphy would be highly desirable. He told me that he had conferred this morning, as a result of my conversation with him last night with Professor Hall and Mr. Eccles<sup>10c</sup> and that Professor Hall had today sent to the Ministry of Economic Warfare in London a very urgent recommendation that the British Government immediately agree to a continuation of the North African trade arrangement with General Weygand.

The Ambassador told me likewise with some satisfaction that of his own initiative Sir Ronald Campbell, British Ambassador to Lisbon and former British Ambassador in Paris, had urgently telegraphed the British Foreign Office recommending earnestly that every possible attempt be made to give support to General Weygand in the way of food and needed supplies for the civilian population. Lord Halifax said he believed this latter message would carry considerable weight on account of Sir Ronald's familiarity with the French situation.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.0011 European War 1939/11816 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, June 10, 1941—8 p. m.

133. Your 234, June 9, 10 a. m. For Murphy from the Under Secretary. At the first appropriate opportunity, please express to General Weygand the appreciation of this Government for the message sent. Please make it clear likewise that the views expressed have been utilized by this Government in the way in which they are believed to be most effective. You may further state that any further opinions of General Weygand which he believes to be in the ultimate interest of the French people themselves, and in the interest of the causes to which the British and United States Governments have dedicated themselves, will be equally welcome. [Welles.]

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/12051 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, June 13, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received June 14—8:20 a. m.]

240. For the Under Secretary from Murphy. Your 133, June 10. Weygand returned from Dakar unexpectedly last evening. I saw him

<sup>10c</sup> Noel Hall of the British Embassy and David Eccles, representative from the British Ministry of Economic Warfare.

shortly after his arrival and conveyed your message. He expressed his gratification.

1. General said he had returned to Algiers prior to schedule because he thought it preferable, with the rapidly changing situation, to be in Algiers. He said there was no change in his status.

[2.] We talked further about Syria and the General insisted that it is folly for the British to continue in Syria and incite Frenchmen to fight other Frenchmen. He had just concluded a conference with General Odic commanding the air force here. I suspect, but can obtain no confirmation, that the General is faced with a Vichy demand to transfer aviation equipment and personnel to Syria. [Murphy.]

COLE

## VI. Continuation of Economic Aid Program for French North Africa, June–November 1941

740.0011 European War 1939/12088 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, June 14, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received June 15—9:10 a. m.]

215. The following is an analysis of certain factors of the situation in Morocco or as that situation is affected by developments in France, based upon large numbers of conversations had by Bentley<sup>11</sup> and me with French officials and officers in Rabat and Casablanca this week. Monick<sup>12</sup> is authority for most of the facts some of which found corroboration in other sources. The conclusions are based on the sum total of the conversations:

1. The Germans are making more and more use of the weapon of terror in their relations with the French. At his recent meeting with Hitler,<sup>13</sup> Darlan<sup>14</sup> was threatened and railed at in the manner which has characterized so many of Hitler's meetings with European political leaders in the past from the time of Schuschnigg.<sup>15</sup> Hitler is stated to have threatened Darlan with ruthless crushing and dismemberment of metropolitan France.

2. Collaboration with Germany is finding support outside of Darlan, Laval<sup>16</sup> and a small clique of industrialists only under pressure

<sup>11</sup> Maj. William C. Bentley, Military Attaché at Tangier.

<sup>12</sup> Emmanuel Monick, Secretary General of the French Zone of Morocco.

<sup>13</sup> Adolf Hitler, Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich.

<sup>14</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Navy, and Interior.

<sup>15</sup> Kurt von Schuschnigg, Austrian Chancellor, July 1934–March 11, 1938.

<sup>16</sup> Pierre Laval, leading French collaborationist, former Vice President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

exerted by ruthless Nazi threats and methods. The decisions of the French Government are based on fear and the absence of hope. Every German victory increases the pressure upon Vichy and lessens ability of French leaders in North Africa to resist that pressure.

3. The force of the German pressure is expected to increase and also the ingenuity of its diabolical methods. At the intimate dinner attended by Noguès,<sup>17</sup> Weygand,<sup>18</sup> Meyrier<sup>19</sup> and Monick in Rabat on June 11 (see my 214<sup>20</sup>) instances of the German terror, as now exercised, vis-à-vis France were recounted including the persecution of French prisoners of war in Germany who are related to influential French. Mention was made of the son of Puax, of the French Diplomatic Service, who is awaiting sentence on June 20 while his father besieges Government offices in Vichy.

4. Weygand has been greatly encouraged by the message from the Secretary.<sup>21</sup> . . . American backing is of great psychological support to him.

5. Weygand did not appreciate the role of the United States until recently but he now does. At the Council of Ministers' meeting in Vichy June 4, Weygand kept insisting that the French Government must take account of the attitude of the United States in all its important decisions.

6. There is and will be incredible suffering in Europe, becoming worse with winter. Pressure on Vichy and Weygand will increase. We must be prepared for this.

7. The great body of French Protectorate officials or private citizens in Morocco are desperately anxious for American moral support; their one hope is in America.

8. The fear of Fifth Columnists in Morocco is growing. Bentley was cautioned that he must be guarded even in speaking with French officers until satisfied of genuineness of their (pro-Ally) feelings.

9. Germans are now noticeable in Morocco and there is greater evidence of German espionage. We saw three officers in uniform in Rabat and a number of Armistice Commission members not in uniform. The first night of our arrival and the following morning I was followed by three Germans, later identified as belonging to German Consulates in Tangier and Tetuán. During absence from my room an effort was made to open a locked bag. The door of Major

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<sup>17</sup> Gen. Albert Noguès, Resident General in the French Zone of Morocco.

<sup>18</sup> Gen. Maxime Weygand, Delegate General of the French Government in North Africa.

<sup>19</sup> Jacques Meyrier, Delegate of the Residency General, and principal assistant to General Noguès.

<sup>20</sup> Not printed.

<sup>21</sup> Presumably message from the Under Secretary of State contained in telegram No. 133, June 10, 8 p. m., to the Consul General at Algiers, p. 376.

Bentley's room was forced during his absence. We had, of course, left no papers in rooms. Energetic measures which I have every reason to believe in good faith were taken by French authorities upon my verbal representations.

10. Our friends in Protectorate Administration stressed the great and urgent need of resumption of our economic aid, if no more than a token at this time. They made three principal points: 1, the great need of this aid; 2, the concrete link that it affords directly between French North Africa and United States, with its indirect influence upon our relations with Vichy; and 3, the moral support given those in favor of American rather than German collaboration vis-à-vis "doubting Thomases" who are already taxing the American group with having been deceived by false hopes.

11. All American officers in Morocco are unreservedly and unqualifiedly in favor of continuance of American economic aid, believing that such aid at least safeguards continuance of our influence and acts as a deterrent upon that of Germany. We believe that it should go forward short only of German occupation of French North Africa.

Inform M.I.D. and O.N.I.<sup>22</sup>

Repeated to Vichy, Algiers and Casablanca.

CHILDS

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740.0011 European War 1939/12055 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, June 14, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 9:45 p. m.]

244. From Murphy.<sup>23</sup> I learn from an excellent source that a group of 20 German Armistice delegates arrived here yesterday to take possession of military automotive equipment stored in Algeria since the Armistice. This equipment, the exact amount of which I do not know, was requisitioned shortly after the Armistice and delivery thereof is in accordance with the terms of the Convention. However, my informant states that when the equipment arrives in Libya it will prove worthless because great pains have been taken to so doctor mechanical parts that even a slick used car dealer would be impressed.

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

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<sup>22</sup> Military Intelligence Division, War Department, and Office of Naval Intelligence.

<sup>23</sup> Robert D. Murphy, Counselor of Embassy in France, temporarily at Algiers, with responsibility for supervision of the North African economic aid program.

740.0011 European War 1939/12089: Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, June 14, 1941—10 p. m.

[Received June 15—2:20 p. m.]

216. Concerning Admiral Esteva,<sup>23a</sup> I was informed by a high official in Rabat on June 1 that when the Admiral went to Tunisia as Resident General last year he was inclined toward collaboration with the Germans. It was stated that his reports now give evidence that he has become strongly anti-Axis.

He was described to me as a man of very great moral strength of character who is deeply religious and who would never lend his support to a false situation.

Monick was informed by Weygand and others that the support accorded Weygand by Esteva and Boisson<sup>24</sup> at Vichy had been of the greatest possible assistance in checking the policy of collaboration, Esteva having protested most forcibly against the "lying" communi-  
*qués* of Vichy.

Repeated to Vichy, Tunis and Casablanca by mail.

CHILDs

740.00112 European War 1939/3043

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

[WASHINGTON,] June 16, 1941.

The British Ambassador<sup>25</sup> called to see me at his request.

The Ambassador took up the North African trade arrangement. He stated that the British Government had informed him by telegram that provided the United States Government was satisfied with the assurances received from General Weygand and other French authorities that the three French ships now in French ports would in fact be permitted to sail for the United States, the British Government would agree to the necessary arrangements to permit the two French freighters in New York to sail for Casablanca and the French tanker *Schéhérazade* to sail from Bermuda for Casablanca. The British Government also requested that the United States agree to have an American convoy escort the *Schéhérazade* to Casablanca, or an American armed guard to be placed on the *Schéhérazade* on the voyage to

<sup>23a</sup> Adm. Jean Pierre Esteva.<sup>24</sup> Pierre Boisson, High Commissioner for French West Africa.<sup>25</sup> Viscount Halifax.

Casablanca. The British Government also requested that more American observers be sent to Morocco, and finally asked that publicity be given to the fact that the United States was willing to discuss similar economic assistance to the Free French colonies in central and west Africa.<sup>26</sup>

I replied to Lord Halifax that we had not yet received final assurances from the French authorities covering the return to United States ports of the three French ships now in French ports, but that from indications received today by telegram, it appeared probable that such assurances would be given. I said I would interpret the message given me by Lord Halifax as implying definitely that this Government could proceed with the carrying out of the North African trade arrangement with the acquiescence of the British Government. I said, however, that I was not willing to agree to the suggestion of an American convoy or of an American armed guard for the *Schéhérazade*.

Lord Halifax said that his Government hoped that this would be done, but that I was not to interpret it as a prerequisite of British acquiescence for the carrying out of the North African trade arrangement.

With regard to the other two requests made by the British Government, I said they would be given favorable consideration, but that compliance on our part with these suggestions would depend upon our own belief that the steps suggested were in fact desirable and practicable from the standpoint of the United States.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.00112 European War 1939/2904: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, June 19, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received June 19—4:50 p. m.]

717. Rochat<sup>27</sup> expressed delight at the prospective resumption of our program for the economic supplying of French Africa and the indications of British agreement thereto. The latter, he said, is encouraging as an indication that the British are desirous of "localizing" the Syrian affair and of preventing extension of the conflict to other areas.

LEAHY

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<sup>26</sup> For further correspondence on this subject, see pp. 570 ff.

<sup>27</sup> Charles Antoine Rochat, Acting Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.



740.00112 European War 1939/3037

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Villard)*

[WASHINGTON,] June 23, 1941.

Mr. Hall<sup>28</sup> telephoned to raise a point in connection with the arrangements just concluded for the respective departures of the six French vessels to be employed in the North African trade plan. He said that he did not wish to be obstructive but, in order to anticipate any possible future difficulties with London, suggested that the three vessels at Marseille ought to leave for the United States somewhat in advance of the departure of the three vessels from this side. Mr. Hall said that the earlier departure from Marseille might be advisable because the vessels would be two days in the Mediterranean before passing Gibraltar, and that, therefore, it might be advisable to have the departure date correspond to the moment when the vessels entered the Atlantic and had left the Mediterranean behind.

I told Mr. Hall that we had already sent a telegram for General Weygand expressing our approval of the arrangement already worked out and that I feared the injection of this new element into the picture would only serve further to complicate and delay matters. I said that we felt it was all the more urgent to get the plan under way at once, while Germany's attention was engaged elsewhere, and that I hoped the British Government would adhere to the original agreement that these vessels be permitted to depart simultaneously from their respective ports. Mr. Hall said that in view of this feeling on our part, he would drop the subject and would not raise the point with London.

I then asked Mr. Hall what assurances the British Government were prepared to give that the vessels engaged in this legitimate and approved trade with North Africa would suffer no interference. I recalled that Mr. David Eccles<sup>29</sup> had told us the British Government could give no written assurances on this score but would give an oral undertaking that the vessels would be allowed to proceed unimpeded provided the trade was conducted according to our understanding and agreements. Mr. Hall replied that he could not go so far as to give us any blanket assurances, either oral or written. He said that as long as there was no change in the "basic data" of the situation, that is, no untoward acts or pronouncements by the French Government and no violation of the agreement by the vessels in question, these ships would encounter no interference. Beyond that, the British Government could not go.

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<sup>28</sup> Noel Hall of the British Embassy.

<sup>29</sup> Representative from the British Ministry of Economic Warfare.

I asked Mr. Hall whether his definition of untoward acts or statements applied only to the North African situation or to the general situation in France or, for example, in Syria. Mr. Hall replied that he would limit his observation to any change in the situation under the control of General Weygand, or in any moves made by the vessels themselves which would be contrary to the spirit of the understanding.

Given fulfilment of the "basic data" as described above, Mr. Hall said that the British Government would not interfere with the passage of the six ships to be employed in the North African trade.

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740.0011 European War 1939/12407: Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, June 24, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received 9 p. m.]

226. The same source<sup>30</sup> mentioned in my 172, May 22 [23], noon,<sup>31</sup> has reported to the British Consul General in Tangier<sup>31a</sup> as follows:

There is a more optimistic feeling among the friends of Britain and the United States in French Morocco. The Protectorate authorities are taking a very firm stand on German infiltration (we have of course our own confirmation of this). No more Germans are being allowed in the country. Moors who are so much as suspected of being in touch with Germans are being arrested. Two Moorish prisoners of war released by Germany to carry out propaganda in Morocco have been shot.

Weygand is stated to have demanded and to have obtained from the Marshal his own conditions before returning to North Africa from Vichy after the Cabinet meeting of June 3rd.

The most interesting feature about the foregoing is that it represents the first information my British colleague has given me in which [he] did not paint a gloomy picture of conditions in the French Zone in relation to the proposed program for economic aid.

Repeated to Vichy, Algiers and Casablanca.

CHILDs

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740.0011 European War 1939/12608: Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, June 27, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received June 29—9:35 a. m.]

276. From Murphy. Your 134, June 11, 8 p. m.<sup>32</sup> We have made some progress in ascertaining the facts of German infiltration in this

<sup>30</sup> A French official at Rabat.

<sup>31</sup> Not printed.

<sup>31a</sup> A. D. F. Gascoigne.

<sup>32</sup> *Ante*, p. 315.

area. To arrive at the facts it is necessary, of course, to sift numerous stories, many of which are inaccurate. We are reasonably certain that as matters now stand the actual numbers of Germans in Algeria are as follows: Official German Armistice Commission personnel: 38 (2 are the regular liaison officers; 20 compose a "temporary" commission recently arrived to investigate the status of all persons in North Africa claiming German nationality and a further "temporary" commission to remove military equipment heretofore requisitioned under the Armistice Convention which is now being removed to Syria); approximately 60 "businessmen, traveling salesmen, Red Cross representatives, representatives of civilian administrations such as the Propaganda Ministry." These figures are separate and distinct from those for French Morocco. I am informed that in Tunisia there are only 2 German Armistice Commission officers who act as liaison with the Italians but that the commission of 16 for the delivery of matériel to Libya operate both in Algeria and Tunisia. Weygand's staff confirm that the personnel of the German Armistice Commission now in Morocco numbers 204.

An important local official tells me that Algerian officials do their best in a general way to restrict German activity but that it is impossible to refuse entry to Germans equipped with proper travel documents duly visaed by the competent authorities at Vichy. A well-informed source said that every German arriving has a duly visaed passport and he believes that all the German "businessmen etc." are reserve officers. They dispose, he said, of funds of which they make distribution wherever disbursement may result in increased German prestige, especially among the Arabs.

The Germans now here, it is generally admitted, conduct themselves with prudence and discretion realizing that they are under close surveillance. Some French officials are on the alert to penalize both French and natives who are contacted by Germans. In some instances French minor officials, who indicate susceptibility to German inducements, are transferred to other posts.

A military intelligence contact of Cose [*Cole?*] and Taft<sup>33</sup> tells us that the German Red Cross representative in Algiers [apparent omission] stopped was heard to say that he found it difficult to foster contacts among the Arabs because every time he thought he was getting along nicely with one the individual disappeared.

There is no important political effervescence among the Arabs in Algeria. For example the Archbishop of Algeria just returned from an extensive tour tells me that he found the natives tranquil and observed no signs of German activity in any of the many parts he

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<sup>33</sup> Orray Taft, Jr., Vice Consul at Algiers.

visited. Algeria is blessed this year with bumper crops which guarantee the food situation for some months. The French are confident that the natives will resist foreign propaganda if they are reasonably well fed.

The rumors that there are "hundreds" of Germans in this area are not corroborated by the evidence we have been able to adduce thus far. We believe that these rumors are of a piece with the story said to be given credence by the Germans to the effect that there are "80" American consular officials in North Africa. The majority of Germans arrive in Algeria by plane. Some of these are in transit to Morocco and, of course, there is certain return north-bound traffic by plane from Morocco via Algeria. According to a hotel proprietor as many as 20 Germans pass through Algiers daily. This is denied by responsible officials in whom we have confidence. They state that the average is only 5 or 6 daily.

It appears at present that the German plan of infiltration in Algeria is of the longer term variety. A few German civilians are pressing the French authorities for permission to import their families. The Germans seem to be engaged in forming a nucleus on which to build for the future. There is nothing visible here which would indicate an imminent *coup de force*.

Code texts airmailed to Vichy, Tunis, Tangier and Casablanca. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/12656: Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*<sup>24</sup>

ALGIERS, June 30, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received 2: 53 p. m.]

280. From Murphy. I learn from an excellent source that General Weygand is the subject of a bitter complaint from the German Armistice Commission through the French liaison at Wiesbaden, a copy of which was transmitted by Vichy to the General. The Commission's communication bluntly states that the work of the Commission in French Africa is being sabotaged and impeded at every turn and that the Commission's efforts to establish amicable relations with both French and natives in North Africa are consistently thwarted.

The communication points out that French policy in Africa does not harmonize with the spirit of collaboration affecting Franco-German relations in Europe.

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<sup>24</sup>The first three paragraphs of this telegram were repeated to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom in telegram No. 2398, July 2, 6 p. m.

Weygand in his acknowledgment to Vichy contented himself with the statement that he has noted the Commission's comments with interest.

Repeated by air mail to Vichy, Tunis, Casablanca and Tangier. [Murphy.]

COLE

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851T.50/17

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Villard)*

[WASHINGTON,] June 30, 1941.

Mr. Guérin <sup>85</sup> said that he was very much disturbed at the serious deterioration of the military position in Egypt and its inevitable repercussions in French North Africa. He said that this could not fail to have an effect on the spirits of the officers and the population of the French territories at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. I asked him whether he had any suggestions as to what might be done to counteract the bad news.

Mr. Guérin offered the following suggestions in reply:

1. Substantially increase shipments to North Africa under the terms of the economic accord, thereby giving evidence of our determination not to abandon that area and to maintain our interest therein.
2. Increase our propaganda effort by radio and by the written and spoken word as much as feasible, offering facts and figures of the growing American air power and our rapidly rising production of offensive weapons.
3. Extend the economic plan to French West Africa on the same basis of shipments and control officers, thereby giving renewed hope to the French and proof of our desire to assist them in resisting collaborationist pressure.

Mr. Guérin said that in his opinion the United States should make every effort to preserve the foothold which we had acquired in French North Africa until it might be possible to send military forces to that area. Mr. Guérin believed that it is all the more important to keep our hold, by means of our economic assistance, now that the eastern Mediterranean situation looked so dark. He said that the success of our economic plan so far was obvious, even though it was on the negative side; namely, that to date the Vichy Government had given no bases to the Axis and had not surrendered the French fleet.

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<sup>85</sup> Paul Guérin, representative of the French Moroccan Railways, temporarily in the United States, attached to the French Embassy.

740.00112 European War 1939/3044

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] July 1, 1941.

The French Ambassador <sup>36</sup> called to see me this afternoon at his request.

The Ambassador expressed his satisfaction at the carrying out of the North African trade agreement and expressed the earnest hope that this Government would give immediate consideration to the possibility of a trade arrangement covering West Africa. I said that further consideration would be given to that possibility.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

740.0011 European War 1939/12984

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Villard)*

[WASHINGTON], July 2, 1941.

Mr. Guérin said that he wished to inform me privately that he had received word to the effect that some approach was being made, or about to be made, by the French General Staff in North Africa with a view to obtaining military supplies in the United States for General Weygand. Mr. Guérin said that his information on this subject was neither clear nor detailed, but that it had nevertheless come to his attention that some such plan was under consideration. There was no indication that this move had either the knowledge or the consent of General Weygand, and Mr. Guérin expressed doubt that General Weygand knew anything about it.

I pointed out to Mr. Guérin that our present trade arrangements with North Africa were purely of an economic nature and that it would scarcely seem appropriate to initiate conversations for military supplies at this time. Mr. Guérin agreed entirely with this view. He said that he merely desired to inform me in confidence that something along these lines might develop as a result of the successful inauguration of our economic trade program for North Africa.

740.00112 European War 1939/2978a : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Consul at Dakar (Wasson)*

WASHINGTON, July 2, 1941—7 p. m.

78. As a result of conversations between General Weygand and Counselor of Embassy Robert Murphy, now temporarily at Algiers,

<sup>36</sup> Gaston Henry-Haye.

the Department is putting into effect a plan of furnishing limited amounts of economic supplies to French Africa. The assistance to be given consists of affording facilities to authorized representatives of the French Government to make purchases in the United States of products considered essential to maintain the economy of the French African territories, under assurances that none of the products or their equivalents would be reexported in any form and that their distribution for internal consumption would be strictly supervised and controlled by American vice consuls designated for the purpose. The supplies are to be transported in French vessels, and it is understood that if any violation of the agreement should occur the plan would be terminated in its entirety.

The program so far drawn up, and which is now considered to be in effect, is limited to French North Africa. However, discussions are taking place with a view to the possible extension of the plan in some form to French West Africa. The French Embassy here is preparing a detailed list of the needs of the latter territory and it is expected that the matter will be followed up through further conversations with General Weygand.

A shipment of petroleum products for North Africa is now en route to Casablanca on the tanker *Schéhérazade*, and two freighters are scheduled to sail this week for the same destination. The *Schéhérazade* will stop at Dakar en route in order to discharge 2,000 tons of gasoline. Vice Consul E. Paul Culbert is making the journey as a passenger and will remain at Dakar to supervise the distribution of this fuel and any future cargoes which may be sent to French West Africa. He will be assigned to your office for such duties in this connection as were outlined to him in oral instructions before leaving the United States.

Please inform the appropriate authorities of the above and request provisional recognition for Culbert.

WELLES

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740.0011 European War 1939/12891 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, July 7, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received July 8—1:10 a. m.]

297. From Murphy. My 244, June 14, 7 p. m. Weygand's Aide tells me that the military automotive equipment in question consisting of about 1,000 vehicles was duly delivered to the German Armistice Commission representatives in Algeria. The officer in charge accepted the equipment and in fact complimented the French on the care which apparently had been exercised to maintain it in good condition. The equipment was shipped to Libya and it now develops that the German

military authorities there have protested vigorously that a large portion thereof has obviously been sabotaged, and an acrimonious discussion is going on between them and the German representatives here who accepted the equipment.

The same source tells me that when the delivery of this equipment was discussed some time ago at Wiesbaden the French Government succeeded in exacting from the Germans a *quid pro quo* amounting to 1,500 tons of automotive gasoline and cotton textiles to a value of approximately 6 million francs for delivery to North Africa. My informant states it is not at all certain that the Germans will make delivery under the circumstances but General Weygand wished us to know about the transaction.

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/13011 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, July 10, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received July 11—5:29 a. m.]

309. From Murphy. Personal for the Acting Secretary. Weygand departed for Vichy at 2:30 today in response to the French Government's request. The reason for the request is not indicated. I am now told that when he visited Vichy in June he was informed that Darlan had signed an accord with the Germans granting them the use of certain bases in French Africa. He has not communicated to me the names of those bases. Weygand at that time informed Pétain<sup>36a</sup> and Darlan that as long as he remained in Africa he would not tolerate such a concession and definitely refused assent. He also stated that should the French Government be in no position to resist he would resign.

Fearing the consequences of such a development the French Government decided to discuss the question further with the Germans.

The reason for the present summons to Vichy are not known but it is expected that the Germans must have given a reply which requires further discussion with Weygand. The latter departed determined not to yield and in a fighting mood.

I urgently recommend that until we learn from Weygand the results of his conversation at Vichy that no representations be made to the French Government and that the matter be treated as secret. May I respectfully suggest that for the moment at least this be not communicated to the British. It is evident that the use by the Germans of French African bases is still in the discussion stage. [Murphy.]

COLE

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<sup>36a</sup> Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, French Chief of State.



740.0011 European War 1939/12999: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, July 10, 1941—midnight.

[Received July 11—7:18 a. m.]

851. Embassy's telegram 839, July 9, midnight.<sup>37</sup> The person referred to<sup>38</sup> in the Embassy's telegram 459, April 18, 2 p. m.,<sup>37</sup> called tonight to tell us of Weygand's arrival in Vichy. He inquired, he said, of a member of Darlan's immediate entourage as to the reasons for the visit and the latter replied as follows: "The whole question of bases at Dakar and Bizerte is up again."

Our informant had dined tonight with General Odic, chief of the French Air Force in North Africa, in whom he has full confidence. He said that the latter who is in Vichy only for 3 days told him apropos of Weygand's visit that "unless Weygand has changed, which would surprise me a great deal, I do not think he will fall in with any proposals to let the Germans have bases in Africa".

Our informant went on to say that General Odic retires on August 9 next and proposes to remain for the time being in Algiers thereafter; that he is completely in sympathy with the Allied cause; and that he will then feel himself completely free to act as appears best and he urges that through Murphy we "utilize" the General's abilities and his prestige to the fullest extent.

We were shown the original of a letter and accompanying report which General Odic has written the Marshal criticizing very strongly the condition into which the French air force had been allowed to fall. The report concludes with a statement that, while the author had hoped that "during the days of Pierre Cot and Guy La Chambre the French Air Force had reached its lowest ebb, but the situation today is far worse".

Repeated to Casablanca.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/13066: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, July 12, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received 3:12 p. m.]

963. Embassy's telegram 851, July 10, 12 p. m. [*midnight*] General Weygand's personal representative in Vichy said last evening that the General had told him that he has been called here because of German

<sup>37</sup> Not printed.

<sup>38</sup> Charles Antoine Rochat, Acting Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

anxiety with respect to his attitude and future actions; that the Germans had indicated to Admiral Darlan in Paris that in view of our occupation of Iceland,<sup>39</sup> they were afraid of some similar move toward Casablanca or Dakar. (See also Embassy's telegram No. 858, July 11, 6 p. m.<sup>40</sup>) They wanted Darlan therefore to make sure of Weygand's "loyalty" and that he will continue to obey instructions from Vichy. (Although our informant did not appear to be aware of the development reported in the Embassy's strictly confidential telegram 852 [851], July 10, 12 p. m., if the Germans are aware thereof, as they may well be, it would seem to explain in part their present doubts with respect to Weygand.)

Persistent reports continue to reach Vichy of German and Italian difficulties in Libya and the rapidly growing sick list among their forces there. In the light of the Axis problem of supplying and/or reinforcing their desert forces, the question of utilization of Bizerte and Tunisian territory may well take on an importance in German eyes.

Repeated to Casablanca.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/13096a : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*<sup>41</sup>

WASHINGTON, July 13, 1941—4 p. m.

565. I suggest the desirability of your obtaining in the immediate future an opportunity of talking again alone with Marshal Petain.

You may say that reports which appear to be authentic have been received by this Government that Germany is putting extreme pressure to bear upon France in order to secure arrangements whereunder, directly or indirectly, Germany would secure entire control of such ports as Casablanca and Dakar and presumably North African ports on the Mediterranean. These reports assert that the sudden recall of General Weygand to Vichy was in connection with this matter.

The President has publicly stated as recently as in his last message to the Congress relating to the occupation of Iceland<sup>42</sup> that this Government does not desire to see any change in sovereignty or in jurisdic-

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<sup>39</sup> For correspondence on this subject, see pp. 776 ff.

<sup>40</sup> Not printed.

<sup>41</sup> Repeated on the same date as telegram No. 179 to the Consul General at Algiers for Murphy with the following addition: "Upon General Weygand's return you may if you consider it desirable inform him thereof and keep the Department informed as rapidly and as frequently as may be possible of all information you may obtain concerning General Weygand's conversations in Vichy."

<sup>42</sup> July 7, 1941; Department of State *Bulletin*, July 12, 1941, p. 15.

tion over those strategic points in the Atlantic whose retention in friendly hands is regarded by this Government as vital to the security and defense of the United States. This of course includes the French ports mentioned. Any attempt by Germany at the exercise, direct or indirect, of control over Casablanca and Dakar, or for that matter over other African ports in the Atlantic now under French jurisdiction would immediately be of the gravest concern to the United States.

The President feels that, while your approach to the Marshal should be entirely friendly and should emphasize the desire of this Government to continue to be as helpful as possible to the French people in their present difficulties, you should nevertheless be completely frank and leave not a shadow of a doubt as to the gravity with which this Government views this question.

Please make it entirely clear beyond any doubt to the Marshal that in accordance with its announced policy, this Government has no desire to see modified or to encroach upon French jurisdiction over these regions provided such jurisdiction remains entirely French and so long as France does not permit German infiltration or German encroachment in those regions. Should, however, such a development take place, the policy of this Government would immediately change. Necessarily, the first change would be complete abandonment by this Government of any and all efforts to continue present trade arrangements with North Africa or to negotiate any commercial arrangements in the interest of metropolitan France. The subsequent steps which would be taken by this Government need not be detailed at this time but will be determined upon without the slightest delay in the light of such developments.

Please telegraph as soon as possible any replies which may be made to you and any further information you may have obtained as to the nature of General Weygand's conversations while in Vichy.

WELLES

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740.00112 European War 1939/3030 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Casablanca (Russell) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, July 14, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 7:04 p. m.]

294. From Murphy. Your May 10th.<sup>43</sup> Shortly after the resumption of the plan of economic cooperation with French North Africa, I discussed with General Weygand the preparation of a memorandum

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<sup>43</sup> Telegram No. 122, p. 331.

extending the plan to French West Africa. Subject to Department's approval, we agreed on the following text :

"Reference is made to the memorandum of our conversation of February 26, 1941, regarding the plan of economic cooperation between the United States and French North Africa<sup>44</sup> and to our preliminary conversation at Dakar in December 1940 on the subject of the possible extension of such a plan to French West Africa, and in May 1941, the extension of the provisions of the plan to French West Africa were discussed again and we agreed to such an extension subject of course to the approval of our respective Governments.

Accordingly, it is agreed that the conditions of the plan of economic cooperation between the United States and French North Africa as outlined in the memorandum of our conversation of February 26, 1941, now apply to French West Africa (these conditions as applied to French West Africa are modified regarding exportation of products to fit the circumstances) :

- (1) excessive stocks of commodities will not be constituted;
- (2) measures will be taken to insure that the supplies from the United States and similar products will not be exported under any form outside the four territories of French Africa (Algeria, French West Africa, Morocco and Tunisia) but will be consumed in those territories;
- (3) the American Government is authorized to designate American officials for control purposes at ports and on the railways;
- (4) in the event of violation of the condition regarding exportation (section 2 above) American economic cooperation with French West Africa will terminate;
- (5) the ships engaged in the traffic between the United States and French Africa will return to their respective ports of departure."

The foregoing has been approved by the French Government. Weygand's services have shown me a copy of the telegraphic approval which also contains the following paragraph.

"Finally and conforming to the procedure followed in the exchange of letters regarding French North Africa, the text signed by you and Murphy at Algiers will also be the subject of an exchange of letters between Admiral Leahy and myself (Darlan). It is to the latter text only which we will refer at Wiesbaden."

If conditions remain unchanged at the time of Weygand's return to Algiers, does the Department desire that a memorandum embodying the foregoing text be initialed by him and myself?

Repeated to Vichy and Tangier. [Murphy.]

RUSSELL

<sup>44</sup> See telegram No. 249, February 28, 10 a. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 226.

740.0011 European War 1939/13203 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*[Extract] <sup>45</sup>

VICHY, July 16, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 5:45 p. m.]

888. Your telegram No. 565, July 13, 4 p. m. At 4 p. m. today, I had an interview with Marshal Pétain at which he had Admiral Darlan present, in spite of my request to see him alone. I delivered orally the substance of your telegram No. 565, July 13, 4 p. m. Admiral Darlan replied: "That so long as the political relations with Germany continued as they are today, permission will not be given to anybody to occupy or use the American [*African?*] bases." Darlan added: "That is to say, while our relations are based on the Armistice." The Marshal himself added: "You may guess what the Admiral means," and did not enlarge on this statement.

In reply to my specific inquiry, Admiral Darlan stated and restated that he did not say that the Germans had not asked for use of the bases.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/13253 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, July 17, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received July 18—1:10 a. m.]

895. Apropos of the announcement of General Weygand's appointment as Governor General of Algeria in addition to his other offices, Rochat remarked this afternoon that the appointment was "pleasing to all concerned": Weygand is given "more direct control thereby in Algeria and Admiral Darlan (as Minister of the Interior) will now have some direct authority over the General."

Admiral Abrial,<sup>45a</sup> whose elimination from Algeria did not come as a surprise here, is reputedly slated to be Prefect of the Seine.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/13248a : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, July 17, 1941—10 p. m.

184. For Murphy only. Please arrange to see General Weygand alone at the first opportunity and inform him that I have telegraphed

<sup>45</sup> Portion of telegram omitted here related to Japanese pressure in Indochina; for telegram in full, see vol. v, p. 213.

<sup>45a</sup> Adm. Jean Marie Abrial, former Governor General of Algeria.

to you the summary of a conversation which I held with the President this morning and in the course of which the President expressed the following views. You may inform General Weygand that you are informing him of this message with my full authorization but without indicating in any way that this has been done by specific instruction of the President.

The President referred to reports which are coming from various sources that France and Germany have completed the framework for a treaty of peace and that the peace terms apparently agreed to by the French authorities provide for the utilization of French North African and French West African bases on the Atlantic. The President, of course, has in mind the positive assurances given him by the French Government in Vichy that neither Germany nor any other power would be permitted to occupy these bases under the terms of the armistice agreement. Naturally, in the opinion of the President there is no intrinsic difference between the armistice agreement and any treaty of peace which might be signed between France and Germany under present conditions since both instruments would only be signed under duress.

As the President made it clear in an address to the nation and to the other American Republics of May 27 last <sup>46</sup> and in his recent message to the Congress <sup>47</sup> covering the steps taken to assist the Icelandic people in the defense of Iceland, the United States does not desire to see any change of present sovereignty over what, in our opinion, are the strategic outposts in the Atlantic and our Government is solely concerned to see that these strategic points remain in reality in friendly hands. These statements clearly cover, and were intended so to cover, the French ports in North and West Africa on the Atlantic. So long as effective control over such ports as Casablanca and Dakar remain actually in French hands under the control of General Weygand and no German infiltration into those ports is permitted and no direct or indirect German authority is there exercised, this Government will consider those ports as remaining in "friendly hands". What would be essential, however, from the standpoint of the United States would be to prevent the utilization by the Germans and other unfriendly powers of those ports as military, naval or air bases. This does not imply occupation by the United States of such outposts, but it does imply the prevention of their occupation by Germany.

This Government has two chief objectives in mind with relation to these questions: first, to keep the sealanes open in order to insure the delivery of supplies to Great Britain either across the North Atlantic or from the South Atlantic, as well as for the preservation of traditional American rights on the high seas; and, second, to prevent the utilization of strategic points in the Atlantic by unfriendly powers for the purpose of attacking the Western Hemisphere. In other words, this Government will undertake the prevention of the utilization of these outposts by Germany and powers subservient to Germany for purposes of aggression against the United States and the Western Hemisphere.

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<sup>46</sup> Department of State *Bulletin*, May 31, 1941, p. 647.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, July 12, 1941, p. 15.

The President spoke of General Weygand in very high terms expressing the belief that the policies and the principles for which General Weygand has stood and for which he has fought during his long and distinguished career make it evident that under no conditions would he acquiesce in German domination of, or control over, French colonies or possessions in North or West Africa.

The President recognizes the many difficulties which have confronted General Weygand during the past months in obtaining supplies of all kinds. The North African trade agreement will, the President believes, alleviate certain of these difficulties. The President, however, recognizes the continuing difficulties with regard to military supplies. Recently this Government has adopted certain measures which have made it possible for airplanes coming by air from the United States to be flown from West Africa to East Africa and to Egypt, and many supplies of a military character coming from the United States are now being carried on that "ferry route". General Weygand is undoubtedly familiar with these facts and recognizes their significance, in the light of the situation in North Africa, as a means of possible supply in the event of some emergency.

At the conclusion of our conversation the President expressed the firm belief that only through the complete defeat of Hitlerite Germany and all that it stands for could there be brought about a peace treaty which would insure the restoration of France to the proud position which she has previously occupied and which would likewise insure the integrity of her territory and of her possessions. That, said the President, should be one of the prime accomplishments of such a peace treaty.

In communicating the above to General Weygand, please make it quite clear that you are not authorized to do more than deliver this message to him in oral terms. You should not leave any notes or memoranda.

You should likewise say that any information with regard to developing conditions that General Weygand may feel in a position to communicate to you for the secret information of your Government will be welcome.

Please telegraph a report of your conversation.

WELLES

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740.0011 European War 1939/19332: Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, July 21, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received July 22—9:25 a. m.]

338. Personal for the Acting Secretary from Murphy. Our [*Department's*] 184, July 17, 10 p. m. I saw Weygand alone a few minutes ago and informed him of your message, reading to him a translation of the message and stating that I was authorized to deliver it only

orally. This was the first opportunity to talk with him since my return from Morocco Saturday eve.<sup>48</sup> Weygand listened with the greatest interest. His first comment was an expression of his evident pleasure and satisfaction over the President's complimentary references to him personally. He said with a smile that he would be sure to make no allusions to them in any report he might make to Vichy as strangely enough jealousy was known to exist in that neighborhood. The General made careful mental note and when I had finished repeated what he had told us before, namely, that he would not enter into a commitment regarding the general policy of his Government without authorization, neither had he any intention of taking independent military action.

Weygand said that he was quite willing to state the fact that [to] the best of his knowledge there had been no recent action changing the status of French African ports nor conceding their use to the Germans nor to any power affiliated with the Germans. He said that he could assure the President that there is no French African port at present occupied by or under the control of the Germans or any power affiliated with them aside from the verification of military equipment and control of shipping exercised by the Armistice Commissions of which activity the President is informed. He said that his attitude remains unchanged and that he will oppose to the best of his ability any act of aggression against French Africa or affiliated power. In reply to my question he said that neither German nor Italian nor affiliated naval craft of any description are or have been using French African ports for refueling or as bases generally; neither are they or have they been using French African bases for the purpose of military operations.

The General then made an oral résumé of the message to insure that he retained its essential feature clearly in mind.

He inquired whether in my opinion the United States would enter the war as a belligerent. I replied that the President had by his recent public utterances stated American policy with a clarity that left no doubt about the American position and that naturally I could not amplify my Government's declarations. I mentioned that there is of course an element of public opinion in the United States which apparently believes that the entrance of the United States as a belligerent may be inevitable. Weygand remarked that he had always hoped that the United States might remain aloof exercising its enormous power as an arbiter in whose impartiality the world could have confidence. He felt however that things are developing in a different direction. That fact did not appear to distress him.

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<sup>48</sup> July 19.



The General expressed his satisfaction over the operation of the economic plan and his repeated thanks to the Department and the President for their support the value of which he recognizes.

His principal interest however related to that portion of the message regarding military supplies. I feel that possibly he may be slightly disappointed that the message did not go further to the extent of a preliminary outline of what volume of supplies might be forthcoming and what the possible time lag might be in the event of an emergency. I therefore took the liberty to inquire whether if my Government saw fit to provide data in that respect he would be interested in receiving it. He quickly replied that of course he would, adding as an afterthought that this should not be interpreted as a commitment on his part. I am confident that he is only mildly interested in the volume of our national defense expenditures but reasonably interested in actual production figures. He has, I am sure, an active interest in learning the volume of what material we could deliver within a given period of time and whether we have such a program under study.

The General was visibly pleased over the President's reference to the necessity for the complete defeat of Hitlerite Germany and the provision of the eventual Treaty of Peace which would restore France to the position she previously occupied.

The General referred to the Russo-German campaign with satisfaction. Notwithstanding his ardent dislike of the Soviet regime he said the Russians were putting up a gallant fight. He said that naturally everyone deplored bloodshed but that the contemplation of the mutual liquidation of Nazis and Communism is far from displeasing to him. The General referred to his hope to achieve French unity in Africa as the only satisfactory means of opposing aggression. He said that the activity of Communists and De Gaullists <sup>48a</sup> in French [territories?] mitigates against national unity which is necessary if France is to emerge from her present prostration.

He again referred to Syria, pointing to General Dentz' <sup>49</sup> humiliation which he said would have been less bitter if the occupation had been restricted to British troops to the exclusion of De Gaullists.

Weygand concluded the interview, throughout which he evinced the greatest cordiality and understanding, with an expression of satisfaction over the recent consolidation of his authority (he is now Governor of Algeria by the elimination of Admiral Abrial which authority is in addition to his powers as Delegate General for French Africa). [Murphy.]

COLE

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<sup>48a</sup> Followers of Gen. Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French.

<sup>49</sup> Gen. Henri-Fernand Dentz, French High Commissioner in Syria.

740.00112 European War 1939/3109a: Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Consul General at Casablanca  
(Russell)*

WASHINGTON, July 21, 1941—10 p. m.

211. Your 294, July 14, 10 a. m. For Murphy. Before it can consider the extension of the economic plan to French West Africa, the Department would desire to study the comments of General Weygand in regard to the export of peanuts from that area, as well as the reported proposal to substitute peanut oil for olive oil in North Africa thereby making available a substantial quantity of the latter for shipment to the United States.<sup>50</sup>

It may be added that the failure of the French so far to make any reply to our representations in the matter of olive oil is causing an unfortunate impression here. There is a severe shortage of this product in the American market.

WELLES

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740.00112 European War 1939/3067: Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, July 23, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received 10 a. m.]

343. From Murphy. The North African press carried in the issues of July 21 and July 22 front page items of a communiqué authorized by General Weygand regarding the arrival of the first shipments under the plan of economic cooperation between the United States and North Africa. This is the result of several conversations with Weygand's services during the past weeks. There was Vichy opposition but the General insisted on a fair amount of publicity. He feels on the other hand that it should not be exaggerated to the point of arousing German opposition which might take the form of a stricture on the use of French shipping in the North African traffic.

Code text by air mail to Vichy, Tangier, Casablanca and Tunis.  
[Murphy.]

COLE

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740.00112 European War 1939/3082: Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, July 24, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 3:20 p. m.]

351. From Murphy. During the course of my visit to Morocco last week I had conversations with several officers regarding the opera-

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<sup>50</sup> Further negotiations were unsuccessful and no economic aid agreement for French West Africa was reached.

tion of economic plan and German infiltration. Among them General Noguès expressed to Consul General Russell<sup>50a</sup> and myself great satisfaction over the arrival of the first shipments. He expected favorable results both from a political and economic point of view. He said it was the most effective blow which could be dealt German propaganda. The Germans he said have made abundant promises of the economic aid they would bring to Morocco but so far they had made no deliveries. The Germans for months have scoffed at American aid as illusory. Noguès said that there is no doubt from conversations he has had with Auer,<sup>50b</sup> the German civilian delegate at Casablanca, and others that American economic intervention has had a most disquieting effect on the Germans.

Noguès said that there were last week a few under 200 German official personnel in Morocco due to several departures; that their propaganda efforts had noticeably diminished especially in the Fez area. He characterized the situation as calm. He had no worries for the moment regarding Spanish Morocco where he said there is no evidence of aggressive intentions. His recent meeting with the Spanish High Commissioner, Orgaz,<sup>51</sup> involved an exchange of courtesy and a general discussion of economic topics but no reference to military matters.

Weygand's services confirm this statement. Noguès and other officials said that the Germans have made two formal inquiries regarding the activities of our new consular control officers. Auer said he understood that there are "40" American vice consuls now in Morocco. It is evident from this and other rumors that the Germans intend to embarrass our officers by the circulation of stories to the best of their well-trained ability.

There is a marked decline of sentiment in favor of Franco-German collaboration in Morocco.

Code text by airmail to Vichy, Tangier and Casablanca. [Murphy.]  
COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/13461 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, July 24, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received July 25—12: 40 a. m.]

927. We had a long confidential talk last evening with Weygand's personal representative at Vichy. The object of the conversation on his part was emphatically to urge the utmost discretion by our Gov-

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<sup>50a</sup> Harry Earle Russell, Consul General at Casablanca.

<sup>50b</sup> Theodor Auer, Chief of the German Armistice Commission at Casablanca.

<sup>51</sup> Gen. Luis Orgaz.

ernment (and that we use our "influence" to the same end with the British) in all that concerns French Africa. He emphasized how delicate is the French position there and how suspicious the Germans are. When privileges are granted our "vice consuls" in their control duties in Africa, the Germans immediately demand similar privileges for their own people. Auer is closely watched and some of his native contacts in the past have actually been shot, he said, which had proved "extremely annoying to the Germans" although they are told that the same surveillance is exercised over Murphy. The Germans are insisting that the British and Americans are getting ready for an attack on either Casablanca or Dakar, that we are "buying" native chieftains and otherwise preparing for direct future action. He went on to say that he does not believe these German charges nor does Weygand, but they do call for the utmost discretion to prevent some German move.

He denied that there has been any recent increase of Germans in Morocco or elsewhere in North Africa and particularly the development reported in the Embassy's telegram No. 926, July 24, 2 p. m.<sup>51a</sup> though he admitted the possibility of a "few Germans" getting into the territory clandestinely through Tangier.

He said that the prestige of Weygand, to whom he is personally devoted, grows each time he comes to Vichy and that he has been able to resist German pressure in general and specifically German [demands?] for bases in Africa. "You can rest easy while Weygand is there", he said, "though he will resist any Anglo-American attack on Africa, just as he will resist a German move. So be careful," he went on, "until you have 10,000 planes; then, I say personally, you can do what you want."

He then said that Franco-German relations are "almost at the breaking point" and that this is due solely to French resistance to German penetration in Africa. The Germans interpreted "collaboration" to mean utilization of French African territory and are extremely annoyed at Weygand's resistance to their infiltration into or control over that area.

They would give anything, he said, to get rid of Weygand, but realize that that is impossible. They will probably, however, he said, succeed in eliminating Monick (who has arrived back in Vichy but who has discreetly kept away from the Embassy). The Germans blame him partly for the success of our program of economy supply and for his general anti-German measures. What action the Germans are planning in "retaliation" for French refusal to collaborate in the matter of African bases, he does not know. He confirmed though that

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<sup>51a</sup> Not printed.

there is much anxiety in this respect on the part of the Government here.

We asked whether there is anything specific which had brought forth his request for American "discretion" in Africa and he replied in the negative. He said that our economic plan is working "most satisfactorily" and that General Weygand has great confidence in Murphy. He had broached the subject he said merely in the hope that we would be careful and to let us know how pressing the Germans are becoming with respect to our activities in that area.

Repeated to Algiers and Casablanca.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/13469 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, July 26, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received 7 p. m.]

943. Reference section 3<sup>52</sup> Embassy's telegram 927, July 24, 3 p. m. Monick called at the Embassy this morning. He said that so far the efforts to "fire him" had failed and he is returning to Morocco Monday.<sup>53</sup> Darlan had told him, he said, that the Germans had made it quite clear that there could be no "collaboration" in Morocco as long as Monick stayed there and were charging that he had had some of Auer's useful active contacts in that area shot; that he "cooked up too many things" with the Americans, etc. Monick said that he had informed Admiral Darlan that he would accept no other post and that if he were dismissed it must be publicly announced that it was on the demand of the Germans; that every one in Morocco knows that Auer is complaining loudly and publicly of his, Monick's, activities and has threatened his immediate dismissal; that knowledge of his sacking would hardly serve to increase the prestige of the Vichy Government either among the French elements or among the natives of that area. Darlan, according to Monick, replied that the latter was putting him in an "impossible" position. The upshot of the conversation was that Monick is to return to Morocco for the time being and that Darlan is to obtain from Von Ribbentrop<sup>54</sup> a full report setting forth exactly what complaints the Germans have against Monick's conduct.

Monick referred to his last conversation with us (Embassy telegram 626, June 4, noon<sup>55</sup>) and of the developments subsequent thereto: How Weygand, upon further thought and with the full backing and

<sup>52</sup> Last two paragraphs.

<sup>53</sup> July 28.

<sup>54</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister.

<sup>55</sup> *Ante*, p. 361.

encouragement of Boisson and Esteva, had returned to the charge and had delayed any German move into North Africa, all of which was fully covered in Murphy's telegrams (for example, No. 229, June 7, 6 p. m., and 231, June 8, 6 p. m.<sup>56</sup>). He did say, however, that he had learned from Weygand that Darlan had actually signed, apparently not at Berchtesgaden but at Paris, some sort of "Provisional Protocol" which would place Franco-German relations on a plane "differing from the Armistice Convention" and which involved German utilization of bases at Bizerte and Dakar. (Monick does not know whether Casablanca was specifically included as he has not personally seen the document. Its existence in German hands, he says, may prove extremely embarrassing at some future date if they choose to make it public.)

It was following the second Cabinet meeting those days of early June and on Weygand's insistence that a written "message" of some sort was drawn up and transmitted to the Germans: It stated, said Monick, that France on the basis of such a "vague provisional document" could not turn over African bases to Germany, particularly in view of the vagueness of the indications as to what Germany planned to give in return. To this "delaying measure", said Monick, the Germans have never replied. He confirmed the insistent reports which we have heard from many quarters (Embassy's telegram No. 916, July 21, 11 a. m.<sup>57</sup>) of German annoyance not only at Admiral Darlan but at the French Government as a whole and he also confirmed the anxiety and uncertainty caused thereby in Government circles which we have noted in recent conversations with the Marshal and Admiral Darlan. He too attributes German annoyance primarily, as have other sources, to this refusal—for the time being at least under these tactics of delay—to "collaborate" more fully in Africa.

We mentioned to Monick the report (Embassy's telegram 926, July 24, 2 p. m.<sup>57</sup>) that De Brinon<sup>58</sup> is issuing to Germans "a hundred visas a day" and inquired whether many of the recipients thereby were getting into Morocco.

He said that he did not question the accuracy of the report as far as De Brinon was concerned but has no information to indicate that these German Fifth Columnists are reaching Morocco in any number clandestinely through Tangier. He said that the residency is being very strict in such matters and pointed out that a visa from De Brinon to visit Morocco, "like the visa of any prefect", must be specifically confirmed by authorization from Morocco. In conclusion he said that

<sup>56</sup> *Ante*, pp. 369 and 371, respectively.

<sup>57</sup> Not printed.

<sup>58</sup> Fernand de Brinon, Delegate General of the French Government for the occupied areas at Paris, with rank of Ambassador.

General Weygand is convinced, as is he, that the Germans will renew their pressure for bases in French Africa as well as for general infiltration into that area by October. (Please compare Berlin's telegram to Department 2821, July 14, 4 p. m.<sup>60</sup>) That is why he, with his great interest in that area and his personal position so much at stake finds the "joint defense" analogy of Indochina such a dangerous precedent. (Incidentally other officials here in Vichy have also pointed out to us the logical presumption that the Germans will endeavor to profit by the precedent set for "joint defense" in France's Far Eastern colony.[ ])

Repeated to Algiers, Tangier and Casablanca.

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/3098 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, July 29, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received July 30—2: 17 p. m.]

957. We learn that a plan is on foot which has its origin in German annoyance over the position and excellent relationships enjoyed by Murphy in North Africa to make some *démarche* looking toward Murphy's return to Vichy ostensibly for a visit of a few days duration. Several pretexts would be given for discussing details having to do with operation or [*of?*] our control system in effect in North Africa, efforts to increase the number of ships employed, etc. In addition to German annoyance there is a disgruntled feeling among Vichy officials, particularly the "collaborationist" element, that their authority concerning matters pertaining to that area has been decreased in a corresponding amount to the increase of that of General Weygand and his associates.

We were approached Monday by an official of the Foreign Office with an inquiry as to whether Murphy's movements depended on instructions from the Embassy or from Washington.

2. Same question was asked us by Rochat this afternoon. In both instances we replied that Murphy is Counselor of this Embassy; that his present detail to Africa is however under instructions from the Department and that his movements to and from North Africa were governed by direct instructions from Washington. Rochat admitted that there is a move under consideration to suggest that Murphy be "invited" to come to Vichy on one pretext or another and he likewise admitted tacitly that once here obstacles might arise with respect to

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<sup>60</sup> Not printed.

his return to North Africa. He said, however, when we pointed out the obvious dangers of any such *démarche* on the part of the French Government to the present program of supplying North Africa, that he would endeavor to forestall any such move.

(In this connection the Department will recall the Embassy's telegram 566, May 16, 10 p. m.<sup>61</sup>)

Repeated to Algiers.

LEAHY

740.00112 European War 1939/3105 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, [undated].

[Received August 1, 1941—1 : 50 p. m.]

967. Embassy's telegram 957, July 29, 9 p. m. Rochat, we learn, was successful for the moment in forestalling any attempt to have Murphy "invited" to come to Vichy. Now, however, a further effort is developing largely on the initiative of Leroy Beaulieu, Director of Commercial Accords (who is rather definitely now in the collaborationist camp to help his position with his chief, Bouthillier<sup>61a</sup>) to suggest that Murphy come to Vichy for a few days to discuss the question of alcohol shipments from Algeria. Our friends in the Foreign Office, however, are taking the view that if such discussions are necessary, an official could be sent from Vichy to Algeria to talk matters over on the spot.

Repeated to Algiers.

LEAHY

740.00112 European War 1939/3098 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, August 1, 1941—6 p. m.

616. Your 957, July 29, 9 p. m. Should you be approached in connection with the possibility of Murphy visiting Vichy, you may reply that you have been informed by the Department that the present status of the arrangement as regards North Africa will necessitate his continued presence there for the time being. It is felt that he will be needed there to continue to supervise the operation of this agreement.

WELLES

<sup>61</sup> *Ante*, p. 335.

<sup>61a</sup> Yves Bouthillier, French Secretary of State for National Economy and Finance.



740.0011 European War 1939/13613 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, August 2, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received 10:10 p. m.]

378. Personal for the Acting Secretary from Murphy. Your 184, July 17, 10 p. m. For the past 10 days I have received disquieting reports that the tide at Vichy is running rapidly in the direction of concessions to the Germans in French Africa. In the past 2 days from reliable members of Weygand's staff I hear that important changes are imminent in the Government at Vichy which thereafter will go all out in support of the German program and a reliable official just returned last evening from Vichy states that the trend there is unmistakable. General Odic, commanding the Air Forces in French Africa, also shares that view. He even expresses the opinion that things have already gone so far that there is no middle course regarding the Atlantic bases; he says they will be either German controlled or Anglo-American controlled.

Our friends tell me that at Vichy, with some of the key men, it is no longer a question of freedom from the German yoke. The problem is translated by them into a question of their own selfish careers and the commitments they have made to the policy of Franco-German cooperation. They see in an Allied victory nothing for themselves but ruin. The Germans on the other hand have promised them brilliant careers in the new European order. My contacts, who several months ago had the utmost respect for Marshal Pétain, now frankly discount his waning power.

I have been urged almost daily since my 338, July 21, 5 p. m., by one of Weygand's aides, who enjoys his close confidence, to persuade you to expedite any comment you might see fit to make or any information the President might care to transmit to Weygand regarding any program of military assistance which might be forthcoming should the General be faced with a threat of German aggression. He tells me that Weygand is developing the conviction that Vichy now simply operates under German domination and controls; that in reality the Marshal has no freedom of action. Under such circumstances if the General can be brought to believe that the African trump, which is the last France has, can be played with a chance of winning, he will feel justified in taking responsibility.

In my letter to you of July 15<sup>62</sup> I suggested that the mere information that the President had under study a program of military assistance for Weygand would hearten him enormously. I also said

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<sup>62</sup> Not found in Department files.

that if you were in position to inform him of the volume of such assistance which would be available and the minimum time required for the arrival of the initial supplies this should only be done if the quantities of material were really substantial.

His closest associates assure me that Weygand has never wavered in his determination to obstruct German control of this area. I know he is delighted with the way things are going in Russia and Libya.

Several weeks ago he believed he would be faced with a major crisis in September or October. Now some of his close associates believe that such a crisis may well happen this month. They urge me to suggest to you that encouraging and specific data regarding the volume of any available military assistance be conveyed to the General without delay. I feel that Weygand should know that if he gives the signal certain quantities of material would be available within a given time limit.

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.00112 European War 1939/3297

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] August 4, 1941.

MR. WELLES: I notice that in your telephone conversation with Mr. Hull on July 29 a reference was made to the plan of economic assistance for North Africa and for the necessity of watching carefully the movement of supplies to that area. Mr. Hull in this connection referred to the danger of a joint defense of North Africa by General Weygand and the Germans along the lines of the agreement on Indochina, and to a certain opposition on the part of some people to the granting of facilities for the North African trade.

In order to avoid any possible misconception in regard to our policy respecting North Africa, I feel it would be desirable to emphasize the fact that this Division has never been under any illusions as to the success of the plan. We are fully aware of the fact that the Germans have been putting as much pressure on the French Government as they can with respect to North Africa, such as increasing the size of the German Armistice Commission in Morocco, allowing German commercial penetration, endeavoring to obtain bases, et cetera. Their efforts may be crowned with success at any moment, and we are quite prepared for any unfavorable eventualities. On the other hand, the fact remains that General Weygand has so far stood out

against German infiltration and has prevented any actual occupation or use of French North African territory by German forces. The firm attitude he has taken at Vichy has been largely due to his hope of obtaining supplies from the United States, and the officials under him, who are friendly to the United States, have maintained their positions very largely because of their reliance on American aid. Reports from our consular officers in North Africa show that this faith has to a great extent been justified and that new courage is being lent to General Weygand's organization, with corresponding disgruntlement on the part of the Germans.

As long as this situation obtains and the door to North Africa remains closed to the Germans it would seem worth our while to continue to aid General Weygand. The supplies now reaching him are being very carefully watched by a specially selected staff of vice consuls, who are already rendering valuable service in obtaining information from strategic centers. The moment it should be ascertained that a single item in the list of supplies is going to the Germans, the plan will be automatically terminated in accordance with General Weygand's own statement. While the British have faced some domestic criticism for giving consent to the plan, they are in agreement with us that the results so far have been satisfactory. Even if it should be necessary to abandon the scheme within the next few weeks or months, we shall have gained time in North Africa, and that is what counts today. There can be no question that we are watching the situation carefully and that we are prepared to stop the flow of supplies at any moment.

WALLACE MURRAY

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740.0011 European War 1939/13613 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Casablanca (Russell)*

WASHINGTON, August 6, 1941—10 p. m.

234. Personal for Murphy from the Under Secretary. Your 378, August 2, 9 p. m. You may be assured that in our present discussions and studies relating to defense needs of this country we are bearing in mind the considerations presented in your telegram under reference. I hope shortly that we shall be in a position to furnish you with more concrete evidence of our desire to resist the forces of aggression in whatever territory they may be operating. In your conversations you may assure General Weygand that the developing situation in North Africa and his needs are not being overlooked. [Welles.]

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/13813 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, August 10, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 7:30 p. m.]

392. Personal for the Under Secretary from Murphy. Weygand's close associates believe that his visit to Vichy is connected with the proposed accord (projected accord) which they state was signed by Darlan subject to the approval of his Government on May 28 at Paris. Monick at Rabat told me the other day that he recently learned at Vichy from an unimpeachable source that the projected accord contemplated German use of the naval base at Bizerte and the use of Tunisian air bases as well as the installation of German air forces at Casablanca and Dakar. The proposal was not approved by the French Government early in June due to General Weygand's opposition. To gain time a counterproposal was sent to the Germans. It is believed here that the German comment on that counterproposal has not been received, that Weygand's trip to Vichy relates to the French study of the German reply which may come before the Council of Ministers Tuesday next.<sup>63</sup>

The General's associates say that his attitude is as inflexible as ever; that he is more than ever determined that France will not yield and that he is encouraged in his attitude by the deterioration of the German military situation. There is growing confidence here that Germany is incapable of military intervention in French Africa at present which in part explains the redoubled political pressure the Germans are applying in France.

I urge consideration of a suggestion made this morning by one of Weygand's aides which concerns the statement made by Admiral Darlan to Ambassador Leahy (see Vichy's 970, August 1, 4 p. m.<sup>64</sup>) to the effect that Darlan would have been glad to have given authorization for a visit of four American naval units to Saigon harbor if the United States had acted immediately after his message of July 16 through our Ambassador.<sup>65</sup> Weygand's aide now suggests that Ambassador Leahy should be instructed to inquire of Darlan at once whether it might not be well to apply the principle to Casablanca and arrange for the immediate friendly visit of an impressive squadron of our Atlantic Fleet to Casablanca for the delivery of a good will message to the Sultan of Morocco. If Darlan was sincere regarding Indochina he might be willing to admit the analogy between the two

<sup>63</sup> August 12.

<sup>64</sup> For extracts, see *ante*, p. 189, and vol. v, p. 246.

<sup>65</sup> See telegram No. 888, July 16, 5 p. m., from the Ambassador in France, vol. v, p. 213.

problems and in any event he would be precluded from further similar criticism.

I should be grateful for your comment on this suggestion which seems to merit careful consideration.

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/13867 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, August 11, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received August 12—9:55 a. m.]

1011. We saw Weygand's confidential representative in Vichy this afternoon. The latter had lunched with the General just prior to his departure by plane for Algiers. He said that Weygand was returning to North Africa "quite contented as far as important questions affecting this area are concerned."

On certain internal questions of policy "such as the treatment of Freemasons, labor problems, et cetera" our informant said that the General is not in accord with the present Government but recognizes that these are matters quite outside his field. He confirmed reports that several Cabinet changes are impending, including the ousting of Jacques Valier [*Chevalier?*] (not for his pro-British sympathies but for his completely impractical and academic approach to current problems). "You may assure Washington," said our informant, "that as far as German penetration into Africa is concerned, nothing has changed. I don't say that 3 weeks or a month from now the pressure may not be too strong to resist concessions, but certainly for the moment our position remains what it was and no additional facilities to the Germans of any sort have been decided upon.["]

In reply to our questioning, he confirmed that the Germans have again expressed interest in Africa, particularly in obtaining rights of passage for material through Bizerte (either under a tortured interpretation of article XX of the Italian Armistice Convention or of article XV of the German Armistice Convention or otherwise), and in concessions of even greater import. He likewise confirmed the accuracy of reports reaching us from other sources that German pressure is not yet in the acute or "ultimatum" stage but merely in the form of "suggestions". Weygand had insisted, he said, that nothing should be done to mar the "cordiality" of relations with the United States in North Africa and was quite satisfied on this score with his visit. He left, our informant said, "to let them have their little Cabinet meeting and discuss their internal changes of government as they want."

On the other hand, he said, the General is disturbed at recent articles in the American and British press urging a direct American move against Dakar; such articles merely increase German suspicions of American intentions in the African area and under [make?] Weygand's position that much more difficult. Our informant recognized with our freedom of press such expressions of view cannot be controlled but emphasized again (our telegram No. 927 July 24, 3 p. m.) the desirability of the utmost discretion at the present juncture and said that he was speaking in this respect for General Weygand.

He made light of the recent decree (Embassy's 987, August 7, 11 a. m.<sup>66</sup>) with respect to the administrative handling of North African affairs at Vichy and said that the General is satisfied with the way affairs in that respect are going.

The difficult position of the German Army in Libya, he said, is certain to increase pressure on France as regards Tunis within the next few weeks; he has the "impression" that the Germans are more interested in the means of getting their troops out of Libya than in sending more in. "The Russian situation has certainly strengthened our hand and I personally doubt whether the Germans at the present time are in a position to force an issue with us. Of course, if they can get concessions voluntarily from us that is all to their gain, but I do not believe that they are prepared to use force directly. They are tightening up the line of demarcation again and there is always the question of the prisoners. Our position is really a tragic one and we hope you will understand it."

He likewise confirmed that the Germans are again pressing for Monick's withdrawal from Morocco but "even if they succeed" he said "that will change nothing and we are countering with a request for Auer's withdrawal. Perhaps we can drag on the discussion for some time".

Algiers, Tangier, Casablanca informed.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/13880 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, August 12, 1941—3 p. m.  
[Received August 12—2:55 p. m.]

398. From Murphy. General Weygand, who returned from Vichy to Algiers last evening, tells me this morning that the French African situation remains unchanged. He said "As I have told you before I do not feel that I am authorized to discuss the foreign policy of my Government with the representative of a foreign Government but

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<sup>66</sup> Not printed.

that much I want you to know: There is no change in our situation in Africa and no concessions have been made to the Germans. It is for Marshal Pétain to decide on whatever details, if any, of the recent discussions at Vichy he may wish to disclose to your Government."

We talked at some length of the operation of the North African economic plan. The General repeatedly expressed his gratitude to the President and the Department for their practical interest which had been and was being demonstrated and the hope that the plan could be extended to French West Africa.

General Weygand reviewed the efforts he is making to develop a strong opposition to German infiltration in area, adding that he was disturbed by the persistent effort that some elements in England continue to make in spreading unfounded stories of the presence of quantities of Germans in French Africa. He referred also to the "totally untrue stories regarding the extent of German activity and the reprehensible assertions that the French in Africa were cooperating with the Germans.["] The General said "I don't know what the British hope to accomplish by disseminating these stories. It seems to me that such action injures their own cause. I know it results in increased pressure on us by the Germans who are more excited than ever over the possibility of a British attack against the west coast of Africa. The British talk of Germans in Dakar and French West Africa. I can assure you that there are absolutely no Germans whatever in that area."

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/13887 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, August 12, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 4:30 p. m.]

399. Personal for the Under Secretary from Murphy. Your 234, August 6, 10 p. m. General Weygand was pleased and encouraged to receive the contents of your message under reference which I conveyed to him this morning. He had just given me the information reported in my 398, August 12, 3 p. m., to the effect that the Vichy meeting had not resulted in concession to the Germans regarding French Africa. Apropos of your message he said with a smile that "I hope this does not mean that you plan to attack us," and [apparent omission] ["I'll be happy to receive any data you may be in position to send.["]

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

740.0011 European War 1939/14004 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Casablanca (Russell) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, August 15, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 8:52 p. m.]

371. Manet, Monick's Chief of Cabinet, who returned recently from a visit of several weeks in Vichy, told Mayer <sup>66a</sup> yesterday that he had been surprised to find how many French officials there, including members of Darlan's immediate entourage, shared his own sentiments and hopes with respect to the outcome of the war (there is no doubt that Manet is a sincere opponent of a Nazi new order). He had gathered the impression that although Darlan could not help "collaborating", he did so grudgingly. In Manet's opinion the Marshal's choice of Ministers was limited to "collaborators" of the Darlan or the Laval type.

Manet had been struck by the importance given in Vichy to the plan for economic assistance to North Africa. He was convinced that the plan and it alone had permitted Weygand to oppose successfully the German demands or suggestions—whatever they may have been—which were discussed during Weygand's last two visits to Vichy. The general feeling was that nothing which might cause a suspension of the plan must be allowed to happen. If the French did not seem to cooperate as wholeheartedly as we might expect in the execution of the plan, as for instance in delaying the departure from Casablanca of the *Ile de Noirmoutier*, we must not forget that they are not free agents, that they must refer all sorts of questions (including proposed departures of vessels for foreign ports) to the Wiesbaden Commission, that they cannot reject outright German protests about the "concessions and facilities" which were being granted to us in North Africa and finally that the Germans were very obviously doing their best to sabotage the plan.

In fact, the importance which the Germans seemed to attach to the plan was, in his opinion, perhaps one of the best reasons which [*why*] we might have to overlook any deficiencies which we might feel the French showed in carrying out their obligations under the plan.

Du Gardier <sup>67</sup> later volunteered that Auer recently had violently taken him to task on account of the "facilities" which were being granted to our new Vice Consuls. In discussing the Marshal's recent message, he said that he and his colleagues at the Residency were at a loss how to interpret it. He repeated a remark which he had made previously that they seldom if ever received open intimation of the broad policies being followed in Vichy, but that several instructions which they had received recently in certain specific cases had convinced

<sup>66a</sup> Ernest de Wael Mayer, Vice Consul at Casablanca.

<sup>67</sup> Chief of the Diplomatic Cabinet, French Zone of Morocco.



him that the Government's "collaborationist" tendencies were more apparent than real.

True reading by courier to Tangier and Algiers.

RUSSELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/14105 : Telegram

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

VICHY, August 18, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 8:30 p. m.]

1046. I asked Rochat this morning whether there have been any new developments in the African question. He replied thankfully that all is quiet there "for the moment" and that there has been no further German pressure. I said that I was glad to hear it and that I earnestly hoped the French Government has no illusions as to what facilities of any sort given to the Germans at Bizerte or elsewhere may mean to relations between the French Government and the United States. He replied that the Government is only too well aware of this and remarked upon the "very unfavorable" reaction in the United States to the Marshal's recent statement of policy<sup>68</sup> (concerning which, he said, Henry-Haye had telegraphed). I said that we here agreed that insofar as that statement had been interpreted abroad as an important step along the road to increased collaboration with Germany, we felt the interpretation to be wrong. I added that he must not be surprised, however, with the situation as it is today that any step toward totalitarianism is stamped by American opinion as "made in Germany". I hoped, I said, that, however wrong this interpretation of the Marshal's speech may be, the fact that it is so viewed in the United States may serve to bring home to those in authority in France the great seriousness with which we should view any step toward closer collaboration between France and Germany, particularly in an area which so directly concerns our own security as Africa.

Repeated to Algiers.

MATTHEWS

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740.0011 European War 1939/14137 : Telegram

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

VICHY, August 19, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received August 20—2:45 a. m.]

1051. Weygand's confidential representative here who, with the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires, Dupuy, dined alone with me last evening says that there has been no renewal of German "pressure" for

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<sup>68</sup> Presumably reference is to Marshal Pétain's radio address of August 12, 1941; for text, see *New York Times*, August 13, 1941, p. 4.

bases or port and transport facilities in French Africa. Whether such pressure will be renewed with real insistence in his opinion will depend in part upon developments in the East. He leans to the personal view that, if a major British offensive is scheduled to start in Libya in September, as the French believe and as Dupuy indicates, the Germans will be in no position to force French concessions in Africa at that time. As concerns Bizerte and the reported German need for the use of this Tunisian port and other territory of that colony to ship supplies and possible reinforcements to their army in Libya they would, he said, need at least a month's preparation and, therefore, their efforts to obtain such concessions should be at their maximum now. "The Germans might, of course, occupy the whole of our country if we resist," he said, "which would be the best thing for France, but obviously that is not to their interest or they would have done so before." He went on to say that he thought the critical point as regards North Africa had been reached at the time of Weygand's visit in the first days of June and that since the danger of German acquisition of bases was successfully averted at that time he is not overly worried that they will succeed "so long as Weygand is in Africa." He confirmed reports from other sources that the German efforts to obtain transit facilities through Bizerte a fortnight ago had really been in the form of a "suggestion" as to how France could show a real desire to "collaborate" and thus obtain some more tangible German concessions than vague promises for the future which, except for a few thousand prisoners, is all the "generous" conqueror had yielded since Montoire.<sup>68a</sup> (I should add that his feeling that German pressure for bases in Africa will not be renewed with all the accompanying threats and intimidations so effective a part of the Nazi "war of nerves" technique is not generally shared in Vichy.)

We went over the importance of our present program of economic assistance in Africa and I believe convinced Dupuy of the desirability from the British point of view of strengthening that program in every possible way. We likewise emphasized the unfortunate effect which the clumsiness of Gaullist broadcasts from Britain are now having on French public opinion and the need for the utmost discretion in all references on the air to Africa, particularly the avoidance of any use of names. Weygand's representative confirmed that the dismissal of General Bioyen [*Doyen*] (Embassy's telegram 923, July 23, 7 p. m.<sup>69</sup>), whose effective resistance on the French Armistice Commission to many German demands was of considerable value, should

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<sup>68a</sup> On October 24, 1940, Marshal Pétain and Hitler conferred at Montoire-sur-Loire and drew up a secret protocol providing for French collaboration in the speedy defeat of Britain in exchange for certain German concessions.

<sup>69</sup> Not printed.

be attributed solely to the B. B. C.'s references to his abilities in this respect.

They also talked of the regrettable lack of any effective direct contact between the Vichy Government and the British, a lack which gives rise to so much possibly avoidable friction and so many misunderstandings. A number of the latter Dupuy attributes to "self-seeking De Gaulle adherents in London whose primary personal interest is to prevent any better understanding with Vichy and whose false or exaggerated stories are too often believed." Dupuy suggested that in spite of the great German suspicion of any direct Franco-British contact better use could be made of the French Legation at Dublin or the French Embassy at Washington. The General's representative stated that "fortunately" the decision to change Henry-Haye has been practically taken and that the "failure to have in Washington an Ambassador who could properly interpret" both Vichy policies to our Government and to the British, and "American policies and opinion," was one of the tragedies of the past year. He brought up the name of General Requin, speaking of the high regard which Weygand has for him. (Embassy's telegram 1021, August 13, 1 p. m.<sup>70</sup> An earlier plan to sound us out with respect to Gaston Bergery whose "collaborationist" and Anglophobe views are well known has, Rochat tells me, been definitely dropped.)

I was told incidentally by Weygand's assistant that Hitler had made it known to the Marshal and his Government that he has a "personal interest and [*in?*] the maintenance [of De Brinon?] in his present office as Ambassador of France and general delegate to the occupying authorities; he is therefore for the moment "untouchable" in spite of Darlan's reported personal desire to replace him by Benoist-Mechin or someone else.

Repeated to Algiers.

MATTHEWS

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740.0011 European War 1939/14149a

*Draft of a Letter From President Roosevelt to Marshal Pétain*<sup>71</sup>

WASHINGTON, [August 21, 1941.]

MY DEAR MARSHAL PÉTAIN: I am writing this entirely informal and confidential letter to you in the belief that it may be easier for me, in this manner, to give you a clear understanding of the position

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<sup>70</sup> Not printed.

<sup>71</sup> Submitted to the President by the Under Secretary of State (Welles) in a letter dated August 18, 1941, not printed. According to a memorandum by the President in the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park this draft was approved on August 21.

of the Government of the United States and of the American people in matters relating to the integrity of the French Empire.

The Government of the United States recognizes the limitations imposed upon the French Government in Metropolitan France by the Armistice provisions. It is, however, of the utmost importance to the United States that the continued exercise by France of jurisdiction over the territory of French North Africa and over all French colonies remain unimpaired inasmuch as only in such manner can there be afforded complete assurance of security to the Western Hemisphere insofar as the regions mentioned are concerned.

It, therefore, remains the consistent desire of the United States that there be no infringement of French sovereign control over these territories, provided of course that such control remains in reality purely French, and completely unimpaired.

I repeat that so long as these conditions obtain, the Government of the United States has no desire to see existing French sovereignty over French North Africa or over any of France's colonies changed or infringed.

This policy of the United States I made emphatically clear in the message which I addressed on July 10 [7] to the Congress of the United States<sup>72</sup> concerning the steps which had been taken to assist the people of Iceland in the defense of the integrity and independence of their country.

I feel sure that there has never been any doubt in your own mind with regard to this question and that the questions which have been raised with regard thereto in the press have had their origin in false reports deliberately circulated by propaganda emanating from governments which have desired to impair the traditional relations between our two countries.

For all of the reasons I have mentioned above, this Government will view with lively gratification any steps which have been or may be taken by your Government to prevent German penetration into French North Africa or other French possessions and to strengthen their defense so as to render any surprise attack by Germany, or powers cooperating with Germany, less likely of success.

Because of the belief of this Government that it is the desire of the French Government that any efforts on the part of Germany or on the part of the governments associated with her to extend their control over French colonies be prevented, I have authorized the participation of this Government in such arrangements as the North African trade agreement in order to make clear the desire of the American people and of their Government to do what may be possible to relieve the economic distress of the populations in those areas. I hope that con-

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<sup>72</sup> Department of State *Bulletin*, July 12, 1941, p. 15.

ditions may continue to make it possible for this Government to participate in such measures.

I have felt it desirable to clarify the situation completely and frankly in order to have the assurance that there may not be the slightest misunderstanding between you and myself.

May I add that it is a source of great gratification to me that Admiral Leahy is accredited to you and is in a position to explain to you the full measure of American determination to carry out our present program looking toward ultimate defeat of the forces of aggression typified by Germany and its associates. Admiral Leahy is fully informed as to the extent of our progress. I hope that you are relying on him for your judgment as to the determination of the United States and the American people in this world crisis, as I am confident that he is in a unique position to give you the true facts with regard to our armament effort.

With the assurances of my highest consideration and of my personal regard, believe me

Yours very sincerely,

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740.00112 European War 1939/3249 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, August 26, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received August 26—4: 45 p. m.]

1088. Murphy's telegram 413, August 16, 12 midnight, from Algiers and Department's 238, August 7, 10 p. m., to Murphy at Casablanca.<sup>73</sup> We are told by a high official of the Finance Ministry and a representative of the Economic Division of the Armistice Commission in whom we have full confidence that the Germans have now made suggestions that they too would like to supply French North Africa with certain goods that it needs. The list thereof would include certain types of machinery and cotton textiles. In return they would hope to receive North African products, particularly minerals. The French, they said, have merely told the Germans that they would study the question.

This German move our informants attribute to anxiety at the moral effect of our program of supplying North Africa and its great success. The Germans feel, said our informants, that the growing appreciation, especially on the part of the natives, of what our help means to that area may seriously affect such designs and aspirations as they themselves may have there.

Repeated to Algiers, Casablanca and Tangier.

LEAHY

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<sup>73</sup> Neither printed.

740.0011 European War 1939/14470 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, August 28, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received 10:10 p. m.]

433. From Murphy. General Weygand's diplomatic officer called my attention this morning to American radio broadcasts of August 20 (New York 8 p. m. G. M. T.) according to which one of the civilian delegates at Casablanca of the German Armistice Commission (Klaube) is supervising German infiltration into French West Africa. According to the broadcasts Klaube shuttles back and forth between Morocco and Dakar in his private airplane and has conducted "hundreds" of Germans to that area where they supervise and control the activities of all French officials.

Count de Rose <sup>73a</sup> said that when such fantastic stories come over the De Gaulle and even the British radio they are regarded as unimportant and mendacious propaganda but that when they are taken up and broadcast by the American radio they are greatly deplored and it is felt they are really harmful. He said "As your consular officers in Morocco can confirm Klaube has no private plane, he does not go to French West Africa, Germans are not going there. General Weygand has assured you repeatedly that there are no Germans in that area. We will be grateful if you will advise your Government appropriately."

Repeated to Vichy, Tangier and Casablanca. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/14486 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, August 28, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received August 29—5:45 a. m.]

435. From Murphy. General Weygand informs this morning that there is no foundation for yesterday's radio reports regarding the appointment of General Huntziger to command military forces in French Africa, replacing Weygand, who would be relegated to a civilian administrative capacity. There is no change in Weygand's status; he remains in command of the military forces in French Africa. There are changes in the staff. General Odet in command in Tunisia is transferred to Toulouse and replaced by General De Lattre de Tassigny; General Beynet commanding in Algeria is replaced by General Koeltz who has been with the Direction des Services Armistice. Gen-

<sup>73a</sup> Adjutant to General Weygand.

eral Juin, who has been Adjoint in Command, becomes General in Command of the troops in Morocco. I am told that Weygand fully approves of these changes.

Repeated to Vichy, Tangier, Casablanca, Tunis. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/14875

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Charles W. Lewis, Jr., of the  
Division of Near Eastern Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] August 28, 1941.

Participants: Lieutenant Colonel Robert A. Solborg, MID, War  
Department.

Mr. Murray

Mr. Villard

Mr. Lewis

Colonel Solborg stated that when he arrived in French North Africa in February the feeling of the officials and others toward the United States was very friendly but that toward the end of about three months the attitude of the French toward us began to cool. This, he said, was due to disappointment resulting from the failure of economic assistance from the United States to arrive and afterwards to reach the expected proportions and also because this Government had shown no active interest in extending military assistance, in the form of matériel or otherwise, to French North Africa.

He commented that the fighting spirit in that area had fallen to a very low level and that it had now become clearly apparent, in view of the prevailing weariness and the lack of heart for further struggle, combined with relatively satisfactory economic conditions and the absence of the pinch of war in an acute form, that there can be little hope of a resurrection of a will to fight. The general attitude, he said, is that, for the French, the war is over and that nothing can be done to alter the fact of their defeat. He stated that this attitude had been, in fact, encouraged by the authorities, who likewise had also taken severe measures to suppress those who ardently wished to continue to keep alive a combat organization. He said that while General Weygand had repeatedly stated that he would defend North Africa against all comers he was convinced that this was an empty boast. General Weygand knows the weakness of the North African forces and realizes that a defense against the Germans could last but a few days. The Army, at first puzzled by the confusion of events, has now settled down to a peaceful routine and is therefore no longer in an expectant mood. The soldiers were told by high ranking officers that the "jig was up" and that since no help from the United States,

the only possible source of help, could be expected revenge must be dismissed from their minds. General Weygand, disappointed, has done much, the Colonel stated, to further this forlorn view.

He said that while General Weygand undoubtedly knew of the plans and the statement of needs of the military forces in North Africa which had been transmitted to this Government he had taken no active part in their formulation. When the United States failed to react he was keenly disappointed. The General will not commit himself to a course of independent action without an absolute assurance of adequate help from the United States. If given orders to fight an American invasion he would resign, and he would resign also, Colonel Solborg said, if instructed by Vichy to surrender African bases to the Axis. If called upon to resist the Germans he would say that he has not the forces or material to do so. He is not anti-British, but at the same time he expects nothing good from the British.

There is, however, Colonel Solborg said, a general anti-British feeling in French North Africa. This is particularly so among the officer personnel of the Navy. The Navy, however, has little regard for Darlan. The feeling of the naval officers toward Americans is one of mixed emotions. Generally, they are not particularly cordial, this being due to the knowledge that the United States is supporting Great Britain, the defeat of which country seems to be ardently desired notwithstanding the knowledge that Britain's defeat would end all hope of a free and independent France. Colonel Solborg attributed this paradoxical attitude toward the British to such emotions, a humiliation over the defeat of the French and jealousy of the French toward the British for having continued the struggle.

Basically, Colonel Solborg said, the French are anti-German, but they know what the German war and peace aims are. These aims may be bad in many respects, but at least the French know that if Germany is victorious they will not return to the corrupt political system of pre-war days and will not be subjected to the machinations of "international Jewry". As they see matters now, they have only a choice of "Jewry" if the British win and of the Boches if the Germans win, and as between the two they prefer the latter. The Colonel thought that the recent eight-point declaration of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill<sup>74</sup> might have served a useful purpose in outlining the war and peace aims of the Democracies but he doubted if the declaration was sufficiently detailed or concrete to clarify French minds and dispel all of their doubts.

Colonel Solborg said that while Marshal Petain is still sacrosanct to most French people it is noticeable that his personality is now

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<sup>74</sup> Atlantic Charter, August 14, 1941, vol. 1, p. 367.



beginning to be questioned. One reason for this is the growing realization, or belief, that the Armistice was a mistake. Both Petain and Weygand shared the responsibility of the Armistice and so are now beginning to reap the results of an erroneous decision.

Colonel Solborg said that there was little sentiment in French North Africa in favor of General de Gaulle. While generally regarded as an able tactical officer he lacks the sympathetic personality required, under French standards, for a great leader. Moreover, he is held responsible for many of the British blunders because of bad advice which he is believed to have given the British. It is thought that he would never be accepted generally by the French as a leader. On the other hand, there is some respect for such of his subordinates as Catroux, de Larminat and Gentilhomme.

Questioned as to his reactions to the plan for extending economic assistance to French North Africa, Colonel Solborg said that the plan had one considerable advantage in that it keeps the door open in that area for American observers but that, on the other hand, the plan would not suffice to revive the fighting spirit of the French in North Africa or to induce the authorities to resist the Germans. The assistance should, he said, have been started earlier and should have been ampler to prevent the discouragement which has taken possession of the French in that region. He said that Vichy and the French Navy are not receptive to our economic assistance and are disposed to defeat it, or at any rate Vichy wishes to give it no publicity and thereby prevent, as far as possible, the natives knowing from whence the assistance comes. So far as the plan's effect on building up resistance in North Africa to German propaganda is concerned, such effect is limited because of the factor just noted, but in any case, he added, when the Germans are ready to move they will invade North Africa and the economic assistance now being given will in no way affect the situation.

Colonel Solborg said that he estimates that there are perhaps one hundred and fifty Germans in French Morocco in addition to the members of the Armistice Commission. These Germans, he explained, are mostly ex-soldiers of the French Foreign Legion. There are no Germans or Italians in Dakar and the French Sudan. The police in French Morocco are efficient and are implacable in their determination to destroy all contacts between natives and German agents. The loyalty of El Glaoui, Pasha of Marrakesh, to the French depends entirely upon what he can gain by the attachment, and likewise his present pro-British feelings will continue only so long as it is advantageous to him or there is a prospect of his being able to gain some-

thing from the British. He is equally mercenary, the Colonel stated, with respect to the United States.

Colonel Solborg stated that when he arrived at Dakar the sentiment at that place toward Great Britain and the United States was bitter. Fearful of another attack, the authorities were on the alert and were resolved to defend the city against all comers. However, after the arrival of the tanker *Schéhérazade* carrying oil supplies for that area the feeling toward the United States improved considerably. He expressed the opinion that Casablanca is of far greater strategic importance to the United States than Dakar and would be much easier to take. Dakar could, he said, be largely neutralized by the capture of Casablanca. He felt that no serious French resistance would be encountered in taking the city but admitted that such a move on the part of the British or Americans would probably precipitate a German move into North Africa, the Russian campaign notwithstanding.

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740.0011 European War 1939/14542: Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, August 29, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received August 30—7:10 a. m.]

296. Following repeated to Vichy, Casablanca, and Algiers:

I had a family dinner with Monick the 27th when he informed me he had received news, in the most brutal way, that morning of his recall. He added that the communiqué issued on the subject was untrue when it stated that he had been called to new and important functions; the fact was that he would return as Inspector of Finance and would probably be "buried" in some town in France.

He was not downhearted or at least affected not to be. He asked that his friends be informed that he had never varied from the conviction in an ultimate victory of the Allies. He was gratified that he had been able to do as much as he had, recalling that due to his delaying tactics the Germans had not been able to have any cobalt shipments from Morocco. He expressed deepest regret that he would be deprived of contacts with his American friends. He hoped, despite the difficulties with which he would be faced, to maintain occasional contact with Matthews in Vichy and he would continue to do what he could for the reintegration of his country and for the ultimate triumph of the ends for which we had all been working.

He added he had just forwarded a report to Vichy stressing that the continuance [of] our economic aid was a matter of life and death for French North Africa (he hoped to be able to communicate a copy

of the report to us before leaving). The fact that he, as public enemy number one of the Germans in Morocco, had finally been ejected for his identification with the economic aid program was proof that the plan was anathema to the Germans and that it was serving American as well as French interests in North Africa. He begged me to emphasize that and to state that we should by all means continue the economic aid so long as Weygand remained in control in North Africa. He said Darlan had endeavored to have himself appointed as Chief of all French military naval and air forces but Weygand had opposed this successfully when he was last in Vichy. Weygand had asked Darlan "You mistrust then our forces" and the reply had been, yes. Darlan and Weygand were now at daggers' ends.

Monick considers Weygand has gained greatly in moral stature and that he now commands an influence second only to Petain in North Africa as well as in France. He feels Petain is crumbling and cites his last speech as his own confession of failure.

He believes France will be faced shortly by terrible inflation which will add to existing confusion there.

We heard by radio news of the attack on Laval and Deat.<sup>75</sup> The universal comment in Rabat on the news of their escape was "what a pity."

Monick is leaving in about 10 days. He will see Weygand and Murphy in Algiers.

The next day I discussed Monick's recall briefly with three of the higher officials in Rabat. Monick has been on indifferent terms with Noguès for several months (probably because Noguès considered he gave first loyalty to Weygand) and I gathered from these officials that Monick's going was at Noguès' request. It is my belief from the suggestions they let drop that Noguès for reasons of prudence rather than policy wished to disassociate himself from one who had been so closely identified with us and the British as Monick.

CHILDS

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740.0011 European War 1939/14545 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, August 29, 1941—midnight.

[Received August 30—11:20 a. m.]

300. While I was in Rabat announcement was made of the appointment of General Juin as commander of French military forces in Morocco. He will take office September 13.

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<sup>75</sup> Marcel Déat, editor of the French newspaper *L'Oeuvre*, under German control.

It was announced on the 27th by the British Broadcasting Company that Noguès was being relieved of his military functions and was being replaced in them by Juin. This is quite incorrect as Noguès was relieved of such functions some time ago and these have been exercised by General Vergez. When Juin was sent to Morocco a few weeks ago it was with a view to his replacement of the former who was on the verge of retirement.

Monick described Juin as very able and very prudent and all the other estimates obtained of him were favorable.

By mail to Algiers and Casablanca.

CHILDS

740.0011 European War 1939/14470 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, September 3, 1941—7 p. m.

234. Your 433, August 28, 2 p. m. For Murphy. The Coordinator of International Broadcasting has investigated this report carefully and ascertains that it was based on an Associated Press despatch from London of the same date. Richardson has enjoined the broadcasters once again to use the greatest care in their references to North Africa.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/14697 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Casablanca (Russell) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, September 4, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received September 5—4 a. m.]

440. The Chief of Staff of the division whose headquarters are at Casablanca informed Mayer in answer to the latter's question that the war material being shipped from this port to Dakar was released by the Germans following representations by the French that their inability to defend Syria had been due to the lack of sufficient equipment. The French who were of course delighted to regain possession of some of the material stored under German surveillance following the Armistice had made the most, he added smilingly, of the American threat on Dakar.

Colonel Moll also said that the members of the German Armistice Commission in Casablanca are very discouraged over the turn of events in Russia and that reports received from Tunisia indicated that the Italians did not seem to think that they would be able to resist the anticipated British offensive in Tripoli. The Colonel is confident

that within 2 or 3 months the Axis forces will have been driven out of North Africa and feels that when this has occurred, the political position of France vis-à-vis Germany will be much stronger than at present. The Germans, he thinks, are realizing that French collaboration is not sincere (it is difficult for the French not to show pleasure as well as surprise at the strength of the Russian Army) and are not likely to release much more war material for shipment to Dakar or elsewhere. French policy, he admitted frankly, was opportunist but necessarily so and he personally had no doubt about what French reaction would be if the United States ever could and did offer 3000 planes and 3 or more divisions "in North Africa". Incidentally, he could not understand our alleged interest in Dakar. How could we get anywhere from there?

Moll was certain that reports which have reached the Consulate that the number of Germans attached to the Armistice Commission here had been materially reduced were incorrect. He did confirm, however, that German effectives in France were very substantially smaller than they had been. He had even heard that three Italian divisions had been sent to Alsace to replace German forces. He added that the German commission here was making strenuous efforts to enlist Germans and other central Europeans who were serving or who had served in the Foreign Legion. They were not meeting with much success, however, even among ex-legionnaires who were incorporated in labor battalions in the east of Morocco and living under very primitive conditions.

RUSSELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/14805 : Telegram

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

VICHY, September 8, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 4: 47 p. m.]

1150. We have received the visit of an intelligent representative of the Foreign Office on the French Armistice delegation at Paris, who expressed the conviction that in the month of October the Germans will again exert pressure and in a much more insistent form to obtain concessions in French North Africa. The initial demand, he believes from his conversations in Paris, will be for landing rights at Bizerte and transit privileges through Tunisia, probably with the usual worthless German assurances that in such case Algeria and Morocco will not be affected. He went on to express the further belief, or fear, that the pressure will be such that the Marshal and his Government may yield. He sees, he says, only one way to forestall such collapse: Clear notice and *public* notice by the United States that at

the first sign we would move to occupy Casablanca, Dakar or other positions on the coast of Africa, either alone or if jointly with the British, with emphasis that the initiative is ours. If the French Government and the French people, he said, become convinced that any yielding to Germany in Africa will mean a complete break with the United States and a definite naval and military move against French Africa, they may not dare to give way.

If the French Government and the French people, he continued, realize that concessions to the Germans in Africa will make that area a battleground of the future, that the pride of the French colonial empire will be destroyed by the ravages of war, they will at least pause for some hard thinking. It is he says just a question of pressure and counterpressure; and a firm attitude on our part will make French resistance to German demands much easier.

Such a threat might likewise, he went on, if the Germans believe we are serious, mean that Hitler will not insist: If they believe that we can and will move into African bases and will be thus brought openly into the war against them, they will hesitate. Furthermore he said the Germans know that occupation of African bases by the United States would mean the loss to them of the battle of the Atlantic; and there is in addition a real German dread of "encirclement" with a battle front running from the sands of the Sahara through Russia to the White Sea, and the United States as an active enemy. "They eagerly seek" he said "an open break between France and the United States, but they still strive to prevent your coming in against them."

He went on to say that he did not know of course whether the state of American public opinion or our military situation would permit the adoption of such a policy and he strongly cautioned against any attempt "to bluff." He emphasized that words are not enough to act as an effective deterrent: "The words of your President and Secretary of State are excellent but the only thing the Vichy Government understands is acts. It is all very well to argue that France will need American friendship at the peace conference but that may be a long way off and the only thing that interests our Government—and for that matter, to a great extent, the French people—is what is going to happen in the immediate future. It is only if the Government here is convinced that you have the force and will use it effectively that it will really listen to you."

(The foregoing views are reported merely as coming from a responsible French official who has had much contact with the German authorities. As the Department is aware, there is division of opinion in Vichy as to the probability and extent of renewed German pressure for facilities in North Africa: The final attitude of the Marshal, of his

Government and of General Weygand in the face of such pressure, if and when it materializes, is the all-important question mark of the day. Meanwhile the momentary "lull" in Vichy's foreign relations continues.)

Repeated to Algiers.

MATTHEWS

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740.00112 European War 1939/3386 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, September 9, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 4:47 p. m.]

451. From Murphy. Theodore Auer, German civilian Armistice Commission delegate to French Morocco, left Algiers this morning for Vichy and Paris. I am informed confidentially that he will discuss with the competent French and German authorities a German proposal to supply Morocco with textiles, various types of machinery including mining machinery and other commodities. Weygand's services state they have lent a deaf ear to German suggestions along this line for some weeks past but they are apprehensive that the Germans will find support both on the part of certain French industrialists as well as members of the Government at Vichy.

Repeated to Vichy, true reading by courier to Casablanca, Tangier, Tunis. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/14942

*The Counselor of Embassy in France (Murphy), Temporarily at Algiers, to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

ALGIERS, September 11, 1941.

DEAR MR. UNDER SECRETARY: I should like at this time to refer to your telegram No. 234 of August 6, 1941, in which you expressed the hope that it might shortly be possible to furnish concrete evidence of our Government's desire to resist the forces of aggression, making reference to the developing situation in North Africa.

There is a mounting conviction here that if and when things flare up in Cyrenaica, General Weygand will be faced with some difficult decisions. If the Libyan campaign develops in the manner visualized by some military experts in this area, German pressure on Marshal Petain's Government for the use of Tunisia and possibly other French North African territory may become exceedingly difficult for that Government to resist. The position of General Weygand would then become acute.

It goes without saying that if, at that critical moment, you would be able to convey to him definite assurances of support, his determination to resist would be immeasurably strengthened. To be effective such assurances should be substantial and should specify the quantities of matériel as well as the time lag in delivery which would be contemplated. In my conversations with him I find him eager for information as to American ability to play a role in this area, and unflagging in his determination to oppose German pressure.

Such assurances would provide General Weygand with every opportunity to profit by American assistance. By the same token he could not thereafter, even if he so desired, claim inability due to lack of means to resist aggression.

I presume that in such an eventuality at the critical moment you would instruct Ambassador Leahy to intervene with the Marshal's Government suggesting that French concession of Mediterranean or Atlantic bases might lead to war with the United States.

If that is so and I could be authorized to repeat the message to General Weygand, it would be well at such time to convey to him something along the following lines:

"When you recommended to the French Government last year that it sue for an armistice, we believe that you were convinced that only in such manner, refraining from further concession, could France save its Empire. In that belief the United States decided to cooperate with you in a plan for the economic assistance of French North Africa.

"If the French Government is now unable to adhere to the objective for which it signed the Armistice Convention, it would mark a dangerous departure from the basis you recommended.

"As far as the United States is concerned, it is believed that our vital interests are threatened, and we are decided to act should France lend Mediterranean or Atlantic bases to the aggressor powers. We have at our disposal the means of decisive action. We believe that it is in France's interest that they be used in friendly support of the French Empire. It rests with you to decide whether they will be used with or without you."

Respectfully yours,

ROBERT D. MURPHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/15003: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, September 12, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received 8:15 p. m.]

1170. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. I delivered the President's letter dated August 21, to the Marshal this morning. Ad-



miral Darlan was present, and after reading the Embassy's French translation to himself, the Marshal stated that since it concerned questions of policy also in Admiral Darlan's domain he should like to read it aloud, and did so.

The Marshal remarked to Admiral Darlan that since the letter was personal and confidential it should be kept so and not communicated to the Germans. He then went on to say that he has no intention of ceding any bases in Africa to the Germans, but that France is in the position of a conquered country and he never knows "when the *diktat* may come" which would affect North Africa. The Marshal continued that he has not changed his original position in regards to the use of French bases or the use of the French fleet to assist the Axis Powers, and that he will not agree to such use, although he has not sufficient power to prevent seizure of the bases if Germany should use its military power for that purpose.

Admiral Darlan said that it is necessary for France to assume a give-and-take attitude in the matter of providing food for German forces in Libya via Bizerte, but that he will not agree to use of African bases for military purposes.

The Marshal then turned to Darlan for his comments. Darlan stated that there are two ways for the Germans to get into Africa: One through Bizerte, which he thought would be quite difficult in view of the strong British naval forces in that area, and the Germans are not likely therefore to undertake it; and the second through Southern Spain to Spanish Morocco, which would be, "in view of German mastery of the air, impossible to prevent." Gibraltar he said could easily be neutralized. His son, on a recent motor trip, saw 132 long range batteries of artillery on the road through Cadiz and Seville. On the other hand, he does not think that the Germans have any intention at the present time of any move against the Atlantic coast of Africa; it is not, he said, to their interest to make such a move; at any event, they have not gone into Spain yet, and for either route to Africa the French would have prior notice. The Germans are however suspicious he said of American activities in Africa and have consequently recently reinforced their Armistice Commission personnel in that area, thus continuing what he described as a "vicious circle of mutual mistrust of each other's intentions by the United States and Germany in Africa." He hoped, he said, that the President would understand the difficulties of his, Darlan's position: That for 3 months he has "refused" to grant the Germans the right to ship foodstuffs across Tunis to Libya, but he does not know when "he may be forced to yield." He has to "maneuver" and to give way on what he termed "minor points" in order to hold out on major questions, and he hoped this policy of give and take would be understood.

If he resists when pressure is renewed—he indicated there is none being exerted at the present moment—he may then be threatened with a military occupation of Bizerte against which “the French could not long hold out.” (He made no commitment, however, that any attempt to resist by force would in fact be made.) If he does reject this demand under such a threat, he said, it would bring about the very situation which the United States is anxious to avoid: German occupation of North Africa. The Marshal made no comment on Darlan’s reference to the possible passage of German foodstuffs through Tunis. Darlan added that land transport facilities are so deficient that he is sure the Germans could ship very little through that French colony.

Both the Marshal and Darlan then discussed a situation which is apparently very much present in their minds, namely, “the Gaullist and Communist” efforts to stir up trouble, particularly in the occupied zone, and to weaken the Marshal’s Government. Darlan said that the London Gaullist radio, which is “tolerated” by the British, by attacking the Marshal personally (he also referred to attacks on himself and, while ostensibly making light of them, it was quite clear that he resents them bitterly) and endeavoring to “incite revolution” against the Marshal’s Government is merely playing into the hands of the Germans. It might result, he said, if continued, in a complete occupation of the country and, once in Marseille and Toulon, the Germans “could proceed on into North Africa with nothing to stop them.” This he said would be disadvantageous to American and to British interests, as would be the replacement of the Marshal or himself, or a France torn by internal strife and turmoil. He is not asking that the British and American radios praise the Marshal and himself—in fact, such praise would prove a handicap—but merely that they refrain from personal attacks and inciting the population to revolt. He asked that this point be emphasized to the President “who must have, or should have, considerable influence with the British”. The Marshal broke in here to say: “Please tell the President that so long as the British tolerate De Gaulle and his activities, there can be no better understanding between them and ourselves,” and he reiterated, as he has so frequently in the past, that De Gaulle who was one time on his general staff is “a viper that he had warmed in his bosom”.

I then asked the Marshal if he had yet read the President’s address of last evening,<sup>75b</sup> and he said merely a few brief extracts. I handed him an English copy and will follow it with a French translation. I emphasized the importance and pertinence of the President’s address and summarized its purport.

<sup>75b</sup> Department of State *Bulletin*, September 13, 1941, p. 193.

As we were leaving the Marshal asked that I convey his appreciation of the letter and his high personal regards to the President. He indicated that a written reply will be made and that it will be transmitted through me. Darlan said privately that as he is leaving this evening for the south and will not be back in Vichy until Tuesday "there will be necessarily a few days delay in the reply."

I should like to say that I consider the President's letter extremely timely. It should serve to make our position abundantly clear and tend to encourage and facilitate resistance by the Marshal within the very definite limits of which he is capable.

This telegram has not been repeated to Murphy.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/14149½

*The French Chief of State (Pétain) to President Roosevelt*<sup>76</sup>

[Translation]

VICHY, September 17, 1941.

MR. PRESIDENT AND DEAR FRIEND: I thank you most sincerely for having been good enough to explain to me, with all the clarity permissible in a personal communication, the position of the United States Government and the American people with regard to the question of the integrity of the French Empire.

I was particularly happy to find in your letter that spirit of true candor and friendly understanding which, in the tragic events through which the world is passing, should make it possible to prevent any misunderstanding between our two countries, equally dedicated to the maintenance of the relations by which they are traditionally united.

I am, therefore, very sincerely gratified to note the desire of the American Government that there should be no change in or encroachment upon the present French sovereignty in North Africa or in any French colony as long as France exercises sovereign and absolute control over those territories. This affirmation happily puts an end to certain rumors, which are undoubtedly of tendentious origin but have been echoed publicly in the statements of prominent Americans, regarding alleged strategic needs that may bring into question the situation in French overseas territories.

As regards the maintenance by France of the exercise of all her sovereign rights over the territories of French North Africa and over all French colonies, I repeat most categorically that the French Government has always been and is still determined to ensure respect for

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<sup>76</sup> Transmitted to the Under Secretary of State by Ambassador Leahy in a letter dated September 18, 1941; received October 27.

those rights against any attack. Its determination to do this is still as firm and it has given indisputable proof thereof in many instances.

Allow me to observe, however, that the only attacks which the territories subject to the authority or sovereignty of France have had to suffer were made by British armed forces or by French rebels openly supported by those forces, unjustified attacks which in certain cases resulted in military occupation and which, in spite of their obviously violent character, gave rise to no condemnation or even censure in American governing circles.

These acts of aggression can only confirm the French Government in its determination to strengthen all the means of defense at its disposal to ensure respect for its rights; and I can assure you that the Government considers it its first duty to oppose with all its force anything that might imperil the maintenance of its sovereignty over the territories in its charge.

But, as you yourself point out, France is at present bound by two armistice conventions which impose upon her certain obligations limiting her freedom of action, especially as regards the disposition of her military forces. In this connection, she must suffer the presence in North Africa of control commissions whose authorization is required before undertaking any strengthening of the means of military defense. The presence of these commissions cannot be invoked to cast doubt on the sincerity of the efforts which the French Government is supporting to increase, more particularly in Africa, its means of resistance against any attempted attack on its sovereignty and its rights.

However, since you are good enough to adapt an attitude of complete candor, allow me in turn to express myself freely. I shall not bring up again the sad chapter, referred to above, of the English attacks of which France has been the victim. But I wish to call your personal attention to the tragic situation in which England's hostile, not to say inhuman, lack of understanding places our unfortunate European and native populations in Djibouti; I refuse to believe that the American Government and people can remain indifferent to the fate of this handful of men, whose heroic loyalty to their country cannot threaten any British interest.

I desire even more deeply, on the occasion of this free exchange of views, which I thank you for having initiated, to protest most indignantly against the odious efforts being made more relentlessly every day by British propaganda to disorder in France. I shall not dwell on the gross insults which the British Government has allowed to be circulated about me and my colleagues. But it is my duty to resist with all my force everything that might divide the French at a time when misfortune compels us to be more united than in any other period of our history. It is my duty to denounce to the President of

the great friendly American Republic a systematically hostile campaign which may affect not only the French internal situation but also basic American interests. The outbreak of disorders in France would without any doubt cause, in a form and within limits impossible to foresee, the intervention of the German armed forces and an extension of the occupation which would run directly counter to the basic American interests so clearly defined in your letter.

I have replied to your letter of August 21, as you asked me to do, with complete frankness and complete sincerity. This reply will, I hope, give you all the assurances that you expected. Rest assured that it is inspired solely by my very high esteem for you personally and by fidelity to the bonds of traditional friendship that unite our two peoples. I am happy to entrust my reply to the care of Admiral Leahy, who is serving here with such devotion the cause of Franco-American friendship and who will always be sure of receiving from Admiral Darlan and me the consideration due him for his sure judgment and the extent of his knowledge alone, even if I did not know the special confidence with which you honor him.

I beg you to accept [etc.]

P. PÉTAIN

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740.00112 European War 1939/3479a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, September 18, 1941—7 p. m.

704. There is a growing desire in this country to criticize our North African policy in spite of the fact that to date only 2 tankers and 2 cargo vessels have left this country after months of negotiation.

At the present moment the French authorities here are bargaining to increase French tonnage available for this North African service and likewise pressing the Treasury for increasingly substantial releases of blocked French funds to finance contemplated exports. The issues involved have broadened into the several interested Government departments including the War and Navy Departments and are approaching major Government policy. While in theory the British are participating in these North African negotiations in reality the British Ministry of Economic Warfare is also the spokesman for those elements in the British Government who only give lip service agreement.

The principal points on which the criticism is based are:

- (1) The reported large quantities of supplies proceeding from North Africa to continental France and eventually to Germany and Italy.
- (2) The recurring reports of trucks and war materials delivered or requisitioned under the terms of the Armistice Convention by German

military authorities in North Africa. Frequently these are alleged to be used for strengthening the Axis North African forces.

(3) The constantly repeated stories emanating from Vichy sources that there is to be a shift of personnel in North Africa with the elimination of all French officials not 100-percent collaborationists.

(4) Frequent reports that the Vichy Government intends some sort of punitive campaign against French Equatorial Africa.

(5) Lastly but most important the reported fortifying of Atlantic bases particularly Dakar with men and material (under German initiative) in a way which can only be interpreted as a threat to this hemisphere.

Point number 5 is stressed today as of particular importance since the French never made military preparations against German use of military air bases in Syria, nor did the French resist Japanese encroachment into Indochina. In connection with this latter the French Ambassador has stated in press interviews here that he is constantly urging upon us the necessity for safeguarding French possessions in Indochina in any negotiations this country may undertake as regards the Far East. All the above is also in face of current reports reaching here that the French are prepared to turn over bases, specifically Bizerta, to Germany and can offer no military resistance to a German occupation of North Africa.

As an example of steps taken to strengthen the military situation in the African territories, a well-authenticated report states that the garrison of French West Africa has recently increased by 8,000 men transferred from French North Africa. On September 10, 1941 the total garrison was estimated at 74,000 men. Furthermore, that among substantial supplies of all types recently sent to Dakar from North Africa, with some quantities from Marseille, were 900 tons of ammunition, 160 tons aviation bombs, 6,000 tons aviation gasoline (from French sources), an unknown quantity of crated planes and parts, 35 medium tanks, building materials for coast defenses, barracks, and airfields. It is reported eight airfields are in process of construction at Louga and that further defense installations are planned. All of this equipment and work represents obviously a large outlay.

While, of course, I do not necessarily consider it desirable to use this detailed information, I thought it of interest to you to be informed of these operations. We are much more concerned with the broad question of attitude and policies rather than the actual operations. We are requesting your judgment in this situation which, to public opinion here, is rapidly deteriorating and coming more and more under German domination. I think you might very well ask the French authorities whether there is any good reason for undertaking these military operations at great expense other than to serve the purpose of Hitler's program and to create an atmosphere of threat to this hemisphere.

Please repeat this telegram to Murphy with any comment you may care to make. We desire both your opinions based on the above-outlined situation.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/3519 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, September 25, 1941—4 p. m.  
[Received September 26—6:50 a. m.]

1225. Department's telegram 704, September 18, 7 p. m. Careful consideration has been given to the highly important question of policy presented in the Department's telegram under reference. I may wish to supplement this telegram after receipt of Murphy's views and after further conversations with high officials of the French Government. Meanwhile, since the problem presented appears to be of urgency the following is submitted:

As to the five specific points of criticism:

1. As the Department is aware from previous telegrams (for instance, Embassy's telegram 251, February 28, 8 p. m.<sup>77</sup>) under specific agreement with Germany certain percentages of colonial products ranging from 12½ percent to 50 percent arriving at Marseille are to be delivered to Germany. The French Government has not concealed the general terms of this agreement from us. Actual deliveries of such products as palm oil, peanut oil, and phosphates, we understand, have fallen far under the original estimates owing to transport and other difficulties in getting the products to Marseille. (The Department will recall that in return Germany was to furnish France with certain quantities of potatoes and sugar which have likewise been far below the amounts promised.) In addition, however, there seems little doubt that in practice substantial percentages of foodstuffs arriving from overseas eventually find their way from Marseille to Germany. This seems particularly true of Algerian wine and mutton. The same applies to such raw materials as crude rubber (some 1,700 tons which arrived at Marseille, as the Embassy has previously reported) and probably Algerian wool. The Germans apparently operate largely through purchase made by private French intermediaries rather than through official direct requisitions so that reliable estimates are difficult to obtain.

I feel that there is probably some exaggeration as to the quantities of colonial products obtained by the Germans at Marseille, but there is no doubt that there is considerable leakage.

2. Of the reports of deliveries of trucks and other materials to German military authorities in North Africa, Murphy is in a better position to furnish the exact figures than I can ascertain in Vichy. His previous telegrams have indicated that trucks in quantity have been

<sup>77</sup> Not printed.

delivered from North Africa. Weygand seems to resist such deliveries to the best of his ability.

3. The stories which the Department states emanate "from Vichy sources" as to a wholesale shift of personnel in North Africa are, as far as I can learn, grossly exaggerated. (It would be helpful in my search for information to know just who these sources are if the Department is in a position to inform me.) Careful investigation leads me to believe that, while there have been and necessarily will be changes in personnel, they are not on the scale reported, nor are key posts being filled by "100 percent collaborationists". For instance, General Koeltz, who was personally known to a member of my staff and who left Vichy recently to take command in Algiers, was not considered to be pro-German; in fact, his direct contact with Armistice Commission decisions could hardly have led him to have much faith in the possibilities of any real Franco-German collaboration under present conditions. Similarly, reports on General de Lattre de Tassigny, who took over yesterday as Commandant in Tunis, indicate that he is anything but a collaborationist. The reports, as the Department will recall, on General Juin are contradictory though since his arrival to take command in Morocco he does not appear to have shown any collaborationist tendencies and his earlier reported advocacy of views in that direction may have been merely with the object of obtaining his release from a German prison camp.

As against this of course there is the ousting of Monick for whom the Germans have long been gunning and which unquestionably represents a concession to their demands.

4. As the Department is aware, during the period last May and early June when German pressure was at its height, there was much insistence that the French undertake a military operation to retake dissident colonies in Africa. As the Department is also aware, Weygand (and in this he appears to have had Darlan's support) effectively resisted the German demands, or at least succeeded in postponing action thereon, by showing conclusively that any such operation was unfeasible, owing to climatic conditions, prior to October. Investigation here leads me to believe that there is strong opposition, not only from Weygand but also from General Huntziger,<sup>78</sup> to any such movement now. In fact there is considerable reluctance shown here to any plan, inevitably unpopular, which would involve taking the initiative in sending Frenchmen to fight Frenchmen, and it will be remembered that this fratricidal aspect was the principal source of Vichy bitterness over the British move against Syria. (This does not of course in any sense imply that the forces loyal to the Vichy Government will not resist to the full any further Gaullist attack against French West Africa.) In addition to private investigation showing the lack of any such plans for an attack on Africa, my Military Attaché has received an official denial of any such plans at the War Ministry and Rochat has given us a similar denial at the Foreign Office.

5. There is no doubt that the French have for some time, as the Department points out, been strengthening their defenses in West Africa; but official sources, even friendly ones, are of course reluctant

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<sup>78</sup> Gen. Charles Léon Huntziger, French Minister of War.



to talk. We are told by a reliable source that two battalions of the French Foreign Legion have recently arrived at Dakar and that plans are being made to send a Senegalese infantry regiment and a Madagascan engineering battalion by the end of this month. Two anti-tank corps are reported to be in process of formation and are slated to be sent to Dakar as soon as they are completely equipped. Apparently quantities of munitions, aviation bombs and gasoline, as well as bridging materials, have been sent from metropolitan France to Dakar, and the air army units there have also been reinforced. Similarly, work is reported to be progressing on a number of air fields in North Africa, although we have received no official confirmation of this. There is little doubt, in my opinion, that the primary purpose in this military reinforcement of Dakar is to defend that portion of the French Empire from any further De Gaulle or British attack, or if need be, against a similar move by the United States. This seems obvious since a German move would not come from the sea, in view of the distance of Senegal from any present German-occupied base, and would probably not take place until North Africa had been occupied by Axis forces.

It is assumed that America's present attitude toward the African colonies was taken with a thought that when he is faced with a decision, Weygand either with or without the Marshal's orders might determine to resist by force of arms a German move to North Africa; whether this premise proves to be right or wrong—and only time and future events can tell—presumably the quantities of supplies which we are now furnishing French Africa or may furnish in the future are not sufficient to make any appreciable difference in the success or failure of a German attack on that area. To halt or to reverse our North African policy at the present time might have the effect of throwing France completely into German hands.

This moment would, in my opinion, be singularly ill-chosen for such a change which, insofar as we can see from here, promises no advantage to America. Since early June, as I have reported, Vichy has shown some resistance to German demands with respect to North Africa and this resistance seems to be as firm today as it ever was—as German interruption of collaboration negotiations would seem to show. It is due almost entirely to two facts: The strength of Russian resistance and a growing realization not only of the magnitude of our defense effort but of our determination to see a Nazi defeat. For these reasons there has been a considerable evolution of opinion here. As I have reported, the eagerness of the "collaborationists" to hedge has at times been very apparent.

I do not wish in any sense to imply that this change is necessarily permanent. German successes in the Ukraine in the past few days have already given signs of reversing this trend, and Vichy, which began by having no faith in Russian resistance then changed to be-

lieving that country invulnerable, is once more beginning to visualize complete German occupation of the vital Caucasus oil area and all its implications. It is the growing feeling here that within the next month, possibly the next fortnight, German demands for facilities in Africa will be renewed to the accompaniment of dire threats, if not an ultimatum, with probably some proposals for modifying the "severity" of the Armistice Convention terms. What the attitude of the Vichy Government will be at that time depends, to some extent, on the military situation. If there then should be sufficient evidence that Vichy is prepared to grant facilities to Germany in Africa, that Weygand will not resist such a grant with force, a change in our policy would seem necessary, including an immediate stoppage of all shipments and a recall of the Ambassador "for consultation;" and the reasons therefor should be publicly and widely stated. In the meantime, however, pending some evidence or indication that either Marshal Pétain or General Weygand is not prepared at least to refuse *to agree to* German infiltration into Africa or the passage of supplies to the German forces in Libya through Tunis, I feel that we should continue our present program, including Red Cross supplies for children in Free France and hold out hope for its extension.

With reference to the specific question of Bizerta or Tunis, the Department will recall (Embassy's telegram 1170, September 12, 2 p. m.) the intimations of Admiral Darlan, in the Marshal's presence, that the French Government may be compelled to agree to the passage of German "foodstuffs" to Libya. Weygand, we are told by Monick who has just arrived at Vichy, will oppose any such concession, recognizing it for the entering wedge. I feel that it might be well for the Department to instruct me to make it clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that agreement to the extension such facilities will definitely mean the end of all cooperation with French Africa, even if more serious steps are not under consideration. It has been unfortunately, but understandably, in the past the policy of the Vichy Government to yield when the pressure is greatest and in the face of the greatest immediate dangers. In the long run, only through the exercise of strong counter-pressure on our part will the Marshal and his Government be persuaded to resist. As indicated in telegram No. 1150, September 8, 1 p. m., they may even welcome a strong statement of what we can and will do, and use such a statement in the renewal negotiations with the Germans which, according to current reports, will not now be long delayed.

Repeated to Algiers.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/15558 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

[Extracts]

TANGIER, October 1, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received October 2—2:15 p. m.]

315. When I passed through Rabat Monday on my return to Tangier General Noguès who had invited me to informal lunch expressed concern about the delay in the departure of the vessels functioning under the economic accord. He stated the holding up of the vessels here was due [to] the machinations of the Germans and particularly Auer, now in Germany, who was furious over the prestige we were gaining from the economic accord.

Noguès was more cheerful than I have ever found him, a reflection presumably of his strengthened personal situation following his visit to Vichy and apparently of his conviction that our increasing efforts and Russian resistance had spelled the doom of a German victory.

Referring to the strict French measures against French and Moors consorting with the German or Italian Armistice Commissions, Noguès commented "We had to show them that we are masters in Morocco and not the Germans".

Repeated to Vichy, Algiers and Casablanca.

CHILDs

740.0011 European War 1939/15585 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, October 3, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received 4:14 p. m.]

481. From Murphy. Admiral Fenard, who is at present on the staff of General Weygand, formerly commanded the *Dunkerque* and is a close friend to Darlan. He professes sympathy for the British cause but was undoubtedly put on Weygand's staff to protect Darlan's interests. He tells me that Darlan's views on the outcome of the war and French foreign policy have undergone a profound change. He urges that it would be most beneficial if we encouraged Darlan, who now wants to gain American favor.

Another Weygand [apparent omission] put the matter more boldly saying that Darlan having played the German card now sees he was

wrong and wants to change his policy. He does not know how to do so without losing face completely.

The latter contact said that the Germans during the past month have disregarded Darlan. They conduct practically all their conversations on political matters at Paris with Benoist Mechin.<sup>79</sup> The contact declared that until the Marshal discovers a way to rid himself of the four German henchmen—Benoist Mechin on Foreign Affairs, Pucheu<sup>80</sup> in charge of International Affairs and Police, Lehideux<sup>81</sup> in charge of Production and Economics and Marion<sup>82</sup> in charge of the press—French policy fatally will continue on the wrong road.

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

740.00112 European War 1939/3584: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, October 4, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received October 5—12: 18 a. m.]

1267. Department's telegram 704, September 18, 7 p. m. and my telegram 1225, September 25, 4 p. m. The following telegram has been received from Murphy dated October 1, 5 p. m., in 13 sections:

"From Murphy. Your 1225, September 25, 4 p. m., and Department's 704, September 22 [18], 11 a. m. [7 p. m.]. This telegram was delayed due to my absence in Morocco and my desire to discuss some phase of the matter with General Weygand prior to reporting to you.

1. I believe that it should be bluntly stated that whatever reports critics of the economic plan for North Africa may have before them regarding 'large quantities of supplies proceeding to France and eventually Germany and Italy from North Africa,' it is certain that such shipments have never been as low as they are now since the Armistice. Algerian and Tunisian ports are practically stagnant, and shipments out of Casablanca to Europe, I am informed, are far below what they were some months ago. According to the estimate of informed observers, including our Consul General, the port movement at Algiers is approximately but 3 percent to 4 percent of normal, taking 1938 as a normal year. This is likewise true of the ports of Oran, Nemours, Bône, Bougie, Philippeville, etc.

There is no doubt that recently the Germans have exerted increased pressure to obtain minerals from Morocco. French North African authorities deserve credit for maneuvering during a period of months and successfully blocking shipments of minerals which they knew were destined for Germany through French intermediaries. This at a distance may not appear a difficult matter but on closer inspection

<sup>79</sup> Jacques Benoist-Mechin, French Secretary of State in charge of Franco-German relations.

<sup>80</sup> Pierre Pucheu, Minister of the Interior.

<sup>81</sup> François Lehideux, Minister of Industrial Production.

<sup>82</sup> P. Marion, Secretary General of the Office of Information and Propaganda.

it is not trivial. General Weygand, I am reliably informed, flatly refused a recent proposal made by private Japanese interests to French Moroccan authorities for the delivery to Japan of 3,000 to 5,000 tons of cobalt ore by the *Omnium Nord African* on the ground that cooperation with Japan would alienate American public opinion. This was a difficult decision because the deal might have resulted in obtaining a substantial tonnage of Japanese cotton textiles sorely needed by the North African population.

2. I do not believe there is mystery nor bad faith connected with the delivery of war matériel to the Germans and Italians. It is remembered that France suffered an humiliating military defeat ending with the hardest kind of an Armistice Convention. Article 6 of that Convention requires France to preserve certain war matériel (over and above that allowed for the use of the French military establishment) in unoccupied French territory at the disposition of the Axis Powers. The latter's Armistice Commissions made an immediate census in metropolitan France and in North Africa of the matériel available and had it set aside during the months after the Armistice before Weygand's arrival here. In North Africa the matériel so set aside by the Armistice Commissions was kept in depots under their supervision. The Germans and Italians withdraw it when they wish. During the months that elapsed a portion of the matériel, I am informed, was sabotaged. The Department's 325 of September 20, 7 p. m.<sup>83</sup> states that the British complain that, according to their reports, of 1,000 trucks seized by the Axis Commissions in North Africa after the Armistice 450 actually arrived in Libya in working condition. The British regard this as aid extended by General Weygand to the Axis.

The following figures regarding deliveries of automotive matériel to the German and Italian Armistice Commissions in North Africa have been provided confidentially by a member of Weygand's staff: total number of motor vehicles set aside after Armistice: trucks 1,100; passenger cars 275; busses 30. These were taken from French North African military stocks. In addition to the foregoing, 400 trucks were to be delivered from military stocks in metropolitan France to the Tunisian border. Under this application of the Armistice Convention the following deliveries were made up to August 31: motor vehicles from North African military stocks: 581 delivered; 343 ready for delivery; 267 under repair; 94 refused by the Germans; 920 not yet submitted to inspection. Trucks from France: delivered nil; arrived in North Africa 72; inspected and ready for despatch to North Africa 78; in France under inspection 250.

Part of the February 1941 accords entered into by Vichy with the Axis Powers contemplated the delivery to them in Libya of food-stuffs including 110,000 hectoliters of wine (about 10,000 metric tons) and from 40,005,000 [4,000 to 5,000?] tons of wheat monthly beginning with October 1941 or a total of from 40,000 to 50,000 tons of wheat.

Weygand's arguments against such deliveries are bad crops, danger of famine on the part of the native population of French North Africa, no transport facilities. After long discussions the agreements were recently revised at Vichy (this is one of the reasons for Admiral Esteva's recent visit to Vichy) and the French obligation reduced

<sup>83</sup> Not printed.

to deliver a total of 8,000 tons of wheat, 4,000 in October and 4,000 in November. Esteva, Resident General in Tunisia, urged that there are no means of transport overland; that if the Axis wanted the wheat and wine they would have to come by boat to Sfax to get it. The Italians indicate they are afraid of the risk involved.

Weygand said he promised me that if an arrangement is made to send an Italian ship to the port of Sfax to take this produce he will notify me in advance so that the Department may be appropriately informed.

In addition as previously reported 335 tons of olive oil was delivered under the February and March 1941 accords to the Italians in Libya from Tunisia.

The Germans also sent a commission to Algeria as previously reported for the purchase of other foodstuffs for the Afrika Korps but for reasons best known to the French the efforts of the commission failed.

I discussed this phase of the question with General Weygand today. He said the February accords were negotiated by Vichy without consultation with him. He has done his best to prove that they were wrong and oppose their execution. Last February, he said, Admiral Darlan believed in a German victory and felt that there was no alternative but to cooperate with the Axis. He said 'Since then, June, July, August, and September have passed and on October 1 the war in Russia really is just beginning. The German front has broadened from the British Channel to Murmansk, the Caucasus and the Mediterranean basin. The battle of the Atlantic has begun to swing in favor of the British. Darlan has changed with the situation. Last June I had to oppose his readiness to make concessions to the Germans in North Africa. Today he gives me support.'

3. I am of course entirely ignorant of the source of Vichy stories regarding a shift of personnel in North Africa with the elimination of 'all French officials not 100 percent collaborationist'. I am not acquainted with any officials of importance in French North Africa who are '100 percent collaborationists'. There are, of course, different points of view as to how France could emerge from her present dilemma but these ideas generally converge around a basically nationalistic sentiment, not the thought of France as a province in a Nazified Europe.

A change such as that of Secretary General Monick at Rabat, though admittedly desired by the Germans, was largely due to disaffection which grew up between him and his superior, General Noguès. The latter, I am reliably informed, felt that Monick was not personally loyal.

General Weygand confirms entirely the statements made in your telegram under reference regarding the selection of General Koeltz, De Lattre de Tassigny and Juin for service in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, respectively, he says that he approves of them fully, he asked for their assignments to North Africa and knows that they are anti-Nazi and anti-collaborationist. He said 'These men are excellent soldiers who do not love the Germans. They are not collaborationists. They can be depended upon to give a good account of themselves. General Juin will probably succeed General Noguès as Resident General of Morocco'.

4. No one of any reliability in French North Africa with whom I have talked seemed to believe that the French are planning a punitive expedition against French Equatorial Africa. A highly qualified French General, who has had many years of experience as a soldier in French Africa and who possesses an admirable grasp of the military problems involved, gave me the other day in Casablanca a graphic description of the obstacles to such an undertaking. He said he thought it might be a good idea if some of our military experts would study the map of that part of Africa, realize that Britain controls the seas, and understand that the shortest line of attack would require the establishment of an overland supply line of 1,000 miles across desert from Dakar to Bamako (rail end), Mniamery [*Niamey?*] and Zinder to the Tchad, a large portion of which would be flanked by British Nigeria. The General said that with the pitifully inadequate supplies now available such an enterprise would be folly and every French officer in Africa knows it. He, as do others, said that the strengthening of the military establishment at Dakar is purely a defensive move because many French do fear another British or an Anglo-Saxon attack against Dakar.

I put this question to General Weygand today. He replied that I could quote him as stating categorically that no attack against French Equatorial Africa is contemplated or will be made. He also pointed out on a map of Africa in his office the obstacles to such an enterprise. These obstacles under present conditions, he said, are insurmountable. He said 'that is furthest from our minds. There is no German initiative in the movement of effectives, matériel and munitions to Dakar. As you know I have always opposed fratricidal action between Frenchmen and I blame the De Gaullists more than I do the English for such action in Syria and last year's attack against Dakar. I would be the last to initiate such action and I know the Marshal shares my views. We have taken advantage of German fears regarding Dakar to obtain concessions in respect of effectives and military equipment.' I have always imagined that a prime objective of our North African policy is a development of affairs which will lead the French to resume hostilities against the Axis and themselves to defend their African Empire. That policy fails if recourse to offensive military operations against the French in French West or North Africa is necessary. I believe that we are justified in hoping that if the Axis provokes the French by aggressive action against French Africa that the French will fight and that is particularly true if they are convinced that prompt and efficacious military support will be forthcoming from the United States.

On the other hand I believe that the French are [far?] from resumption of hostilities on their own initiative in the absence of Axis provocation. Therefore, our present policy of encouragement and support is at least partially responsible for the negative result that French Africa is not used as a base of Axis military operation. This may not be considered enough or satisfactory but I see no present opportunity to obtain more in the absence of German provocation.

First and foremost in the minds of the French in Africa is the question of Libya. Respect for British military ability has not been enhanced by the British showing thus far on the land in Libya and elsewhere. Many French here still hope that the British High Command will succeed in driving the Axis forces out of Libya. Should

that happen we could hope that those forces might then supply the necessary provocation to the French by overrunning Tunisia. That hope would justify, it seems to me, our present inexpensive policy of encouragement and support.

I might add in conclusion that I have never seen General Weygand in a more confident mood than he is today. His bitterness over Syria has disappeared. He spoke at length of his admiration for General Wavell.<sup>84</sup> He voiced his pleasure several times over the progress of the Russian campaign. He inquired eagerly for news of the production of war material in the United States. He also asked whether there was anything new on the subject of a negotiated peace and seemed satisfied when I said that I knew of nothing new other than what President Roosevelt, the Secretary and Mr. Churchill<sup>85</sup> had said on recent occasions. Weygand referred to his continuing efforts to oppose German infiltration in French Africa and to the additional execution of natives who had been cooperating with German Armistice Commission representatives. He dwelt at considerable length on the incapacity which some French statesmen had demonstrated during the years before the war and expressed the opinion, to which I agreed, that the United States had no interest in seeing any particular set of individuals established in the French post-war Government.

At the end of our conversation he said with obvious sincerity 'You may tell your Ambassador that I have not changed in my intention to defend French Africa against the Germans. You know that I do not love them. I very much appreciate the understanding support which Ambassador Leahy gives my Government'. [Murphy.] Cole."

While I do not have complete confidence that Weygand, as he stated to Murphy in the last paragraph of the latter's telegram, will resist German occupation of French Africa with force of arms, unless he should have either an order from the Marshal or satisfactory assurances of adequate American military assistance, I am in full agreement with Murphy's expressed opinion that our present policy of encouragement and material support should be continued with the purpose of maintaining such obstacles to German penetration into French Africa as at the present time exist.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/15903

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

[WASHINGTON,] October 10, 1941.

The French Ambassador<sup>86</sup> called to see me today at his request. The Ambassador referred to continuing reports in the American press that the Vichy Government, in cooperation with the German Govern-

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<sup>84</sup> Gen. Sir Archibald P. Wavell, British Commander in Chief in India; formerly Commander in Chief in the Middle East.

<sup>85</sup> Winston S. Churchill, British Prime Minister.

<sup>86</sup> Gaston Henry-Haye.



ment, was making extensive military preparations in Dakar for the purpose of undertaking an offensive against the British and Free French in Equatorial Africa. The Ambassador read to me a telegram received from his Government in which he was instructed to state to the Department of State officially that the French Government intended to undertake no military offensive against the Free French or against the British in Equatorial Africa and that all military preparations in Dakar were solely for defensive purposes.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.00112 European War 1939/3713

*Memorandum by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Alling) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*<sup>87</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] October 14, 1941.

MR. WELLES: We have been informed that an official of the British Embassy will shortly proceed to London for consultation purposes and that before his departure it is likely that an interview will be requested of you. If such an interview takes place it would seem to afford a good opportunity to convey to the British authorities in London the position of this Government in regard to the plan of economic assistance for North Africa. There are a number of factors which would seem to make it desirable to impress the British Government with our views in this regard.

Although the British Embassy officials here have reluctantly come to agree that the plan of economic assistance is producing good results, it is evident that the London authorities are far from enthusiastic about the scheme. The reason for this no doubt is that the plan is not fully understood by the people of Great Britain and as a consequence there has been severe criticism in Parliament. This criticism seems to be reflected in the slowness of the British Government to approve each step in the development of the plan, particularly with respect to the items submitted for approval under the quota and with respect to the shipment of petroleum products.

The type and quantity of the commodities listed under the quota are generally subjected to numerous conditions and provisions which are difficult for the French to accept and which are then referred back to London for final decision. The delays in reaching agreement on these many small points naturally slow up the whole plan enormously and have been in large part responsible for the fact that only four cargo vessels have actually left the United States for North Africa since the plan was first discussed last November. One of the principal

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<sup>87</sup> Marginal note by Mr. Welles: "I quite agree—SW".

troubles seems to be that the British are endeavoring to utilize the economic plan to implement their war policy, and as a price for their consent to the shipment of many items they demand concessions from the French which bear no direct relation to the internal economic problems of North Africa.

The question of oil shipments presents a more difficult problem, since it is likely to arouse even more criticism in the future. The British desire us to issue a statement to the press regarding the forthcoming arrival in Casablanca of the tanker *Lorraine*, which sailed from the United States on September 26 with fuel oil and other petroleum products. The object of such a statement would of course be to have us assume a share of the responsibility. The preliminary conditions attached to a future program of oil shipments have been so discouraging that Mr. Robert Murphy has asked permission to postpone discussion of this subject with General Weygand and to set forth in any case that they are British conditions and not ours.

I believe that if advantage could be taken of the opportunity to impress upon the British once again our desire to proceed rapidly with the North African plan, we might obtain a greater measure of cooperation. It would seem that what really counts in North Africa is the broad gesture of American aid, rather than long drawn out bargaining over details. Even if an entire shipment of American goods fell into the hands of the Axis it would have no real effect on the course of the war and might actually call favorable attention to the efforts of the United States. Yet in this connection the British constantly seem to lose sight of the fact that our control officers in North Africa are supervising the distribution of goods and it is highly unlikely that any portion thereof would find its way to an unauthorized destination.

The British Embassy in Washington seems to be little more than an intermediary in negotiations with the Foreign Office, and apparently has no authority to make decisions. It would be of vital assistance to the success of the plan if the whole machinery could be speeded up and emphasis laid on the broad general policy involved rather than the constant negotiations on small matters.

P[AUL] H. A[LLING]

851.00/2404 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, October 21, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received 4:47 p. m.]

1356. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. We had a talk this morning with Weygand's personal representative in Vichy and he showed considerable indignation over efforts during the past week

end to get the General out of Africa. The principal force behind these efforts he said was not the Germans "although they would of course be delighted to have Weygand leave" but a number of his rivals in the Vichy Government. First and foremost he said was Admiral Darlan who with "his unlimited personal ambitions" is intensely jealous of Weygand's authority and prestige and sees in him a dangerous rival. Pucheu, Benoist Mechin and Marion, he said, are likewise eager to get the General out of Africa, hoping that his removal might likewise not redound to Darlan's advantage but might serve to increase their own relative personal positions and authority. No less than four times, said our informant, the Marshal presumably at Darlan's instigation called Weygand down to his room Saturday afternoon offering him first the post of Ambassador to Washington, then a position in his Government as Minister of State and several other offices, all of which Weygand firmly declined "in the belief that his duty to France requires his remaining in Africa." Finally he said the General told the Marshal that he was going back to Africa to stay unless he received a "written order in the Marshal's own handwriting to relinquish his post." The Marshal, the General's representative told us, is in full agreement and has told Darlan and others that Weygand will remain. "The storm has passed" said our informant and for the time being Weygand remains with undiminished authority. As for the German attitude he said their dislike for Weygand is due in part to their suspicion that he is "negotiating for military aid from the United States" and partly to a remark made by General Weygand to Scapini last summer. During a heated conversation in which Scapini, "the arch collaborationist", spoke of his feeling that Germany was "saving France through her attack on the Bolsheviks", the General remarked that "to me every German who dies in Russia is a gain for France". This remark, said our informant, Scapini had "of course immediately repeated to the Germans" and they will not forgive Weygand for it.

During the entire time of Weygand's visit here, said our informant, Darlan "did not have the courage" to tell Weygand of his "intrigues" to get rid of him. The one time he did receive the General at the latter's request he spoke only "of the weather and of their families."

The French Government has decided, our informant said in reply to our inquiry, to permit the Germans to have consulates at Algiers and Casablanca, but the personnel "will be strictly limited". While Weygand, he said, was not previously consulted he is willing to accept this decision but is as firmly determined as he has been in the past to restrict the field of activities of the German "Consuls" and all other Germans in North Africa. He mentioned in this connection Weygand's "practice of shooting natives who associate with members of the German Commissions". Auer, he said, will probably be the

"Consul" at Casablanca and he has heard the name of one Pfeiffer mentioned for Algiers but that has not been decided. When these "Consulates" or missions are to be operative, he does not know; "possibly in a fortnight, possibly in a month's time". General Weygand feels, however, he said, that we should not exaggerate the importance of this step, insisting that it will make no difference in his North African policy. He likewise insisted that there is no possibility of any campaign being undertaken to reconquer dissident African colonies. On the other hand, he said the Germans are bringing no pressure now for cession of bases in Africa or extension of other facilities in that area and have "indicated they are no longer interested in Bizerte as they have found other means to supply their Libyan forces". (He does not know what the "other means" may be, other than possibly greater success in getting ships across the Mediterranean.)

Our informant does not believe in an early important change in Franco-German relations and takes a more optimistic view of the Russian situation than most of Vichy officialdom.

General Weygand, he says, is delighted at the proposed mission for Rist<sup>88</sup> and "well aware of its importance".

Repeated to Algiers.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/16111 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, October 23, 1941—midnight.

[Received October 25—3:33 a. m.]

525. From Murphy. General Weygand received me this evening and discussed some of the features of his recent visit to Vichy. He said he could assure us that no decisions have been taken by the French Government changing the status of French Africa and that no concessions have been made to the Axis Powers for the use of French African naval or air bases. He also said that as far as he is aware there is no change in his personal status, adding "as you know I never discuss my personal situation and have always considered that phase of it quite unimportant. I have been ruthless at times and obviously I have made enemies. No one in the Government at Vichy suggested to me that I leave Africa."

Weygand confirmed Vichy's 1350, October 20, 12 noon<sup>89</sup> to the effect that Rist would proceed to Washington on special mission and

<sup>88</sup> Prof. Charles Rist, French economist and banker; there was some discussion at this time of sending Professor Rist to the United States on a special mission.

<sup>89</sup> Not printed.

undoubtedly later replace Henry-Haye. He said he thoroughly approved of Rist, mentioning that they had discussed the importance of Franco-American policy with Marshal Pétain and Rist at Vichy.

He said that the other persons considered for the post, as previously reported, were passed over because of opposition to them for one reason or another on the part of members of the French Government rather than German interference.

The General also declared that "no one at Vichy dared criticize the American economic plan" in any conversation in which he participated. He said that he fails to see any justification for criticism as France can only benefit by the plan. I mentioned the reports coming to us that certain members of the Government were opposed to the plan calling it a Trojan horse and asserting that it only served selfish American interests. I said that I hoped it did serve a selfish American interest but that I also was convinced that our motive corresponded with the selfish interest of France—namely resistance to Axis domination in French Africa. General Weygand said he agreed fully; that we knew his anti-Axis sentiments; and that he was committed as every one knew to a policy of economic cooperation with the United States in North Africa.

I then mentioned the reports which have come to our Embassy at Vichy regarding the reopening of German Consulates at Algiers and Casablanca and the rumored increase of the German Armistice Commission personnel in North Africa (see Vichy's 1333, October 1 [17], 7 [2] p. m.,<sup>91</sup> and 1356, October 21, 3 p. m.). General Weygand said that it is true that the French Government has agreed in principle to the establishment of German civilian representation in the two places mentioned but it has not yet been decided what form the representation will take nor how large will be the personnel. He says it is not clear how they can be properly called Consulates because of the technical state of belligerency prevailing between the two countries. He maintained that if such civilian representation were authorized, there would be no possible justification for an augmentation of the Armistice Commission personnel which he said he argued should be reduced. He is not informed of an acceptance of a "cultural mission" of 20 persons mentioned in Vichy's 1301, October 13, 2 p. m.<sup>91</sup> This may be identic with the civilian representation.

I next referred to our apprehensions regarding the use of Tunisian territory by Italian airmen (see Doolittle's despatch 100, October 15<sup>91</sup>). His reply was slangy: "You're telling me". I asked what he was [doing] about it and he said that he just yesterday vigorously told the Italians again in no uncertain terms that they must take measures

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<sup>91</sup> Not printed.

to stop their planes landing in Tunisia. It is undoubtedly true that many Italian crews land in Tunisia on one pretext or another hoping at least for temporary internment of several weeks to take them out of the fighting. General Weygand said that no German planes were involved.

General Weygand asked numerous questions regarding the Russian campaign, General Wavell's progress, would the British fight in the Caucasus and what are they going to do in Libya. I gave him what little information I have been able to glean from published material, which is precious little. He said he thought the Russian line would hold and that the Russians could and would defend Moscow for a long time. He was particularly eager for information regarding the Russian military and industrial establishment between Moscow and the Urals. He said with satisfaction that the German losses are serious. He inquired whether and how American supplies were reaching Russia and hoped they were in quantity. He was particularly interested in knowing whether the British were moving effectives up into the Caucasus and praised General Wavell, whom he admires as the only British General he knew with real ability. He thought the British division of forces between Iran and Egypt made the Libyan problem a difficult nut to crack. I spoke as reassuringly as I could of important shipments of American matériel, about which I know practically nothing, to the Red Sea area. Weygand was particularly interested in the description of the Chrysler 30-ton tank, about which I had heard a radio report and of which he professed ignorance.

We talked about the assassinations of German officers in unoccupied France which Weygand attributes to De Gaulle inspiration, deploring efforts of the De Gaullist organization to sow discord among the French population. I inquired whether he had any evidence that the murders were inspired by the De Gaulle group, and he replied that one need only listen to the De Gaulle radio broadcasts which constantly instigated acts of violence. He said the point is that they are safely abroad and do not have to pay the price of such acts which sadly enough serve no useful purpose. I suggested that the evidence in the Laval affair failed to show that Paul Colette was in any way connected with the De Gaulle or any other organization, to which he agreed. Weygand referred to the current German reprisals in the form of mass executions at Nantes and Bordeaux which do not surprise him as just another manifestation of disgusting Germany brutality.

General Weygand then asked for information regarding the American mission sent to the De Gaulle organization in French Equatorial Africa.<sup>92</sup> I gather that there was a discussion of the matter in Vichy.

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<sup>92</sup> For correspondence on this subject, see pp. 570 ff.

I told him that I had no information regarding it other than a brief radio reference to such a mission and that I assumed it was a fact-finding undertaking. The Department's comment in that connection might be useful.

General Weygand referred to General Huntziger's visit to French Africa as a matter planned long ago and deferred several times. Huntziger wanted relief from the atmosphere of Vichy, a chance to visit his son—a lieutenant at Marrakech, and an opportunity to "discover Africa". According to Weygand General Huntziger's visit should not be misconstrued or [*as*] a change in the direction of North African affairs.

He concluded the interview with a request that I thank the Department for its courtesy in arranging the shipment of pneumatic tires now arrived at Casablanca for his personal Lockheed plane.

Repeated to Vichy, texts by courier to Tangier, Casablanca and Tunis. [Murphy.]

COLE

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702.6251R/13 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, October 25, 1941—7 p. m.

800. Your 1356, October 21, 3 p. m. The decision of the French Government to accept German Consuls in Algiers and Casablanca is somewhat incomprehensible to us as it implies a new relationship which is not defined by the Armistice provisions. Functions of Consuls in such areas would seem to relate to the protection of nationals of their country and the extension of trade relations.

We should appreciate receiving further information from the French Government regarding the functions of these Consular Officers.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/16111 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, October 28, 1941—9 p. m.

293. For Murphy. Your 525, October 23. With regard to General Weygand's inquiry concerning the American officials who have proceeded to French Equatorial Africa, you may inform him that Colonel Cunningham, of the War Department, accompanied by Laurence Taylor, Foreign Service Officer, and Commander Mitchell of the Navy,

proceeding to Equatorial Africa on a fact-finding commission on behalf of their respective departments. In no sense should they be considered a mission to General de Gaulle's territory and there is no change in the position of this Government as regards the Free French movement.

This Government, when it was informed on the Comité National Français in London, replied that "in its relations with the local French authorities in French territories the United States will be governed by the manifest effectiveness with which these authorities endeavor to protect their territories from domination and control by those powers who are seeking to extend their rule by force and conquest or by the threat thereof."

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/16431: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, November 4, 1941—8 p. m.  
[Received November 5—6: 45 p. m.]

1405. Marshal Pétain received me this afternoon with no other person present at the interview than Mr. Matthews who acted as interpreter. I told him first of Matthews' transfer to London and he turned and said though without bitterness: "I hope you will remind the British that I promised that I would never attack them. Each time there is an incident it is they who are the attackers—Mers-el-Kebir, Dakar, Syria and the destruction of all our ports. So far I have not retaliated." (Whether he had reference to the reported seizure of five French merchant ships by the British in the past few days which has stirred considerable feeling both in Foreign Office and naval circles, he did not indicate.)

Bearing in mind the Department's telegram 704, September 8 [18], 7 p. m., I told the Marshal that there is a growing feeling in the United States that the continued reinforcement of French defenses at Dakar and the large expenditures involved therein are taken under German initiative and are considered a threat to the Western Hemisphere. I asked him specifically whether I could assure my Government that if that area were attacked by Hitler's forces he would resist. He said in reply: "We are in a position where we must obtain German authorization for strengthening our forces in Africa. But the orders issued as they stand today in our colonies are to resist attack from whatever quarter it may come. That includes from the German side." He added after my further inquiry: "The orders will



not be changed". (I personally am not sure that these orders may not be changed under pressure.)

I then referred to recent reports concerning the proposed establishment of German Consulates in North Africa and he said that he did not have the details. He understands that one is to be established at Casablanca but did not seem to know that one is likewise to be opened at Algiers. He said that the number of the personnel has not yet been fixed and he has no knowledge as to just what functions these German Consuls will have. (Department's telegram 800 October 23 [25], 11 [7] p. m.) "They will of course", he added, "engage in surveillance activity." He said that he would frankly tell me the details if he knew them but that the whole question has not yet been decided.

As to any German plans toward French Africa, he said he had no information. He feels, however, that the Germans will, by the end of this month, have "finished their Russian campaign, occupying Leningrad, Moscow and Rostov, and will then cease for the winter. They must obtain Russian oil for they have expended huge quantities in this campaign. They have no object in going on to Siberia", he said. "Their losses have been, I believe, extremely heavy and certainly they are weakened but that they will undertake some operation elsewhere this winter seems certain. They are still at war with England. When they have finished with Russia they can either attack England or attempt to isolate her. In the latter case, they will turn their attention to Africa or to Turkey, Iraq and Iran. This is of course just a personal opinion based on what I should do in their place. Just what their intentions are, I do not know."

I asked him what he could tell me with respect to any general negotiations with the Germans and whether some change in the Armistice regime is contemplated. He replied: "When they have finished with Russia, they will turn their attention to us. They will certainly offer us some concessions. My real fear is that they will seem too generous." He quoted with emphasis and repeated later on: ["*Timeo danaos et dona ferentes*. I do not trust them.["] What "counterpart" the Germans will ask he said he does not know but he is sure it will add to his difficulties; neither does he know what his own demands will be. He made two important facts clear however: That serious conversations have not yet begun but that he feels certain that some offer to change the present Franco-German relationship will be sought "upon termination of the Russian campaign."

[The remainder of the telegram reports Pétain's protest to Hitler against mass execution of French hostages.]

VII. Suspension and Reconsideration of the Economic Aid Program for French North Africa Following Removal of General Weygand

851.00/2420 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, October 28, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received 4:22 p. m.]

1385. Embassy's telegram 1356, October 21, 3 p. m.<sup>93</sup> and Murphy's<sup>94</sup> telegram 525, October 23, midnight.<sup>95</sup> In spite of the perhaps natural reluctance of General Weygand<sup>96</sup> to indicate to Murphy that the question of his position in Africa was under consideration during his recent visit to Vichy, we have heard sufficient confirmation from a number of other sources to leave no doubt in our minds that a real effort was in fact made to oust him. We believe that neither the General's person nor his policies in Africa enjoy the support either of Admiral Darlan<sup>97</sup> or of his ambitious and even more "collaborationist" rival Pucheu<sup>97a</sup> and that both would like nothing better than to "eliminate" the General. We are not inclined to believe that the Marshal<sup>98</sup> gave the detractors of Weygand more than lip service support, but it is not unlike his nature to have offered various posts outside Africa to General Weygand in order to satisfy the General's enemies in his Government knowing full well that the General would decline and in fact approving his decision to do so. We hear from many sides (including Rist<sup>99</sup>) of the Marshal's firm wish not to "break" with the United States and he must be aware of the importance we attach to Weygand's presence and authority in Africa.

Repeated to Algiers.

LEAHY

<sup>93</sup> *Ante*, p. 447.

<sup>94</sup> Robert D. Murphy, Counselor of Embassy in France, temporarily at Algiers.

<sup>95</sup> *Ante*, p. 449.

<sup>96</sup> Gen. Maxime Weygand, Delegate General of the French Government in North Africa.

<sup>97</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Navy, and National Defense.

<sup>97a</sup> Pierre Pucheu, Minister of the Interior.

<sup>98</sup> Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, French Chief of State.

<sup>99</sup> Prof. Charles Rist, French economist and financier.

851.00/2443 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

[Extract]

VICHY, November 7, 1941—8 p. m.  
 [Received November 7—10 : 35 a. m.]

1417. Embassy's telegram 1385, October 2 [28], 11 a. m.

We asked Rochat<sup>1</sup> this afternoon what basis there is for these current reports of Weygand's removal from Africa. He said in reply: "I know of no very recent developments. I won't conceal the fact though that ever since Weygand's last visit here and a few weeks prior thereto the question of his status in Africa has been a burning one. It remains so. What will come out of it I do not know."

We asked him whether he felt that higher circles in the Government, mentioning specifically the Marshal and Admiral Darlan, realize the interpretation that would be placed in the United States upon General Weygand's departure from Africa and whether they are fully aware of the effect thereof not only upon our program of economic aid to Africa but in the whole field of relations between the United States and the Marshal and his Government. We said that we do not in any way wish to question the Marshal's complete right to choose his own associates. We said however that there would be widespread belief in the United States, if Weygand departs from Africa, that his removal has been brought about by German dictation. It would be tragic therefore, we said, if the effect of the General's removal on relations between our two countries is not fully and carefully considered before any final decision is taken, and we asked whether he feels that this factor is being fully weighed. He replied: "I believe that they are all, including the Marshal, well aware of this aspect of the question."

Repeated to Algiers.

LEAHY

851.00/2443 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*<sup>2</sup>

WASHINGTON, November 10, 1941—10 p. m.

839. Your 1417, November 7, 8 p. m. In view of the current uncertainties of the North African situation and having in mind various requests from North Africa for an indication of the amount of mili-

<sup>1</sup> Charles Antoine Rochat, Acting Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> The same, *mutatis mutandis*, on the same date, to the Consul General at Algiers for Mr. Murphy, as No. 318.

tary assistance which the United States might supply in the event of German invasion, we were considering ordering Murphy to Washington for a brief period of consultation. He would not need to be absent from North Africa for more than 3 weeks. Your telegram under reference would, however, seem to indicate that events may be moving more rapidly. Should Weygand be removed, we might be obliged to revise our present policy as regards North Africa entirely and the question arises whether in this critical moment it might not be preferable to leave Murphy on the spot. Please telegraph an expression of your views.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/16523 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, November 11, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received November 12—5:34 a. m.]

1428. Embassy's 1425, November 11, 10 a. m.<sup>3</sup> The Marshal told Matthews<sup>4</sup> who lunched with him today before leaving that he has asked General Weygand to come to Vichy sometime within the next week "to discuss this situation". When Matthews told him of the importance from the point of view of Franco-American relations that the General should thereafter return to Africa, he replied "I shall only work in agreement with Weygand. He will return to Africa. As I have all along done with the Germans, I am trying to gain time."

He was in an optimistic mood and went on to say that he felt things might "soon take a turn for the better"; that the war may not last so long. "Perhaps I can be useful in some way as an intermediary, if peace seems possible. You should delay entry into the war as long as possible and you may not have to come in at all."

Darlan this morning, when Matthews went to say goodbye, in the course of a long tirade against the United States, against England, against Murphy's presence in Africa, against our insistence on the departure of the *Lorraine* and against the attitude of our press towards the Marshal and himself, voiced similar views as to the possibility of a negotiated peace. He said "You should not trouble us so in Africa. You just arouse German suspicions whereas if you would reduce your activities there they would never go into Africa. If they distrust our intentions too much they will go there however and they will beat you to it, which is neither to your advantage nor to ours. Why do you want the war to go on? You can never beat the

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<sup>3</sup> Not printed; it told of reported coming changes of French officials in North Africa and of plans to remove General Weygand (851.00/2444).

<sup>4</sup> H. Freeman Matthews, appointed Counselor of Embassy in the United Kingdom on October 27, 1941; previously First Secretary of Embassy in France.

Germans militarily and to think that they may threaten your security is laughable. The war could go on for 10 years, to the destruction and starvation of Europe but I think you could find me useful as an intermediary between yourselves and the Germans and I think there will be a chance for peace negotiations in a short time."

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/3856 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, November 12, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 4:55 p. m.]

1430. Your 839, November 10, 10 p. m. In the course of his conversation with Matthews yesterday (Embassy's 1428, November 11, 3 p. m.) Darlan referred to Murphy's activity in North Africa and to the "unfortunate effect" which it had upon the Germans. He went on to say that while he had "nothing against Murphy, the Germans are both jealous and suspicious of him" and in order to avoid exciting them, he hoped that "Murphy could be a little less active."

In reply Matthews pointed out the benefits accruing to North Africa and France under the present plan of economic assistance and told Darlan that Murphy's activities and presence in North Africa seemed both desirable and necessary if economic assistance was to be continued. Darlan dismissed rather lightly the aid which we have thus far given, and said that he hoped to be able to arrange a shipment of gasoline and petroleum products to North Africa from Rumania in the not too distant future.

In view of Darlan's attitude and with the situation in mind outlined in my telegram 1417, November 7, 8 p. m., I do not believe that it is desirable for Murphy to leave Africa at the present time. Should he return to Washington it is within the realm of possibility that on one pretext or another the French authorities could find reasons for delaying his return to North Africa.

Repeated to Algiers.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/16601 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, November 13, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received November 14—4:32 a. m.]

579. From Murphy. Your 318, November 10, 9 p. m.,<sup>5</sup> and Vichy's 1428, November 12 [11], 3 p. m. I had a discussion this morning with

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2, p. 456.

General Weygand regarding his situation in French Africa. He was as always reluctant to dwell on his personal importance which he dismisses with the statement that he intends to serve France as best he can; that when Marshal Pétain relieved him of his functions as Minister of National Defense which he had assumed after the Armistice he was happy to take the assignment to Africa where he could be free from the suffocating atmosphere of Vichy and could enjoy the possibility of accomplishing something constructive; and that he has no political ambitions. He said, "Your Government should [understand?] that I have made myself thoroughly disagreeable to certain gentlemen at Vichy because I was not in accord with their attitude to the Germans. Some people are made of cotton and I pride myself on having a good deal of iron in my makeup. I know that some of these gentlemen agree with the Germans that I should leave Africa. It is not impossible that the Marshal may find it necessary to remove me. Or he could not forget his primary responsibilities vis-à-vis the 1,500,000 French prisoners in Germany and to the nation generally".

I referred to the President's declaration of May 27,<sup>e</sup> to the effect that German invasion of French Africa would be considered as a menace to the security of the American Hemisphere, which the United States could not afford to tolerate, and to the recent statement made by Matthews to Rochat at Vichy (see Vichy's 1417, November 7, 8 p. m.) regarding the possible repercussions on Franco-American relations which Weygand's recall from Algiers might have. I said that my Government considered him as an important element of resistance in French Africa to German intrusion, and in the event of his recall we would be justified in placing our own construction on his removal. My Government might find it necessary in such event to revise its entire French African policy.

I then said that the Department is considering ordering me to Washington for consultation and that I knew that there had been under study, in addition to economic matters, the question of the quantity of military assistance which the United States might provide General Weygand (naturally with the consent of his Government) should French Africa be menaced by German aggression. He replied as expected that he has no mandate to discuss military aid with a foreign power but that he was glad to know that careful study was being made of the matter.

He said that he would welcome any news along those lines which we could give him. Officially of course he said "my relations with you concern economic matters and I cannot emphasize too much how important American assistance is at the present time."

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<sup>e</sup> Radio address by President Roosevelt, May 27, 1941, Department of State *Bulletin*, May 31, 1941, p. 647.

I also mentioned Matthews' conversation with the Marshal (see Vichy's 1428, November 12 [11], 3 p. m.) and the possibility of his visit to Vichy next week. This information greatly encouraged him. Weygand then said that he believed that in connection with the Department's inquiry regarding my return to Washington that it would be best to defer a decision until his return to Algiers from Vichy. If the Department approves I shall telegraph a recommendation at that time.

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

851.00/2467: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, November 18, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received November 18—6:37 p. m.]

1453. At half past 4 this afternoon we received an urgent call from the member of Darlan's Cabinet we saw yesterday (Embassy's telegram 1450, November 17, 8 p. m.<sup>7</sup>) stating that Weygand's position had greatly deteriorated. Benoist-Mechin<sup>8</sup> he said had arrived from Paris about noon today with a German ultimatum that Weygand must go. This information was subsequently confirmed to us in confidence by a subordinate member of the Marshal's entourage who stated that the Marshal would receive me tomorrow, probably in the morning. Both our informants expressed the opinion that while the decision might not as yet have been taken, they were fearful that Weygand would be ousted.

At 6:30 p. m. Du Moulin de la Barthète<sup>8a</sup> and Rochat called at the Embassy with the following *note verbale* from the Marshal which they said the Marshal transmitted to the American Ambassador first and immediately following the decision:

"The French Government has the honor to bring to the knowledge of the Ambassador of the United States the following facts:

As a result of German pressure which has been exerted for several months and which this morning took an imperative form, the Marshal has taken the decision to suppress the Délégation Générale in Africa which involves the recall of General Weygand.

If the Marshal had not made this decision there is every indication to believe that German troop penetration into Africa would have been inevitable and would undoubtedly have occurred very soon."

I have just been informed that the Marshal will receive me at 4 o'clock tomorrow afternoon and I will tell him at that time that in my

<sup>7</sup> Not printed.

<sup>8</sup> Jacques Benoist-Mechin, French Secretary of State in charge of Franco-German relations.

<sup>8a</sup> Henri du Moulin de Labarthète, Marshal Pétain's Chef de Cabinet.

personal opinion yielding to this German demand will probably interrupt the economic assistance now being given to Africa and it may bring about a complete change in the present sympathetic and understanding attitude of America toward the Government of France.

Repeated to Algiers.

LEAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/17273

*The Counselor of Embassy in France (Murphy), Temporarily at Algiers, to the Secretary of State*

No. 1000

ALGIERS, November 18, 1941.

[Received December 10.]

SIR: I have the honor to enclose, in original and translation, a copy of a memorandum on the subject of French policy taken by General Weygand to Vichy. He planned to read this statement of his conception of what French general policy should be, with particular regard to French Africa, to the Council of Ministers at Vichy during the course of his present visit.

The Department will find the enclosure, I am sure, an interesting résumé of the current views of General Weygand which are shared by some of his associates.

Respectfully yours,

ROBERT D. MURPHY

[Enclosure—Translation]

*Memorandum by General Weygand*

When I undertook the functions of Delegate General of the Government in French Africa, the international situation was dominated by a fact, the importance of which would of necessity be capital in the conduct of French policy. I speak of the failure of the German air offensive against the British Isles which presaged a prolongation of the war and, without doubt, the incapacity of the German Reich to bring the Anglo-Saxon powers to their knees.

Under those circumstances, the position of vanquished France suddenly took on a new value by reason of the fact that the Armistice concluded on my request permitted to France the control of its Empire. With one stroke France again became master of an important factor in the outcome of the war, and the strategic positions in its control became a trump essential in the general diplomatic situation. The importance thereof was emphasized by the general interest which was shown therein by foreign propaganda.

I fought this propaganda to the best of my ability.



In my opinion, the role of the Empire should be the protection of metropolitan France against abuses which the Reich imposes upon all European peoples. This protection cannot be exercised if France does not retain its territories intact. France must guard its territories against dissident movements or foreign attack. That was my role and I do not fear to say that the loyalty of French Africa today is stronger than ever.

It was necessary also that France guard its territories against German infiltration. That was the duty of the Government. Control by the Reich of affairs in our Empire deprives France of the trump which the Armistice left it. Such control places France at the mercy of the conqueror just as in the case of Poland and Greece.

At the beginning of the present year, the United States offered us an economic accord which has not given all the economic results for which we could have hoped because of British opposition (seizure of the *Schéhérazade*, reduction of our requests for petroleum products), and that of Germany (opposition to the departure of our ships, refusal to accept propositions permitting an increase in the number of merchant ships engaged in this traffic, opposition to the control by American consular officers of the exportation of petroleum products, etc.).

But, from the political point of view, this accord offered an important advantage. France, thanks to its Empire, remained the only European power retaining its economic relations with the United States. As long as French control of its territories was not threatened, the Anglo-Saxons respected it.

Thus, in addition to the duty, as I understood it, of protecting the Empire against the conqueror, there was added a further possibility, that of maintaining cordial economic and political contact with a power which, in any event, will be one of the arbiters of the situation at the end of the war.

The evolution of the situation in 1941 only confirms the growing importance of French Africa. The battle of the Atlantic does not develop into a German success. American intervention is growing more defined, and today the amendment of the Neutrality Act is an accomplished fact. Germany, on the other hand, marks time in Russia. Everything indicates that the battle this winter will be that of the Mediterranean, as the possession of that waterway will be indispensable to Germany for the transport of raw products from East to West. The organization of Germanized Europe is impossible without control of this important maritime highway, the Mediterranean.

To open French Africa to Germany is to assure to the latter the possibility of organizing the continent of Europe. It would also mean that France would be deprived of a strategic position—the key

for the final issue of the war. It would cause the Empire to run the risk of becoming a battlefield between the two opponents. By resisting Germany we might aggravate the conditions of a severe Armistice, but we would leave ourselves the possibilities of action which can only improve with time. Opening Africa to Germany means in the last analysis giving to Germany a unique opportunity to be able to continue the war during 10 years and to impose without the possibility of any reaction its will upon France.

[ALGIERS, 15 November 1941.]

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740.00112 European War 1939/4084

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

[WASHINGTON,] November 19, 1941.

The French Ambassador<sup>o</sup> called to see me today at his request.

When the Ambassador came in he inquired immediately whether I had any word from the Embassy in Vichy in confirmation of the press reports regarding the rumored recall of General Weygand.

I told the Ambassador that unfortunately I had received a message from the American Ambassador in Vichy, stating that this report was correct and further that he was due to have this afternoon a personal interview with Marshal Petain, a report of which I was now awaiting.

I said to the Ambassador that pending a full report from Admiral Leahy there was nothing further I could state beyond saying officially to the Ambassador that the step in question decided upon by his Government made necessary a complete change in the policy which this Government had hitherto carried out vis-à-vis France. I said that the American Government had made every effort to strengthen the resistance of the French Government to increased pressure from Germany in the hope that the French Government would agree to no terms or provisions on the part of Germany which exceeded, in the slightest degree, the terms of the armistice agreement in 1940. I said that this new step agreed upon by France implied that Germany would now rapidly increase its practical and effective control throughout North Africa and that a situation of this kind was regarded by the United States as a direct threat to the security and national defense requirements of the United States.

The Ambassador said very little beyond stating that it was a desperate shock to him, that he had time and again made clear to his

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<sup>o</sup> Gaston Henry-Haye.

Government what the attitude of the United States would be should France make any concessions whatever to Germany with regard to North Africa, and that he personally believed it was a decision which every patriotic Frenchman must abhor. The Ambassador came in to discuss various matters, particularly the seizure of French ships by the British, but in view of the statements I made to him he did not bring up for discussion any of these problems. He left with me two notes attached herewith<sup>10</sup> dealing with routine questions.

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851.00/2475 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, November 19, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 8:38 p. m.]

1454. For the Secretary and Under Secretary: My 1453, November 18, 7 p. m. I had an interview with the Marshal at 4 o'clock today, no other person being present except MacArthur,<sup>11</sup> acting as interpreter, at which time I told him that I fear his action in submitting to German pressure to remove Weygand may interrupt the provision of economic aid to the colonies, that it will probably be accepted by the American public as beginning of Axis control of the French colonies, and that it may cause a complete change in the existing sympathetic and understanding attitude of America toward the Government of France.

The Marshal explained that he has for one year resisted requests by Germany that Weygand be removed, that his continuing and one hope for France has been America's sympathetic understanding but that in consideration of the welfare of his people confronted with a German threatening ultimatum "dictat" he was unable to hold out longer in the matter of retaining General Weygand in Africa, although he said he had refused the use of the fleet, military assistance, and other excessive demands.

He stated that Weygand will not be replaced in Africa and that no other changes of official personnel there will be made.

He said that Weygand will be retained near him in France for possible future employment, that General Juin will be appointed Minister of War and that the high military command in Africa will be administered from Vichy.

In reply to a direct question as to whether or not his decision is irrevocable he said that a formal decision in the matter of Weygand will be made this evening and that there will be no public radio or press announcement of the change. He will communicate to the public

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<sup>10</sup> Not printed.

<sup>11</sup> Douglas MacArthur, 2d, Third Secretary of Embassy in France.

at a meeting of the regional directors of the "Legion" probably within 2 or 3 days. Obviously the decision was made prior to my receipt of the *note verbale*<sup>11a</sup> yesterday evening.

The Marshal, who seemed very much distressed, said repeatedly that he is a prisoner of the invaders, that the Germans are ruthless in their treatment and had threatened, should Weygand not be removed completely, occupation of France where they would live off the country thereby starving the civilian population. He expressed hope that my personal regard for him would not be injured by the action which he has been forced to take in this instance.

Referring to Department's 631, August 13, 4 p. m.; my 1024, August 14, 4 p. m.;<sup>12</sup> and Department's 839, November 10, 10 p. m.

In view of the unnecessary surrender of the Vichy Government to German demands that Weygand be removed which appears from this point of view to be the real beginning of the Axis move to control the colonies, it is believed that this is an appropriate time to consider a complete revision of American policy in regard thereto.

While full consideration should be given to an assumption that the Axis is desirous of creating difficulties between France and America with the purpose of making France completely dependent upon Germany and of forcing us out of Africa, it does not now appear to be to our advantage to permit the initiative to remain with the Axis Powers, who equally with Vichy are responsive only to aggressive action.

The advisability is suggested of

(1) An immediate interruption of economic assistance to all the French colonies;

(2) The recall of Murphy for consultation;

(3) The recall of the Ambassador "for consultation";

(4) A thorough dissemination by all available radio channels of America's attitude toward this latest surrender of the Vichy Government to Axis demands beyond the Armistice terms.

Murphy has the latest local information about the situation in Africa not yet available to me and in considering his recall it would appear wise to obtain a specific recommendation from him.

In considering a recall of the Ambassador, attention is invited to the fact that there is at present in the Embassy no subordinate officer who has both the necessary seniority and adequate experience to take charge of the supervision of American diplomatic business.

It therefore appears that a departure of the Ambassador prior to the arrival of Mr. Tuck<sup>13</sup> would be extremely disadvantageous to

<sup>11a</sup> See telegram No. 1453, November 18, 7 p. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 460.

<sup>12</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>13</sup> S. Pinkney Tuck, appointed Counselor of Embassy, October 27, 1941.

the conduct of diplomatic relations with the Government of France in the presentation of American policies and the protection of American interests.

Repeated to Algiers.

LEAHY

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851.00/2473 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, via VICHY, November 19, 1941—midnight.

[Received November 20—3:43 p. m.]

593. For the Under Secretary from Murphy. From several reliable official sources I learn today that the ground on which Vichy relies for justification of its decision to cashier General Weygand (see Vichy's 1453, November 18, 8 [7] p. m.) is his position was hopelessly compromised as a result of his dealings with the United States. These informants tell me that the Germans *claim* that they have been kept accurately informed of all of Weygand's conversations with us through a "reliable Washington source". One even said that the Germans had "documentary proof" regarding Weygand's secret negotiations.<sup>14</sup> They also refer to the unfortunate publicity regarding Weygand in the British and American press and radio. Each of these informants including two who arrived from Vichy this evening whose names they ask be not divulged expressed the opinion that whatever leakage there may have been does not result from deciphering of our code messages but from a leak in the Department of State (I believe this story of a leak in the Department is a fabrication and probably of German origin).

My conversations with these officials convince me that there was no German ultimatum demanding Weygand's dismissal. That decision I am told results from a combination of German pressure and the eagerness of the cabal consisting of Darlan, Benoist-Mechin, Pucheu, Lehideux<sup>15</sup> and Marion<sup>16</sup> to eliminate Weygand. For that purpose they relied on Marshal Pétain as a decoy who is always ready to sacrifice any man no matter how loyal to his country if it serves the Marshal's immediate end. The group undoubtedly convinced the Marshal that dire consequence would follow if he retained Weygand.

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<sup>14</sup> Among German Foreign Office records captured by the Allies are German translations of the greater part of telegram No. 338, July 21, 5 p. m., from the Consul General at Algiers (from Murphy) and the third paragraph of telegram No. 378, August 2, 9 p. m. (in the German translation wrongly dated August 5), pp. 396 and 406, respectively.

<sup>15</sup> François Lehideux, Secretary of State for Industrial Production.

<sup>16</sup> P. Marion, Secretary General of the Office of Information and Propaganda.

My informants insist that Weygand's removal will cause no immediate change in the French African situation nor an immediate Axis intrusion. They all urge that it would be folly for the United States to abandon the field at a moment when its influence is demonstrated and when it can become indispensable. They insist that if we make Weygand an issue it will support the German argument that Weygand was negotiating with us over Vichy's head. They assert that it would be in our interest and Weygand's (who may have a future value) to continue as we have on the condition that the terms of the North African accord be observed.

They say that the set-up in North Africa will be practically unchanged—that the Delegation General of the Government in French Africa be continued and that only the Délégué General (Weygand) is suppressed. Chatel becomes Governor General; Admiral Fenard remains Secretary General Permanent of the Delegation General. The latter always professes active friendship for us and the hope of a British victory. He pleaded with me for an hour this evening after his return from Vichy to urge the Department to take no hasty decision on its French policy pointing to Darlan's offer to sell to us the rubber recently arrived at Casablanca from Indochina as a sign of Darlan's desire to cooperate with us. He begged that we do not slam the door in the French face now. If we do "France will surely and inevitably be thrown into the German camp". Fenard asked me what I would have done in Darlan's place. I replied that 4 years' experience in Germany taught me that the Germans occasionally respect a firm "no" and that on the rare occasions during the past year when France had said "no" the Germans had yielded. I told him I thought the opposition to Weygand lay as much in Vichy as it did in Berlin.

I learn from these conversations that Admiral Platon, Minister of Colonies, is flying to Dakar because it is feared in Vichy that dissidence may develop in French West Africa. My contacts do not believe that French West Africa is ready for anything of the sort. Neither do they believe that Weygand's departure will engender any immediate violent reaction in North Africa. They are also convinced that the Axis Powers will not undertake immediate aggressive action nor accentuate their infiltration in this area. They believe the Germans are not able at the moment to do so and they say the Germans fear us more than we fear them. Weygand's removal, they say, will calm German apprehensions regarding French Africa and there will be a breathing spell in which to formulate a program under the changed conditions. They urge that we intensify rather than abandon our supply program making ourselves indispensable for the subsistence

of this area, that thereafter should we be ready to provide military assistance a man will be found with whom we can deal.

Marshal Pétain, I am told, has requested Weygand to remain in France. He may not even return to pack his effects. I am told Weygand will reside temporarily with Count de Leusse family near Toulon. Weygand's principal military aide arrives tomorrow and I hope to gain from him additional information.

May I recommend that before final decision on policy is taken that a brief period be allowed in which to gather all essential facts.

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/16797½ : Telegram

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

[Extract]

LONDON, November 20, 1941—noon.

[Received November 20—8:45 a. m.]

5547. Personal from Former Naval Person<sup>19</sup> to the President.

"2. It would be disastrous if Weygand were to be replaced by some pro-Hun officer just at the moment when we are likely to be in a position to influence events in North Africa both from the East and from home. I hope you will try your utmost at Vichy to preserve Weygand in his command. If this cannot be achieved some friendly figure from retirement, like General Georges might be agreed upon. I have not seen Georges since the collapse but I have reason to believe his heart is sound. I knew him very well. Anyhow, Mr. President, Tunis and all French North Africa might open out to us if we gain a good victory in Libya and we must be ready to exploit success. I am afraid, on the other hand, lest Hitler may demand to occupy Bizerta in view of possible danger to Tripoli. It is now or never with the Vichy French and their last chance of redemption.

3. Very glad to get Averell<sup>20</sup> back here."

WINANT

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851.00/2475 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, November 20, 1941—2 p. m.

861. Your 1454, November 19, 6 p. m. and previous. The following statement is now being given to the press in Washington:

<sup>19</sup> Code name for Winston S. Churchill, British Prime Minister.

<sup>20</sup> W. Averell Harriman, special representative of President Roosevelt in the United Kingdom, with the rank of Minister, with responsibility for expediting lend-lease aid to the British Empire.

"According to reports reaching the Department the French Government has acquiesced to the express demand of Hitler to remove General Weygand from his post as delegate general of France, thus permitting a German control over French authority entirely outside of the provisions of the Armistice. As a result of these reports American policy towards France is being reviewed and all plans for economic assistance to French North Africa are suspended. It remains to be seen to what further extent Hitler will attempt to take over by force or threat of force the sovereignty and control of the French Empire."

Repeat to Algiers.

HULL

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851.00/2490a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, November 20, 1941—5 p. m.

863. We are giving careful consideration to the points raised in your 1454, November 19, 6 p. m., and I have sent you by separate telegram the text of a statement given to the press today.<sup>20a</sup> Your reports of developments are most helpful in keeping us promptly informed and are exceedingly important in the formulation of our policy in this immediate period.

If the occasion presents itself and in your discretion I think it would be well to place the following considerations before Marshal Petain, whom you may wish to inform of the suspension of the plan of assistance to North Africa and the necessity for a review of our policy toward France. According to your reports there is no present plan to replace Weygand in the superior post of authority he held in the North African territories and the military control of those territories is to be exercised from Vichy. It is obvious that the adoption of a policy of assistance to German penetration and military activity in North Africa would be disastrous for the French nation. Our whole policy toward France has been based on the Marshal's assurances that every effort would be made to preserve for the French people the integrity of their territories. It has been possible for the Marshal to maintain this position by his continued resistance to German demands which went beyond these requirements. I am certain that through your presentation of the policy and attitude of this Government in support of those nations resisting German aggression Marshal Petain must realize that acceding to German pressure for assistance to the military plans of Hitler will bring a sharp reaction on the part of public opinion in this country and will make it impossible for us to con-

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<sup>20a</sup> See telegram No. 861, *supra*.



tinue our helpful attitude either now or in the future. We must observe developments in Vichy and North Africa with closest attention. What do you think about remaining there for the present, keeping in close touch and seeing if something cannot be salvaged with respect to the North African situation now and in the period just ahead.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/16797½ : Telegram

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

[Extract]

WASHINGTON, November 20, 1941—8 p. m.

5318. Your 5547, November 20, noon. Personal from the President for the Former Naval Person.

“2. With regard to the Weygand situation I am taking steps to bring forcibly before Petain the disastrous consequences of any action with regard to the authorities in North Africa which would result in aid to Germany. Leahy reports that Petain himself informed him that Weygand’s removal was solely due to German pressure under the threat of complete occupation of France. Petain also told Leahy that Weygand will not be replaced in Africa, that no other changes of official personnel there will be made, that General Juin will be appointed Minister of War, and that the high military command in Africa will be administered from Vichy.

3. You have probably already seen that we have suspended all plans for economic assistance to North Africa and that we are reviewing our whole policy toward France.”

HULL

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851.00/2481 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, November 20, 1941—midnight.

[Received November 21—10:56 p. m.]

596. From Murphy. This evening I asked Yves Chatel, who succeeds General Weygand as Governor General of Algeria, for his view of the changed situation. As the Department is aware Chatel during the early part of 1941 as predecessor of Vice Admiral Fenard, Secretary General of the Délégation Générale, gave us excellent cooperation and always evidenced the friendliest sentiments toward the United States and Great Britain. I also asked for his suggestion regarding what should be done about the North African economic plan which under Weygand’s direction he made every effort to promote.

Chatel said that when Weygand's retirement became evident he proposed to quit and added that his present decision to accept the position of Governor General of Algeria is due solely to a personal appeal made to him by General Weygand. The latter has appealed to all his associates in Africa to remain at their posts.

He said that he had given much thought to the effects which the changed situation might have on American policy and that it is his considered opinion that we should take no hasty action such as cancelling the economic accords because by so doing we should play into German hands. The latter would then maintain that we had obviously bought Weygand and that our interest was only in him for his value as a military leader; that we had no honest interest in the welfare of the French people.

He declared that we risked nothing by retaining intact our position in this area and urged that we let the Germans take the initiative to break the accord which he is certain they will do by refusing permission for the departure of the ships in the Casablanca-New York run.

Germany, said Chatel, has no intention of allowing the United States to build up an economic influence as we have been doing in this area. The Germans want this area dedicated to the new German order under the the Eur-African plan. If, said Chatel, we simply allow matters to run along for a few weeks (permitting the ships now en route to complete their voyages) we will be in a position publicly to place full responsibility for a break on the Germans.

Chatel insists that there is no present indication of an imminent German intrusion in spite of endless rumors to that effect. He spoke unconvincingly of resistance to Axis encroachment and I am sure that he has no idea of Vichy's plans in this respect.

Chatel repeated what many others have said regarding the operation of our economic plan, namely that it is a great pity that during the 9 months of its operation actual deliveries have been restricted to a handful of products, that is to say, our small cargos and 3 tankers of petroleum products for the 30 millions of French African populations. These deliveries amount to, he said, 7 percent of the quotas authorized on paper. If there had been a really important performance under the plan, enough to arouse the interest of a large section of the population, much more could have been expected now in the way of a public reaction to termination of the plan as the result of German interference. General Koeltz, Chatel said, would continue in command of the military forces in Algeria as a member of Chatel's staff but the military command for North Africa falls to General Juin. According to Chatel, General Juin will obey Vichy's orders without

question as will, he said, General Mendigual at Algiers commanding the air force in French Africa.

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.00112 European War 1939/3930 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, November 21, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received 6:14 p. m.]

597. From Murphy. Weygand's personal military aide Major Gasser returned from Vichy last evening. He delivered this morning a handwritten message from General Weygand dated at Vichy yesterday to me from which I quote the following: "Continue I beg of you to favor the supply program. As the Marshal told Admiral Leahy nothing is changed in French policy by my departure. Just suppose that I have passed to the other world. French Africa would continue notwithstanding that unimportant normal accident. Gasser who will give you this letter will tell you how much I count on the maintenance between our two countries of the union necessary for the near future of the world."

Gasser said that Weygand had written to all the authorities in French Africa in whom he has confidence (especially Boisson<sup>21</sup> at Dakar and Chatel at Algiers) insisting that they remain at their posts. In Gasser's opinion if the organization which Weygand has built up in French Africa crumbles overnight with the departure of the General his enemies in Vichy will be delighted and regard it as proof that his retirement is justified. He also said that one of the principal weapons used against Weygand was the publicity given him in the British and American press and radio. He said that sometimes one forgets that unfriendly persons in Berlin and Paris listen to those broadcasts and read even articles by Pertinax.<sup>21a</sup> [Murphy.]

COLE

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881.00/2058 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, November 21, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received November 22—1:16 a. m.]

356. The question is raised whether the Department has given consideration to an approach to the present Moroccan problem along the following lines.

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<sup>21</sup> Pierre Boisson, High Commissioner in French West Africa.

<sup>21a</sup> Pseudonym of André Géraud, French journalist, editor of *L'Europe Nouvelle*.

The United States has been assured by the treaties to which it is a party of the open door in Morocco. We recognized the French Protectorate in 1917<sup>22</sup> on the basis of assurances by the French Government of the continued exercise by us of those rights.

The presence of German and Italian Armistice Commissions in Morocco and the increasing intrusion of their influence may at some moment jeopardize the exercise by us of our treaty rights in Morocco as the French Government and the French Protectorate authorities may become powerless to continue to implement their obligations to us in this respect in Morocco. While these rights were originally purely economic the shrinkage of distances as a result of technological developments in communications facilities has given these rights since they were acquired far vaster importance, notably as affecting our hemispheric defense.

It may therefore be necessary at some given moment for us to be in a position to enforce these rights by such means as may be at our disposal.

Repeated to Vichy and Algiers.

CHILDS

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740.00112 European War 1939/3929 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, November 21, 1941—6 p. m.

325. For Murphy. Since sending your 593, November 19, midnight, you have undoubtedly received Ambassador Leahy's 1454, November 19, 6 p. m.

In informing him of the suspension of the plan of assistance to North Africa and the necessity of a review of our policy toward France we stated that "it is obvious that the adoption of a policy of assistance to German penetration and military activity in North Africa would be disastrous for the French nation. Our whole policy toward France has been based on the Marshal's assurances that every effort would be made to preserve for the French people the integrity of their territories. It has been possible for the Marshal to maintain this position by his continued resistance to German demands which went beyond these requirements. I am certain that through your presentation of the policy and attitude of this Government in support of those nations resisting German aggression Marshal Pétain must realize that acceding to German pressure for assistance to the military plans of Hitler will bring a sharp reaction on the part of public opinion in this country

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<sup>22</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1917, pp. 1093 ff.

and will make it impossible for us to continue our helpful attitude either now or in the future. We must observe developments in Vichy and North Africa with closest attention."

For the present we shall expect you to continue to follow the situation in North Africa very closely and to keep the Department promptly informed of all developments. We should also appreciate your estimate of the attitude of the local authorities of the different localities as well as your comment on the Ambassador's suggestion that you return for "consultation". You should also endeavor to obtain as much further information as possible regarding the so-called leak in the Department.

With regard to Casablanca's telegram 621, November 18 and 629, November 19,<sup>23</sup> regarding the activities of German agents, we feel that this matter should be fully investigated and would like a report as to the basis upon which police activities of the German Armistice Commission in uniform are being carried out.

HULL

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851.00/2491 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, November 22, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received November 22—9:57 a. m.]

1458. Your 863, November 20, 5 p. m. In reply to your question, it is my opinion that by remaining here for the present I may possibly be able to exercise on the Marshal a restraining influence, counter to additional demands for collaboration in Africa which are generally expected in the near future.

British success in the African campaign which from available information today seems possible should weaken the collaborationist group. It appears certain that the maintenance here of an Ambassador pending developments in the Libyan campaign should be advantageous whether or not we can, through our favorable contacts, exercise any influence on the situation.

LEAHY

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881.00/2060 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGLER, November 24, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received November 24—3:07 p. m.]

361. My 356, November 22 [21], 8 [4] p. m. In view of the importance to us of Morocco it is believed that despite the setback oc-

<sup>23</sup> Neither printed.

casioned our position by the events of the past few days everything possible should be done to salvage as much as can be preserved of the economic aid program. It is suggested that at least we endeavor to maintain our contact with Morocco through perhaps a modified program applicable to the French Protectorate or if need be a more restricted and hand to mouth basis.

Russell<sup>24</sup> and King<sup>25</sup> have been spending the weekend in Tangier and we and all of our officers in Morocco feel that there is much to be gained by continuing our program as long as possible.

It is true that it has been said of General Noguès<sup>26</sup> that he is an opportunist and time server who sacrifices his subordinates to maintain his own position and that he is a man without any strong fixed principles. It must be remembered, however, that Noguès took a very advanced position in favor of a continuance of French resistance from the French colonial empire in June 1940, a fact which does not appear to have been reported adequately to the Department at the time.

In all my talks with him since my arrival in Morocco I have never found the least suggestion of any anti-Allied sentiment. In these conversations Noguès has shown himself always discreet but also unmistakably friendly disposed toward the democratic cause. If he has shown himself an opportunist it can only be said that faced with the necessity of composing the conflicting interests confronting him he has shown himself skillful and dexterous in maintaining himself for 18 months in his position, as any man would have had to do in his place.

It has been charged that he is both a politician and a soldier but no one who was not a consummate politician could have survived the storms of the past year as he has. Noguès is an old Moroccan who is passionately devoted to this country if he can be said to have any passion. He was trained by Lyautey<sup>27</sup> and the disintegration of Morocco would mean the loss of his life work. He retains the great respect of the Sultan and the natives as possibly no French administrator has since Lyautey and it is this strong bond with the native population which has preserved his situation so long with Vichy. I obviously do not know what his feelings are at present but I believe it may be safely said that he would be willing to take any reasonable risks to safeguard France's position in Morocco.

Repeated to Vichy, Algiers and Casablanca.

CHILDS

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<sup>24</sup> Harry Earle Russell, Consul General at Casablanca.

<sup>25</sup> David W. King, Vice Consul at Casablanca.

<sup>26</sup> Gen. Albert Noguès, Resident General in the French Zone of Morocco.

<sup>27</sup> Marshal Louis Hubert Gonsalve Lyautey, Resident General in the French Zone of Morocco, 1912-25.

740.0011 European War 1939/16883: Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, November 25, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 8:20 p. m.]

365. My telegrams 360<sup>28</sup> and 361 of November 24. I have just received by courier from the Consulate in Casablanca the following memorandum left with the Consulate by Pierre Lyautey<sup>28a</sup> with the request that it be transmitted to me. In its covering communication, the Consulate states that Lyautey had said that his suggestions arise from conversation he has had with Resident General Noguès' secretary, General Voizard, and General Juin since the retirement of General Weygand. Following is translation of the memorandum:

[“]This note will give you my point of view subject to the development of events now taking place in the Libyan offensive.

I naturally reason as a Moroccan and accordingly I have always been opposed to a military policy in North Africa and to a Pro-Consulate in Algiers. Morocco is an Empire with a Sultan who is a religious and temporal head, and with a population proud of its history. That will always be the great political mainspring.

The Weygand-Murphy accord<sup>29</sup> had the incontestable advantage of assuring to the United States the publicity which they had never had in Africa. More than the small amount of merchandise sent, the presence of the consuls and their automobiles—today the only sign of force in Islam—has established American prestige.

The disappearance of the Pro-Consulate of Algiers which was doomed from its birth does not modify to my mind the essential and fundamental facts of the problem, namely, that the Atlantic shores of Africa are a commercial advance guard and tomorrow will be a military fortress for the operations which will permit the driving of the Germans from Africa, Italy and France.

A policy based on so much reality ought not to be eliminated by the sole fact of the disappearance of one man. If General Weygand had had the airplane accident of General Huntziger,<sup>30</sup> would the policy of the accord have been terminated?

The nomination of General Juin, former collaborator of Marshal Lyautey and future Minister of War, signifies that France intends to reserve Africa for the Africans.

General Noguès was somewhat hurt at having been left outside the accord by General Weygand and by Monick,<sup>31</sup> to speak only of the French.

Advantage should be taken of the suspension to resume most discreetly the conversations in choosing the day of an Anglo-American success in Libya and in letting it be understood that in these conversations the consideration of every political aspect is adjourned in order

<sup>28</sup> Not printed.

<sup>28a</sup> Nephew of Marshal Lyautey.

<sup>29</sup> See telegram No. 249, February 28, 10 a. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 226.

<sup>30</sup> Gen. Charles Léon Huntziger, late French Secretary of State for War.

<sup>31</sup> Emmanuel Monick, former Secretary General, French Zone of Morocco.

to facilitate the task of the Resident General with the German commissions.

The Residency General has always let it be understood that if it had been alone in negotiation, the commercial accord untrammelled by the inevitable publicity due to the signature of a universally known soldier, it would have been at the same time more discreet and more fruitful. By being more discreet the cotton goods would have arrived in larger numbers and would have on the other hand exercised a profound influence upon the native Moslems.

If Washington were to throw away this card it would give to Berlin too easily acquired advantages. The Reich got Weygand it is true but it should not be allowed to exploit this success in its lesser consequences.

So long as American diplomacy is present in Morocco it should play all of its trump cards, letting the population understand that there is no question, by its departure of delivering it to Germany, bound hand and foot and to leave the Residency General to drop the mask and to play an open and aboveboard game. Algiers is dead, long live Rabat. This is the language which must be used. The guarantees are more-over inevitably connected with the natural consequence of the existing fact.

In taking into account these psychological considerations the diplomacy of the United States will be guided by the fact that a people should not be left without a counterweight and that its conduct in the future will be influenced by the feeling of never having been abandoned by America.

Surely one can speculate upon the instinctive reactions due to hunger, misery and external trouble, the preludes of an Anglo-American expedition. But from the practical point of view the hypothesis is premature as a German air expedition is more probable. One should follow up therefore with patience the work so well begun.

If the sentiments of this note are shared it would be easy to appreciate the conditions in which the negotiations should be opened. But it would appear above all to be indispensable not to leave to the men here in the government the feeling of an American abandonment and therefore of the success of a German Eur-African policy. Even if only on questions of detail, the conversations should be resumed immediately."

As the Department is aware the Lyautey above mentioned is a nephew of Marshal Lyautey and has had as such very close relations with Morocco.

Repeated to Algiers; by courier to Casablanca.

CHILDS

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740.0011 European War 1939/16905: Telegram

*The Consul at Tunis (Doolittle) to the Secretary of State*

TUNIS, November 25, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received November 26—9:11 p. m.]

144. The shock of Weygand's dismissal which was like that of the Armistice is now producing in Tunis strong doubts of Vichy. Former



sincere collaborationists are revising their ideas and for the first time since my arrival here the possibility of North Africa declaring itself free is openly discussed. However, the result of the British campaign in Libya will be the touchstone. It is not believed here that the Germans are in sufficient strength in Sicily to take positive action against Tunis if the British make speed.

In the Air Force the defection of General Odic<sup>32</sup> has had an enormous effect. No longer ago than July Odic had told the local aviators that they must follow the Marshal blindly and now they know not what to believe. According to Bergeret,<sup>33</sup> here on inspection and the last military man in the Cabinet, the resignation of Pétain may be expected any day.

General de Lattre<sup>34</sup> is reported furious over appointment of Juin to supreme command in Africa. Other military men are badly shaken and there are signs of an impending conflict between Army and Navy here.

The United States have critical role to play, one which must be speedily and seriously studied. Our prestige is great and our disinterestedness admitted. But we are far distant. The French here would like to have not only our promise of material help but our physical presence in the form of armed forces, even a token naval detachment, as a buffer against the British and a guarantee of our sincerity of purpose.

On the other hand the Arabs want to see the French put down and look to America to help them win a greater degree of freedom. They fear the conflict is moving in on Tunisia and they want a friend at hand.

Vichy is rumored to have until Thursday<sup>35</sup> to accede to whatever demands Germany may have made. This rumor may tie in with the remark about Pétain's possible exit. Up to today no demands have been made on the Tunisian Government itself from any source. In any case the whole North African situation hinges entirely on the success of the British drive in Libya and failure there now will destroy what little will to resistance remains among the French and throw them definitely into the German orbit in self-defense.

In that case and if we are unwilling or unable to act we might as well close our offices here and write off our investment.

Repeated to Vichy, copy to Algiers and Tangier.

DOOLITTLE

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<sup>32</sup> Gen. Robert Odic had retired on August 10, 1941, as Commanding General of the French Air Forces in Africa. He promptly left North Africa for the United States and subsequently joined the Free French.

<sup>33</sup> Gen. Jean Marie Joseph Bergeret, French Secretary of State for Aviation.

<sup>34</sup> Gen. de Lattre de Tassigny, French commander of troops in Tunisia.

<sup>35</sup> November 27.

740.00112 European War 1939/3974: Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, November 25, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received November 26—8:24 p. m.]

602. From Murphy. Your 325, November 21, 6 p. m., and Ambassador Leahy's 1454, November 19, 6 p. m., regarding our policy toward France and North Africa. I of course concur in the recommendations made by the Ambassador especially his suggestion that "it does not now appear to be to our advantage to permit the initiative to remain with the Axis Powers who equally with Vichy are responsive only to aggressive action." I believe also that in translating that thought into action we should not abandon any instruments available to us.

I respectfully submit that the value to us locally (whatever its value in the United States) of a public declaration to the effect that the North African economic plan is suspended is doubtful. It seems to everyone here that such a declaration strengthens the German position. The local reaction is in part—if the Americans abandon us there is nothing else to do but depend on the other side. We are faced by opponents who do not publish in advance their decisions; they depend on surprise and duplicity as much as possible. It is evident that the German demand for the removal of Weygand is an expression of their opposition to his policy, part of which was expressed in his economic accord with the United States which enabled American influence to develop in this area.

The accord has brought with it certain advantages for our representatives in North Africa—a courier service, the use of cipher messages between the territories and the maintenance of observers, acting as control officers. Our cancellation of the accord will undoubtedly deprive us of these advantages just as it deprives friendly officials of our influence and support. It would seem that we should endeavor to retain these advantages as long as we can.

I recommend that if possible, we permit the economic accord (now suspended) to continue ostensibly in effect. It is understood that there are now two small cargo ships with mixed cargoes en route to Casablanca. Their arrival will create the impression for a short time at least that we have not abandoned the field. The small volume and the character of such cargoes are without military importance. The arrival of 1 or 2 additional non-petroleum cargoes during the coming weeks would enable us to maintain our position. The shipments would be compensated by cork and other shipments necessary for the national defense. Such a temporary set-up would provide a useful auxiliary for aggressive action in line with the Ambassador's recommendation.

I suggest the following considerations: The recall for consultation of the Ambassador and myself and publicity of the American attitude as recommended by the Ambassador are acts which should be implemented by the formulation of a new Mediterranean policy of which our French policy is a segment. (A rupture of our relations with the French Government, it seems to all here, would be a voluntary relinquishment of the advantage of maintaining representatives in this area—an advantage which the Germans after months of striving only recently obtained.)

It is now evident that the French State will yield to the Germans in French Africa. The only man who successfully opposed German encroachment has been removed. Concessions will be progressive—one step at a time always accompanied by a Vichy denial of any change of general policy or intention to make further concessions. Weygand's removal opens the door to German infiltration, increase of Armistice Commission and other German personnel, who are already arriving, propaganda and other subversive activity. Quietly the ground will be laid for direct Axis control of the territory by the liquidation of unfavorable individuals and persuasion of others. When the moment is ripe the military use of Tunisia by the Axis would be automatic and undoubtedly coupled with a Vichy denial that this would affect in any way the status of Algeria. I believe that the doors of French Africa are now open to the Germans and that during the coming weeks they will use the entry provided them.

It is also clear that French circles here were wrong when they anticipated that the Germans in Spain would take all the necessary steps for the invasion of Africa before they brought pressure to bear on Vichy. The Germans to the contrary calculated Vichy's confusion and readiness to submit to pressure and as a result Weygand was sacrificed to Hitler who apparently was in no position to invade this area.

It appears that the Germans, convinced that they cannot invade Britain nor win the battle of the Atlantic, must organize the Continent on a defensive basis to hold out indefinitely. With their successes in Eastern Europe they [could?] apparently dispose of inadequate resources if they could solve the transportation problem. Land transport and the Danube are inadequate to cope with the huge requirements of the Eur-African if we consider but two elements—Russian wheat and Rumanian oil. German domination of the Mediterranean therefore seems vital for Axis prosecution of the war. It has proved impossible to win the battle of the eastern Mediterranean because Britain has control of the Near East and might prevent passage through Turkey. On the other hand the reinforcement of Libya has proved too much for the Italian Navy.

Therefore, it becomes apparent that the problem of the control of the Mediterranean can only be solved by action in the western part of that sea. If the hypothesis is correct that present French policy contemplates opening the door of French North Africa to the Axis, and that this in turn may be conclusive of the battle of the Mediterranean then I respectfully submit that our policy should support in every practical way a British effort to prevent all transport by the Mediterranean between Europe and Africa.

Libya has proved that adequate reinforcements cannot be brought by air and that they could be prevented from arriving here in force by a screen of naval units operating in the western Mediterranean.

If this can be done our task in North Africa as long as permitted would consist of the cultivation of well-disposed civilian and military officials (with the possibility of developing among the generals a provisional leader), the close surveillance of the movement of German effectives and material, the reporting of data of interest especially shipping and related developments. The Department undoubtedly has accurate information regarding the Axis shipping possibilities. That they are limited would seem clear from the fact that they have thus far not been able apparently to provide a foreign ship to fetch the 500 tons of cobalt ore awaiting them at Nemours. I am now told that the French Admiralty will perform this small service. It will undoubtedly also cooperate in facilitating other trans-Mediterranean shipments.

Replying to the Department's inquiry I respectfully concur in the Ambassador's recommendation that I be recalled for consultation.

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/16893: Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, November 26, 1941—noon.

[Received 1:59 p. m.]

606. From Murphy. Your 325, November 21, 6 p. m., last paragraph. I am told that 2 weeks ago Darlan, after a long series of German complaints that the German Armistice representatives in French Morocco were ignored and mistreated, restricted unnecessarily to their movements which were controlled by French liaison personnel and not allowed "to occupy in the eyes of the native population the dignified position to which representatives of the great German Reich were entitled", yielded to their demands for more liberty of movement. They have always enjoyed the technical right to wear uniforms and

carry side arms just as the Allied Armistice Commission representatives did in Germany after the last war. The French insisted in the beginning that unpleasant incidents would be avoided if the Germans ordinarily did not assert their right to appear in public in uniform. They have not been granted, according to reliable sources here, police powers.

Repeated to Vichy, Casablanca and Tangier. [Murphy.]

COLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/16895 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Casablanca (Russell) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, November 26, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received 8:24 p. m.]

651. Vice Consul King reports from a police contact that the police, Sûreté and Service des Renseignements at Rabat have received orders to reinstate repressive measures against German agents and extra Armistice Commission activities. Same contact reports that the forcing out of Weygand seems to have bolstered up the French morale and determination to resist all over North Africa; that the opinion is growing here, even among those who were favoring a strict blockade by the British a few weeks ago, that from the American point of view it would be fatal to stop the economic plan just when the North African spirit of resistance was beginning to crystallize.

General Juin has left for Algiers and Tunis. It is reported from another source although not yet substantiated that General Bethouard <sup>36</sup> has told his officers that if Juin would not resist German invasion others would be found who would. At the moment there seems to be a certain swing back in favor of Juin as the belief seems to be that he would not keep his parole if the Germans invaded North Africa. The same officer group feel that Noguès should remain as Resident General because he can be relied upon to resist German efforts to encroach on this territory.

With reference to my 642, November 23 [22], 11 [10] a. m.<sup>37</sup> this contingent apparently was a substitute one for men called back to active service as the total actual number of the Commission has diminished rather than increased, the total number in Morocco now being 185 (see my 646, November 25, 1 p. m.<sup>37</sup>).

Repeated to Vichy, Algiers, and Tangier.

RUSSELL

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<sup>36</sup> Gen. Emile-Marie Bethouart, French liaison officer with the German Armistice Commission in French Morocco.

<sup>37</sup> Not printed.

851.00/2169½

*The Counselor of Embassy in France (Murphy), Temporarily at  
Algiers, to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

ALGIERS, November 27, 1941.

DEAR MR. WELLES: You might be interested to know that among others Louis Rollin, formerly of Havas,<sup>38</sup> has been living in Algiers where he is part of a small group who have given much thought to the direction in which France has been going during the months since the Armistice, and who have been busy lately with the formulation of a plan of action. I might mention also that Metral, formerly under-secretary for Air, is associated in the study which is being made.

General Weygand's departure, I believe, is crystallizing this study into a practical movement which has the advantage of being limited to a very small group. In essence, their purpose is the establishment in French Africa of a provisional government operating independently of metropolitan France. They are searching and hope to find shortly a military leader (General Delattre de Tassigny, commanding in Tunisia, is the man they have in view now). They feel that he is sufficiently ambitious, ruthless and able to lead such a movement. They also have in mind that Yves Chatel, who succeeded General Weygand as Governor General of Algeria, will fill the top civilian role in such a provisional setup. The control would be in the hands of four or five men at the most. Their immediate action would consist of cutting off all communication with metropolitan France, at which time they will require both economic and military support from the United States. By military support they mean matériel and munitions.

Another phase of their current study is a formula under which a bridge could be constructed between themselves and the De Gaulle<sup>38a</sup> organization. Their conviction is that a large number of desirable military and civilian officials otherwise available, because of an undoubted antipathy which exists among them, would shrink from the idea of forming part of the De Gaulle organization.

They are also studying the question of the role which the French Admiralty would play in such an undertaking. They say that they are reasonably certain of the army and the air force, and that while the navy would play a secondary part, it nevertheless is a factor to be considered.

I thought that you would want me to mention this to you quite informally as a factor in the present situation which may or may not

<sup>38</sup> Official French news agency.

<sup>38a</sup> Gen. Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French.

develop. As to our interest, I have contented myself with references to the public statements made by the President, the Secretary and yourself regarding the American desire to support any group which is offering resistance to axis aggression, and I have also underscored as much as possible my notion regarding the considerable volume of aid, both economic and matériel, which should be available in the United States during the coming months.

Louis Rollin feels that there is a strong possibility that this movement may materialize during the coming weeks.

Faithfully yours,

ROBERT D. MURPHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/3996 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, December 1, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received December 1—8:20 a. m.]

373. A high official in Rabat informed me that German charges against Weygand related not to his conversations with Murphy regarding the economic accord but had to do with conversations of a "political and military nature".

I endeavored to obtain more explicit information but he appeared either to be uninformed further or else disinclined to talk. I incline to the former alternative.

He expressed renewed concern that our code systems were vulnerable. He has maintained this to me on two previous occasions (see my despatch 333 of September 5<sup>39</sup>). I expressed disbelief and he then said of course the leak might have been through a clerk who handled the coding and decoding or who did the typing. He was insistent that there is a serious leak somewhere if it can be safely assumed that our codes are not being read.

Repeated to Algiers; by courier to Casablanca.

CHILDS

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740.00112 European War 1939/4000 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Casablanca (Russell) to the Secretary of State*

CASABLANCA, December 1, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received 9:10 p. m.]

662. From Murphy. I called on General Noguès at Rabat on his invitation. His purpose was to urge that the United States continue its supply program for North Africa. He talked at considerable

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\* Not printed.

length of Morocco's economic troubles, the gist of his conversation being that although the United States only feeds North Africa with a dropper, even that small trickle is of great importance in the prevailing difficult economic situation. Morocco desperately needs textiles and petroleum products. I suggested that the French Government has been informed that our policy is under review in Washington. I said that we wondered if General Weygand's departure at German request presages further concessions to the Germans who we understand are reinforcing their position in Morocco. Noguès repeated the refrain that there is no change regarding German infiltration in Morocco. He also repeated what several other officials have said to the effect that the Germans fear Anglo-American action and influence in this area more than we fear the Germans. He also made reference to the story that Weygand was the victim of American and British press and radio, saying that if the United States could keep French Africa out of the news for 6 months nothing would happen here.

Noguès also declared that he had just talked with Childs and gained the impression that our Consuls in Casablanca were telegraphing alarming reports concerning German activity in Morocco which are unjustified by the facts. He denied that the German Armistice Commission had been granted or is exercising police or political powers and stated that the Commission's personnel has not been augmented since Weygand's departure. He criticized Weygand's policy of ruthlessly penalizing French and native persons in this area who made contact with the German representatives stating that such policy was unwise because it infuriated the Germans and goaded them into demanding new concessions.

My investigation leads me to believe that Vice Consul Reid's telegraphic report 642, November 23 [22], 11 [10] a. m.,<sup>40</sup> regarding the alleged arrival of 50 armed uniformed Germans and his further report in telegram 621, November 18, 6 p. m.,<sup>40</sup> stating that German Armistice Commission personnel would be authorized to exercise police powers, are unsubstantiated and are simply part of a heavy crop of rumors following on Weygand's departure. I have discussed these and similar reports with Russell and Childs who agree that greater effort be made to verify the accuracy of such stories before transmission.

I suggested to Noguès that our supply program undoubtedly hinges on France's general policy and the concessions it may make or has made to Germany regarding this area.

Noguès said that he could not discuss general policy—he follows the Marshal, and Vichy has decided to centralize its authority over

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<sup>40</sup> Not printed.



French Africa. He could only say that thus far there is no change in Morocco, but he believed there would be "an increase in the number of the German Armistice Commission personnel". He said he was going to Vichy shortly to discuss that matter.

I find practically no change in the physical situation in Morocco but a general apprehension that Vichy concessions may lead to changes in the future. Noguès, I find, is as well disposed as ever but it is obvious that we can not count heavily on him for independent resistance to Vichy decisions in favor of German influence in Morocco.

Repeated to Vichy. [Murphy.]

RUSSELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/16982 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, December 1, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 8:16 p. m.]

374. Following is a composite summary of conversations being reported in detail by despatch with 6 of the highest officials in Rabat, with 5 of whom I am on fairly intimate terms and who spoke with even more than their customary freedom. My conversation with the Resident General is being reported separately.

1. No police powers have been given the members of the German Armistice Commission in Morocco. The facts are substantially as reported by Murphy (see Algiers 606, November 26, noon). The appearance of so many Germans in uniform no doubt gave rise to the rumor of the landing of 50 additional Germans at the airdrome in Casablanca as reported in Casablanca's 642, November 23 [22], 10 a. m.<sup>41</sup> The most categorical denial was made of this last report.

2. Noguès was to meet Orgaz<sup>42</sup> November 29 and to lunch with latter at Larache but was prevented by illness. The meeting was a return of that of last July (see Legation's telegram 348, November 12, 4 p. m.<sup>41</sup>) and matters relating to the feeding of Tangier were the principal items on the agenda.

3. There is a general desire that the economic accord should go on. It is pointed out that the termination of this accord would throw Morocco into the economic arms of Germany. The furnishing of cotton goods for the use of the natives can not assist Germany indirectly. One official welcomed the temporary suspension of the accord as affording the French the opportunity to press Germany to

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<sup>41</sup> Not printed.

<sup>42</sup> Gen. Luis Orgaz, High Commissioner of the Spanish Zone of Morocco.

supply Morocco and thus to prove to Germany that no other means exist for keeping Morocco going economically than by maintaining relations with the United States. Another official suggested that so long as Germany is short of men it cannot spare either the men or material for the policing of Morocco and North Africa now being done by French troops and that it is in the present interest of Germany not to do anything that will disturb the existing arrangement. I heard through a third party that Auer, new German Consul General in Casablanca, had stated to a French official that Germany desired nothing more than to preserve the *status quo* in Morocco.

4. The view expressed that one could only consider it little short of a miracle that France had been left as long as she had in undisturbed possession of North Africa. (This was the view expressed by me to the British Consul General in Tangier last week.)

5. It is in our interest to do everything possible to maintain French contact in North Africa. When the statement was made that one of the fundamental considerations to us in solving the North African problem was that of avoiding doing anything that might assist Hitler, an official stated that the Protectorate authorities would give any practical guarantees not touching Morocco's sovereignty; that nothing produced in Morocco went to Germany which was the result of American economic aid. The further suggestion was made that our aid be if necessary placed on a shorter term basis.

6. Great gratification was expressed with our decision to suspend licenses for petroleum shipments to Spanish Morocco and Tangier, the reduction of such stocks lessened the possibility of Spanish pressure on French Morocco.

7. If the economic aid is to go on, and no one sees anything but economic collapse and native troubles otherwise, stress was laid by all on the necessity for greater prudence and discretion in all discussions and comments relating to the accord (see my telegram 373, December 1, 11 a. m.). Some time ago I told a British journalist in Tangier he could render Noguès no greater disservice than to praise him or to leave the slightest suggestion that he was anti-German and pro-Ally. This holds true for American journalists and American radio broadcasts, I was told.

8. The policy of the Marshal was interpreted as that of making concessions of subsidiary importance to protect what he regarded as more important French interest. With the means at France's disposal and the inhuman means of pressure available to Germany (see Legation's telegram 215, June 14, 1941<sup>43</sup>) no other method than that of bargaining and of giving way step by step to better protect one's retreat

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<sup>43</sup> *Ante*, p. 377.

is available. When I asked where the limits of retreat were, the answer was made that this was impossible to determine. I asked if the French were prepared to abandon North Africa and the fleet to German pressure. The answer was that the Marshal's policy was directed to preserve North Africa, and that the Germans would never be able to compel the use of the fleet by their side. Some naval officials might will it but the fleet would not sail.

9. Weygand's dismissal has had a profound effect on public opinion in Morocco and has opened the eyes of many French waverers who have been touched to the quick by the offense to French *amour-propre*. It has greatly strengthened French sentiment against Germany including even the Legion and other organizations of anti-democratic tinge.

10. The situation may be summed up as extremely fluid. The greatest hopes are centered on a British victory in Libya and officials who first make it clear that they are not Communist fairly gloat over Russian resistance. I do not think I have ever found the feeling in Rabat so pronouncedly anti-German nor have I found at the same time such uncertainty as to the future.

11. Neither Noguès nor any other French official in North Africa, I was assured, would take the lead in offering any resistance. The impression given was that the French have not the means and have not the will to offer any other than passive resistance to the Germans but one thing seemed certain, that this spirit of passive resistance is growing.

Repeated Vichy; courier to Algiers and Casablanca.

CHILDS

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740.00112 European War 1939/4010 : Telegram

*The Chargé at Tangier (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

TANGIER, December 1, 1941—midnight.

[Received December 2—5 : 36 p. m.]

375. Following is a summary of my conversation with General Noguès on November 30.

He first inquired about the status of the economic accord and I said that I had no instructions but that Murphy whom he was going to see in a few moments was better qualified to speak with him on that subject. He emphasized that Weygand's departure had not changed anything so far as Morocco's position toward the economic accord was concerned.

I said that while I had no instructions whatsoever from the Department I thought that an unfortunate impression may well have

been created in Washington by the appearance of members of the German Armistice Commission.

Noguès said that the Germans had insisted on wearing their uniforms as a reprisal against the severe restrictions with which he had surrounded them. The other reports were entirely false and had probably been spread by British intelligence agents. The Protectorate authorities had expelled any French person having any relation whatsoever with the Commission outside the strict scope of its activities. Even women in bordels frequented by them had been expelled from Morocco for this association. He added that in addition to exercising their right to wear uniforms the Germans had threatened also to increase the Armistice Commission. He stated that they were already tired of wearing their uniforms as it was a source of embarrassment to them and he had pointed out to the Commission that it greatly increased the possibility of incidents which he wished to avoid at all costs. A Nantes or Bordeaux affair might well result in unforeseeable consequences. He thought the Germans would gradually abandon their intention to wear uniforms at all times but he could say nothing regarding a probable increase in the Commission.

Noguès said a great fault committed in connection with the economic accord had been the loose talk concerning it. Reports had reached him of widespread statements as far afield as Madrid that Weygand was the man of the United States. This talk had done great damage to Weygand and the announcement of the suspension of the accord following the departure of Weygand played directly into the hands of the Germans as it tended to justify the German contention that the accord had a political basis.

He hoped the accord would continue on a purely economic basis. He thought it in our interest, as well as in that of France, to maintain North Africa and especially Morocco outside the war area. The advent of the war to Morocco would be disastrous. Morocco, he insisted, would defend itself against any [attack]. He wished to emphasize that any menace by us against North Africa was only playing into the hands of Germany. I repeated that I had no official information but mentioned our apprehension that German bases might be established. He did not see how submarine bases on the Moroccan coast would give the Germans any advantages they did not already possess at Brest for example.

He did not believe that a German demand for transport of troops via Bizerte was likely. He thought Germany had too little at stake in Libya to risk an attempt to salvage that operation if it went sour.

He thought the Spanish work on airdromes in Spanish Morocco was defensive in character and that it was in the nature of defensive measures against the possibility of a British landing.

In Russia he thought the defense of Moscow more important than the retaking of Rostov just announced. The great thing for the Russians was for them to prevent the Germans from establishing themselves in control of the Volga which seemed to be their ultimate aim.

At one point in the conversation he referred to the tendency of some Spanish authorities to undermine his position in view of his refusal to consider any discussions regarding the extension of Spanish Morocco to the Sebou line. He said that nothing was known as to how far the Laval conversations had gone on this subject (see my despatch 271 [217], June 14, 1941<sup>45</sup>) and that he had taken the position that there could be no adjustment of this subject with Spain until a final general treaty of peace.

Noguès said the native population of Morocco was absolutely dependent on our aid. It was now anti-British but pro-American. If we withdrew our aid the feeling would shift against us also. In the absence of our aid Morocco would be forced to look elsewhere. Noguès had gotten out of a sick bed to see me and he was tired and worn from malaria. It was difficult to determine whether his illness or his anxiety regarding the situation in Morocco and his own personal position was responsible for the nervousness and lack of customary ease with which he spoke.

Repeated to Vichy; by courier to Casablanca and Algiers.

CHILDS

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740.00112 European War 1939/3974: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Casablanca (Russell)*

WASHINGTON, December 2, 1941—9 p. m.

474. For Murphy in reply to his telegram of November 25 from Algiers.<sup>46</sup> In view of the developing military situation in Libya, as well as the uncertainty whether you would readily be accorded permission to return to North Africa, the Department considers it advisable for you to remain at Algiers for the time being.

The question as to the resumption of the economic plan is being studied in the light of developments following the dismissal of General Weygand. It is hoped to send you further word on this subject as soon as the facts in the situation become clearer, possibly by the end of this week.

Inform other offices in North Africa and repeat to Vichy.

HULL

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<sup>45</sup> Not printed.

<sup>46</sup> Telegram No. 602, November 25, 7 p. m., p. 479.

740.00112 European War 1939/4106

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division  
of Near Eastern Affairs (Villard)*

[WASHINGTON,] December 4, 1941.

Mr. Marchal and Mr. Guérin<sup>47</sup> came in to discuss the present position with regard to the program of economic aid to North Africa. I said that until the facts became clearer in respect to developments following the dismissal of General Weygand, the Department was taking no action, and that the plan was considered to be in suspense. In respect to a further specific question, I said that I hoped we might be able to reach some decision in the early part of next week, in order that some word might be given to the two French vessels now in New York, which had returned from Casablanca and were awaiting another cargo.

Mr. Marchal said that he would like to stress the importance of continuing the economic plan. He pointed out that by discontinuing the shipments we are fulfilling the desires of the Germans and we would soon be creating an atmosphere of disillusionment on the part of the French people. Mr. Marchal said that the question was an important one, since by permitting these shipments to go forward again the French critics of the United States and the collaborationists would be silenced.

Mr. Marchal also pointed out that the commodities being sent to North Africa were of no consequence whatever from a military point of view, that they were intended for consumption by the native population, and that if unrest developed among the Arabs the likelihood of the French authorities' being able to control the situation would be so much the more diminished. Commodities such as tea, sugar, cotton fabrics, et cetera, were urgently needed by the natives, and the very small amounts even of these products which had been going forward could not conceivably have any effect on the military situation, even if they all fell into the hands of the Germans.

Mr. Guérin suggested that Ambassador Leahy should be instructed to seek renewed assurances from Marshal Pétain, that North African territory would not be given to the Germans for use as a military base. Mr. Guérin said he realized that the entire plan of economic aid depended on the action of the French Government in respect to its territory in Africa, as well as on the use to which the French Navy might be put. Neither Mr. Marchal nor Mr. Guérin believed that Marshal Pétain would give bases to the Germans in North Africa, or that the French Navy would be turned over to the Germans. Mr. Guérin felt,

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<sup>47</sup> Léon Marchal and Paul Guérin, French Embassy officials responsible for North African affairs.

however, that as a condition to resumption of the plan the Vichy Government should be required to renew its assurances to the United States that it would not pass beyond the strict terms of the Armistice.

Mr. Marchal said that he wished to stress the very serious need of petroleum products in the event the plan was resumed. He said that it was his earnest hope that the *Lorraine* would be permitted to take the cargo which had been authorized, and that a plan would be worked out for the disposition of the *Schéhérazade*. I said that there was some evidence to indicate that the petroleum products which had gone forward to Morocco had in part been used to facilitate mining operations, and that the products of the mines might be eventually turned over to the Axis. Mr. Marchal suggested that resumption of petroleum shipments should be made conditional on assurances that there would be no export whatever of minerals from North Africa, and that the transportation of minerals produced in Morocco should in any case not be permitted to go as far as the ports but should stop at Marrakech.

Mr. Guérin suggested as a further condition to be exacted from the French Government for the resumption of the plan that assurances be given for proper publicity. He said that most of the inhabitants of North Africa, as well as France, were ignorant of the fact that supplies had been delivered from America. He felt it to be of the utmost importance that the French authorities be ordered to permit publication in the newspapers of the news that supplies had been delivered from the United States.

As a final point, Mr. Guérin urged strongly that American vessels be permitted to deliver the supplies direct to North Africa. I asked whether supplies could be successfully distributed if they were landed by American vessels at Tangier. Mr. Marchal said that the effect of this would be even greater than if vessels came into Casablanca, since at the former port the vessels could be plainly seen by all the inhabitants, whereas at the latter the wharves were so obscured from the public view that no one except a few officials knew when a steamer arrived.

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851.00/2534 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 4, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received December 5—9:24 a. m.]

1496. This evening I received a visit from a committee composed of Senator Bardoux, M. Jaray and M. Roz representing the Société France-Amérique and the French Senate, which committee stated that it sought the interview with the knowledge and approval of Marshal Pétain.

The committee asked that I transmit to Washington an expression of hope on the part of those whom they represent that no change be made as a result of Weygand's removal in the existing friendly political relations or the plan for economic aid for the African colonies. The committee said it was assured by the Marshal that the resignation of Weygand has made no change whatever in French policy in Africa; that the officials remaining there will at least for the present carry out exactly the policy followed by General Weygand, and that a stoppage of economic aid at this time would have the effect of throwing the native population into the hands of the Axis Powers who may promise anything without any intention of carrying out their promises.

The committee said that public reaction to Weygand's dismissal has been seriously adverse to the Marshal's prestige and that a withdrawal of the Ambassador or the stoppage of economic aid to Africa would discourage those Frenchmen who desire a British victory and would be an exact compliance with the desires of the Axis.

This report is forwarded in compliance with the request of the committee whose members are definitely anti-Axis.

Senator Bardoux in addition told me that he has highly reliable information to the effect that Germany has lost 1,200,000 killed in Russia, and that a Swiss Army officer of the highest rank who returned some days ago from a visit with the German Army in Russia told him that "Germany has already lost the war."

I suggested that in view of the present German prospects France should now be able to say no to German demands. He replied that he held exactly the same opinion and that he has and will continue to stress it in his contacts with the Marshal.

It is my personal opinion that the Marshal will not refuse future German demands if accompanied by sufficient pressure.

LEAHY

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851.00/2534 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, December 6, 1941—4 p. m.

898. Your 1496, December 4, 6 p. m. You should seek an early interview with the Marshal and refer to the visit of the Committee. You may state to the Marshal that, whereas we are still examining the problem of our relations with France on the basis of the information which has been made available to us, the future course of our policy is primarily dependent upon the Marshal's assurances that the French Fleet will not be used against the British and that French territory will not serve as bases for German military operations.



You may add that if he is prepared to reaffirm the assurances mentioned by the Committee with his knowledge and approval to the effect that the resignation of Weygand has made no change whatever in the French policy as regards North Africa and that the policy approved by the Vichy Govt and carried out by General Weygand will continue and that if a reaffirmation of the Weygand-Murphy memorandum of February 26, 1941 <sup>48</sup> may be forthcoming, we would be prepared to give as favorable consideration as possible to the prompt resumption of the program of economic assistance to North Africa. This interview with the Marshal should take place as soon as circumstances permit unless, in your opinion, more recent developments should render this course of action undesirable.

The following telegrams have just been received from the Legation at Bern. (Repeat Bern's 281, December 5, 11 a. m. and 282, December 5, 1 p. m. <sup>49</sup>).

If there are any movements of this nature <sup>50</sup> the Consulates at Lyon and Marseille should be able to obtain confirmation.

Please instruct them urgently to obtain all possible information in this respect.

Your comments on these reports will also be appreciated.

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740.0011 European War 1939/20095

*The Counselor of Embassy in France (Murphy), Temporarily at Algiers, to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

ALGIERS, December 7, 1941.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I enclose as of possible interest and to show the trend of thought of many representative Frenchmen who are interested in French Africa, a memorandum of a conversation with M. J. Lemaigre-Dubreuil, owner of *Le Jour* and a prominent French business man having important interests in French West Africa.

Faithfully yours,

ROBERT D. MURPHY

[Enclosure]

*Memorandum by the Counselor of Embassy in France (Murphy), Temporarily at Algiers*

ALGIERS, December 5, 1941.

I received the visit this afternoon on my return from Casablanca of Mr. J. Lemaigre-Dubreuil, who arrived on Thursday from Dakar

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<sup>48</sup> See telegram No. 249, February 28, 10 a. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 226.

<sup>49</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>50</sup> Alleged German troop movements toward southern France.

en route to France. M. Lemaigre-Dubreuil is the owner of the newspaper *Le Jour* and has important interests in the edible oil industry, particularly West African peanut oil. He tells me that his invested capital in French West Africa is in the neighborhood of 60 to 70 million francs. He has industrial interests in the occupied zone. He is the proprietor of the Lesieur edible oil plant at Dunkirk which was bombed by the Royal Air Force a few days ago, causing damage, he says, to the extent of four million francs.

Mr. Lemaigre-Dubreuil has always professed the friendliest sentiments in respect of the United States, and ever since General Weygand's arrival in French Africa, has evinced a desire to support his administration. He claims to be, and I believe he is, anti-German, for sentimental reasons and because he is convinced that German domination of France will in the end cause him to lose his own business, as it will lose to most Frenchmen the direction of their own affairs. He has said repeatedly that we should understand that some French business men still believe their interests would be best served by a German victory, and that a British victory would only mean the bolshevization of France.

The purpose of M. Lemaigre-Dubreuil's visit was to tell me that he considered General Weygand's dismissal in the nature of a major catastrophe which might well lead to France's loss of her African empire. Therefore, he said he proposed to work for the establishment of a French African provisional government which would be independent of Vichy. He declared that he is in contact with leading French officials and military authorities in French West and North Africa whose names he will disclose to me at a later date. I know that he has important connections. He said, however, that his plan is dependent on American support. He believes that nothing can be accomplished unless the United States would be prepared to consider the following program:

1—Recognize such a provisional government immediately it is established;

2—Provide transport ships to carry French effectives and military equipment now at Dakar to French North Africa;

3—Arrange for the immediate shipment of arms and ammunition to North Africa *against payment to be made by the provisional government with gold now stored in French Africa*;

4—Be prepared to send an expeditionary force of at least three divisions to French North Africa;

5—Guarantee the complete restoration of *all* the French Empire to France after the termination of hostilities;

6—Accept French command of military forces in French Africa;

7—When French Africa proclaims its independence the United States should send at least four warships to Bizerta as a demonstration

of its sympathy with the purpose of the French African provisional government to resist axis aggression.

Mr. Lemaigre-Dubreuil insisted that under such plan it must be demonstrated that the French are acting independently of the United States and that we must be careful to avoid any appearance of collusion.

Mr. Lemaigre-Dubreuil also recommended that in any dealings with French Africa, the United States must use the greatest discretion as the Germans today are maintaining a most active surveillance of everything which concerns this area. He said that after all there were only two ways of defeating the Germans: (1) by force or (2) by duplicity. He said that thus far the French position is that not having any means to resist by force, of necessity they must resort to ruse. In his own case, for example, as his business requires him to go from the occupied French zone to Africa, since his interests lie in both places, he is even going to the extent of having a police record carefully prepared which will be shown to the Germans indicating that he is a collaborationist and pro-nazi.

I told Lemaigre-Dubreuil, whom I have known for a long time, that his ideas are most interesting; that at the moment I could give him no indication of the policy of my government with respect to French Africa, because as I understand it, that policy is at present under discussion at Washington. I could only tell him that as he already knows, our general policy is to assist all those who offer resistance to axis aggression.

M. Lemaigre-Dubreuil, who is now en route to Paris, and who, of course, runs a grave risk should his actual plans become known to the German authorities, promised that he would keep me informed of future developments. He expects to return to French West Africa on December 22.

R[OBERT] D. M[MURPHY]

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740.0011 European War 1939/17361 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Algiers (Cole) to the Secretary of State*

ALGIERS, December 11, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received December 12—3 a. m.]

629. From Murphy. Your 474, December 2, 9 p. m., to Casablanca. Vice Admiral Fenard, who returned to Algiers last night, tells me that during his visit to Vichy Darlan convinced him that there is no reason to fear a German intrusion in this area. Darlan told him

that no major concessions in French Africa had been made to the Germans or are contemplated. Darlan and other Vichy officials, he said, now manifest the greatest interest in the continuation of the American economic plan for North Africa. They hope that American vessels will be used in the New York-Casablanca run. Fenard declared that many French officials now only begin to realize the importance of French Africa and the American plan which some were inclined to deprecate. He mentioned the increasing alarm felt by many regarding the local economic situation which is acutely unsatisfactory. He said that there is real apprehension over the problem of keeping millions of discontented Arabs in line. Fenard said that Darlan's offer to sell us the *Normandie* is a gesture which proves the French desire to be friendly.

He intimated, as did another Admiral (who asked that his name be not mentioned) just arrived from Vichy, that Darlan is convinced of American naval supremacy and is positive that the United States will defeat Japan. Under present circumstances Darlan cannot publish these sentiments but my contacts seem certain that he will be guided thereby in whatever influence he has on French policy. Fenard and other French officials here have expressed to us their sympathy with the United States in its war with Japan and their wishes for our victory. I believe that sentiment is shared by the bulk of the North African population.

Fenard painted a gloomy picture of North African economy, saying if American supplies are not received industry will drop to 10% of normal, and urged that we take prompt action to resume shipments to this area. He handed me a memorandum regarding the official contracts made for the purchase of goods in the United States, credits opened and licenses delivered for about 200,000 tons of merchandise with a value of approximately \$5,500,000. The memorandum inquires whether the orders given, the licenses and navicerts granted stand and whether the ships now in New York may be loaded. The reply will, of course, affect the movements of the ships now in Casablanca which would carry cargoes for New York. Goods sold f. o. b. once on board of course become the risk of consignee. The memorandum urgently requests the Department's early comment.

Admiral Fenard who was obviously acting under Darlan's instructions concluded with an urgent appeal that we make our influence felt in this area where he said we are most welcome by sending American goods and American ships "before it is too late".

Repeated to Vichy. Copies to North African offices by courier. [Murphy.]

851.33/211 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 12, 1941—11 p. m.  
 [Received December 13—11:30 a. m.]

1531. My 1523, December 11, 7 p. m.<sup>51</sup> We called on Rochat this evening who officially delivered to us three memoranda containing the replies to the question[s] I delivered yesterday [to] Marshal Pétain in the form of three memoranda. He said that "the Marshal has been happy to give you complete satisfaction and assurances on all the questions which you raised."

The following is a translation of the first memorandum dealing with the points raised in Department's 898, December 6, 4 p. m.

"Referring to the note handed by Admiral Leahy to Marshal Pétain and Admiral Darlan on December 11 the French Government renews the assurances that the French Fleet will not be utilized against Great Britain except in the case of hostile action on her part and that French territory will not be used as a base for operations by German armed forces.

It also renews the assurance that the departure of General Weygand did not entail any change in the political position of France in North Africa or any modification of the status governing these territories.

On the other hand it confirms the agreement concluded on March 10 between the Embassy of the United States at Vichy and the French Government on the basis of the memorandum drawn up following the conversation of February 26, 1941, between General Weygand and Mr. Murphy.<sup>51a</sup>

It hopes that the renewal of these assurances will cause the American Government to resume the program of supply for North Africa. It would be happy to receive confirmation thereof."

[Here follow translations of the second and third memoranda concerning Martinique and French neutrality, printed on pages 200-201.]

After handing us these notes, Rochat said that he was particularly glad that we had brought up the possibility of continuing our economic assistance to North Africa at this time. While he understands that as a result of our entry into war the possibility of our giving economic assistance to North Africa, as originally envisaged, may have to undergo drastic change, he said that the continuation of our economic assistance to North Africa will strengthen at the present time France's hand in resisting German demands there. He went on to say that if we resume sending supplies to North Africa, the French will be in a position to argue with the Germans that any additional material con-

<sup>51</sup> *Ante*, p. 198.

<sup>51a</sup> See telegram No. 249, February 28, 10 a. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 226.

cessions to them insofar as North Africa is concerned will lead to the discontinuation of our program and will create a "serious situation very disadvantageous to the Germans insofar as North Africa is concerned."

We asked him whether he really believed the French Government could resist a German demand or ultimatum for the withdrawal of code privileges and the departure of our consulates from North Africa. He replied with embarrassment that he could not answer this question. He went on to say that France would resist German demands in this regard with every possible argument but only the future can tell what the final decision will be. He stated that up to the present time no demands have been received from the Germans insofar as this mission or any of our consulates are concerned.

Repeated to Algiers for Murphy.

LEAHY

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851.33/211 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, December 13, 1941—6 p. m.

928. Your 1531, December 12, 11 p. m. Please communicate immediately a paraphrase of the following message from the President to Marshal Pétain:

"I have received with the greatest gratification the texts of the three memoranda which you transmitted to Ambassador Leahy in reply to the inquiry which he had made in my name.

The receipt of these positive assurances from you with regard to matters of vital concern to the defense of the United States has given me profound satisfaction.

You may rest assured that the Government of the United States under present circumstances and in view of the instructions which you have issued to Admiral Robert<sup>52</sup> will continue to give full recognition to the agreement reached by our two governments involving the maintenance of the *status quo* of the French possessions in the Western Hemisphere.

You will realize the practical difficulties presented by the changed situation in relation to the program of supply for North Africa. You may rest assured, however, that every possible step will be taken in order to make it possible for this Government to assist in the alleviation of conditions in French North and West Africa.

I am indeed hopeful that the traditional relations of close and understanding friendship between our two peoples may be maintained intact."

Please telegraph at once any reply that may be made to this message.

HULL

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<sup>52</sup> Adm. Georges Robert, Governor of the French West Indies and Supreme Commander of the French Islands in the Western Hemisphere.

740.0011 European War 1939/17700 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 19, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received December 20—3:45 a. m.]

1573. Embassy's 1537, December 14, 7 p. m.<sup>53</sup> The Foreign Office has just delivered to us a note signed by Marshal Pétain replying to the message from the President, a translation of which reads as follows:

Note for the Ambassador of the United States. December 19, 1941. The Marshal thanks the Ambassador of the United States for the message which he conveyed to him in the name of President Roosevelt. He notes the assurances given by the Government to the French Government.

The French Government is happy to note that the American Government continues to recognize fully the validity of the accord between the two Governments concerning the maintenance of the *status quo* in the French colonies of the Western Hemisphere.

It also notes with satisfaction the intentions of the United States Government as regards the resumption of the program of economic assistance to the territories of French North Africa. In view of the urgent needs of North Africa it would be grateful to the American Government if it would indicate the date on which this program could actually be resumed. Pétain.

Rochat, with whom we talked, as well as the person mentioned in our 1540, December 14, 9 p. m.,<sup>54</sup> said that the Marshal's reply had been addressed to me rather than to the President and had been carefully drafted in order to avoid giving the Germans any pretext for taking exception to it. "Obviously", Rochat said, "they will in due course obtain its text". Rochat went on to say that he "hoped we would read between the lines and that the program of economic assistance to North Africa would be resumed at the earliest possible moment". "Time", he said, "is of the utmost importance. If you could resume sending supplies and dispatch a ship to North Africa in the immediate future we would be able to use the resumption of the economic accord and our urgent North African needs which only you can fill, as an argument for resisting German demands there."

LEAHY

740.00112 European War 1939/4178 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Algiers (Cole)*

WASHINGTON, December 23, 1941—1 p. m.

352. For Murphy: In view of the renewed assurances with respect to North Africa which have been given by Marshal Pétain, we are

<sup>53</sup> *Ante*, p. 202.

<sup>54</sup> Not printed.

now considering the resumption of the economic plan on a restricted scale. It is planned to grant permission to the two vessels at present at New York to sail with a selected cargo provided the two ships at Casablanca simultaneously return to the United States. You should therefore make inquiry whether the latter vessels are prepared to resume loading with a view to early departure, and what cargo they would carry to this country.

It is to be strictly understood that no movements of tankers or petroleum products are contemplated at this time.

Repeat to Vichy.

HULL

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740.00112 European War 1939/4222 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 25, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 10:37 p. m.]

1605. Murphy reports December 23 there has been official discussion regarding possibility of shipment 4,000 tons gasoline (from French military or naval stocks) from French North Africa to Libya and that colonial authorities have objected that it would be a direct violation of our economic accord. Murphy's "reliable" informant stated that present plan is to send the gasoline from France for delivery via Tunisia.

Vice Admiral Fenard professed to Murphy ignorance of any such plan, stating that his, Fenard's, function is purely economic.

Murphy believes that military and naval authorities have orders from Vichy not to discuss such matters with him and he told Fenard that since the departure of Weygand there is no one in North Africa with a complete knowledge of the situation with whom he can discuss such matters.

It is our opinion here that Germany is pressing Vichy and will continue with increasing pressure to demand assistance for the Axis troops in Libya.

While it is highly probable that Darlan in the past promised some such assistance we are unable to obtain evidence that assistance has as yet been given.

Greetings from two Christmas laborers.

LEAHY



*President Roosevelt to General Weygand*<sup>55</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] December 27, 1941.

MY DEAR GENERAL WEYGAND: I am taking advantage of the departure of a courier a few days before the opening of the New Year to send you my cordial greetings. I have followed the situation in North Africa during your stay in that region with great interest and I am conscious of your courage and devotion in maintaining in so far as possible under the Armistice limitations the integrity of the French Empire. I am convinced that your resolution to do everything possible for the people of France has not ended with your departure from North Africa. I also believe that France cannot fail to recognize now and in the future what your contribution is and has been to its welfare and future greatness. As a lifelong friend of France I share your resolution.

It is in this particular sense that I write you as I am confident that in the difficult hours that lie ahead, your devotion to the best interests of your country will rise above any adverse circumstance.

In conclusion, I express my cordial greetings to you.

Very sincerely yours,

[File copy not signed]

740.00112 European War 1939/4258 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 30, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 5:01 p. m.]

1630. I obtained this morning an interview with Marshal Pétain and Admiral Darlan together and discussed with the Marshal the reports (Algiers December 26, 12 midnight<sup>56</sup>) that 3600 tons of gasoline from French supplies in North Africa are to be delivered to Axis forces in Libya in violation of our economic agreement.

The Marshal did not seem to be familiar with the matter but Darlan stated that the only gasoline that will be delivered to Libya will be shipped by steamer from continental France which he said he is required to deliver in exchange for material that France has received from Germany. He said that he was frank in stating that the Germans had threatened to occupy Morocco unless they received such supplies and that the Vichy Government consequently felt itself

<sup>55</sup> Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y. An attached note states that this letter was given to H. Freeman Matthews, Counselor of Embassy in London, to take to Lisbon on December 28.

<sup>56</sup> Not printed; Mr. Murphy told of the report mentioned here and of the reported French plans to sabotage delivery (740.0011 European War 1939/17914).

obliged to comply. Admiral Darlan added, and the Marshal was in apparent agreement, that they felt that above all things, every step should be taken to avoid a German occupation of North Africa and they had consequently agreed to the shipment of this gasoline from France.

Replying to a direct question Darlan said he may report to the United States that the economic agreement in regard to North Africa will not be violated and that no petroleum products will be delivered to Libya except "small amount" from continental France. This does not appear to be in agreement with Murphy's information that it is to be taken from military stock now in Africa, which latter appears more likely.

Darlan then referred to the Saint Pierre-Miquelon incident<sup>57</sup> and said that Germany has already used the seizure of those Islands by De Gaulle as an argument for the entry of Axis troops into Africa in order that it may be protected against a similar invasion.

Darlan requested and the Marshal agreed that prompt action to return the Islands to Vichy sovereignty be taken by the United States in order that the above-noted argument by Germany may have no justification.

During this interview the Marshal appeared fatigued and even older than usual and Darlan as usual maintained control of the French statements of attitude and policy.

Repeated to Murphy.

LEAHY

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**PERSECUTION OF JEWS IN FRANCE BY GERMAN OCCUPATION AND VICHY GOVERNMENTS; REPRESENTATIONS BY THE UNITED STATES ON BEHALF OF AMERICAN JEWS<sup>58</sup>**

851.4016/22 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, January 11, 1941—5 p. m.

104. According to a report just received from the Embassy in Paris,<sup>59</sup> an ordinance dated October 18, authorizing the occupying authorities to define what are to be considered "Jewish economic enterprises" provides that such enterprises might be submitted to the control of "Administrative Commissioners". The "Aryanization" is provided for in a subsequent instruction issued by the Chief of the German Military Administration.

Commissioners are now being named to assume control of these Jewish establishments. Jewish participation of any importance

<sup>57</sup> See pp. 540 ff.

<sup>58</sup> Continued from *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, pp. 565-570.

<sup>59</sup> Telegram No. 7, January 4, not printed.

whatsoever brings a business enterprise within the provisions of these measures. While the Commissioners are confirmed in their functions by the military governors of the areas concerned, a French Government bureau, the "Bureau de Controle des Entreprises Juives" has been set up in Paris with Fournier, former Governor of the Bank of France, as director to carry out the "Aryanization" task.

From the moment the Commissioner assumes charge he and he alone is responsible for the management of the enterprise with respect to the occupying authorities. His administrative practices are extensive and supersede the prerogatives of the owner or former management. Transactions with banks become impossible without the signature of the Commissioner whose first object shall be to "Aryanize" the enterprise and to eliminate from it all Jewish influence. Jewish owners are permitted to sell their enterprises to Aryan French nationals. Transfer must be effected within a very brief time but if for any reason sale is not consummated "within a very short" unspecified period, or in the event of a refusal to sell, the Commissioner is required without further delay to effect the sale or liquidation of the enterprise. The Jewish character of the enterprise ceases upon the assumption of the control by the Commissioner and notice to this effect is posted on the establishment to replace an earlier notice of Jewish ownership.

The Department has received no reply or indication of the German Government's attitude regarding its note of protest with relation to the ordinance of September 27 concerning similar racial discriminatory measures (see Department's telegram 2972, November 8 and No. 3025, November 15<sup>60</sup>).

You are instructed again to bring this matter to the attention of the Foreign Office and to point out that this Government expects that steps will promptly be taken to insure that American citizens will be exempted from the application of both of these ordinances.<sup>61</sup>

HULL

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851.4016/22 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, January 11, 1941—5 p. m.

127. Your No. 7, January 4.<sup>62</sup> A summary of the ordinance relating to Jewish economic enterprises has been telegraphed to the Embassy at

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<sup>60</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, pp. 568 and 570, respectively.

<sup>61</sup> Another note was sent to the German Foreign Office on January 16 but still there was no reply.

<sup>62</sup> Not printed; substance is given in telegram No. 104, January 11, 5 p. m., to the Chargé in Germany, *supra*.

Berlin with instructions to protest its application to American citizens or American interests. The Department is of the opinion that unless the enterprises concerned are predominantly American in character no representations in behalf of specific concerns can be undertaken by representatives of the Government.

HULL

851.4016/29 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 10, 1941.

[Received March 12—9:53 p. m.]

787. From Paris. Department's 127, undated [*January 11, 5 p. m.*], referring to my telegram No. 7, January 4. As a result of representations made in a specific case, the following reply has just been received from the German Embassy:

"The German Embassy has the honor to communicate the following to the Embassy of the United States of America in reply to the latter's *note verbale* of February 5, 1941:

The measures taken against the Jews by the Military Commander in France form, together with the regulations issued by the French Government, a part of the legal provisions concerning public security and order. They do not admit of any exceptions and must be applied to all persons residing in France, regardless of their nationality. They override the application of any other legislation.

The German Embassy is inclined, however, within the framework of legal regulations, to support the special wishes of the Embassy of the United States of America concerning the administration, or in given cases, the sale of Jewish enterprises when the interests of citizens of the United States of America are involved."

Repeated to Berlin. Barnes.<sup>63</sup>

LEAHY

851.4016/33 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 10, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 6:40 p. m.]

1829. The DNB<sup>64</sup> reports that in discussing the latest measures to exclude Jews from economic life in Paris it was stated by "competent German quarters" there that it is desired to obtain a "uniform settlement of the Jewish question as an international problem" and that

<sup>63</sup> Maynard B. Barnes, First Secretary of Embassy in France.

<sup>64</sup> Deutsches Nachrichten Büro.

“a final settlement for all Europe will be made with the conclusion of peace”.

It has been apparent for some time that a systematic plan is being directed from Berlin to establish in all countries under its control the German discrimination against Jews as rapidly as the local situation permits. The first step is in each case exclusion from political activity followed by social ostracism and economic despoliation leading ultimately to compulsory labor, forced emigration and ghettoization.

MORRIS

851.4016/34 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 12, 1941.

[Received May 14—8: 50 p. m.]

1372. From Paris. Reference Embassy's despatch 7466, January 13th, 1941,<sup>65</sup> and previous communications regarding German ordinance of September 27th, 1940. A new ordinance by the occupying authorities dated April 26th, 1941, and modifying their ordinance of September 27, 1940, relating to Jews was published in the press of May 9th. It is signed by the commander of the German military forces in France and is applicable from date of publication. Official text is not yet available. The following are the essential features of the ordinance as published :

Under article 1 all persons having at least three Jewish grandparents will be considered as Jews. A grandparent having belonged to a Jewish religious order will be considered *ipso jure* as Jewish. Furthermore all descendants of two Jewish grandparents and who (1) at moment of present ordinance belong to a Jewish religious order or do so later or (2) are married to a Jew or marry later a Jew will be considered as Jewish.

Article 2 requires that all persons affected must register before May 30th next and article 3 embodies a comprehensive list of economic activities from which Jews and Jewish enterprises not actually under the management of administrative commissioners will be excluded after May 20th next. This list covers practically all phases of economic activity. The same article also lays down severe restrictions on the employment of Jews. Article 4 provides for the appointment of administrative commissioners who will manage the interest of partners in limited liability companies belonging to Jews or to Jewish enter-

<sup>65</sup> Not printed.

prises. The administrative commissioners may sell such interests but not to Jews. Under article 6 no compensation will be made for damage resulting from the application of this ordinance.

The German official in charge of Jewish questions in France explained to the press that the new ordinance was intended to put an end to trading by Jews which had not definitely stopped under the liquidation procedure. He said that while the income and proceeds of liquidation had up to now been paid to owners by the administrative commissioners henceforth they would only receive "indispensable subsidies" even when an enterprise is totally liquidated. This official further stated that in order to eliminate Jewish participation in enterprises commissioners would be appointed to represent the Jewish proprietors. He concluded that the measures would probably be applied to the unoccupied zone by the French authorities and that the peace treaty would provide for the complete elimination of Jews from the Continent.

LEAHY

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851.4016/34 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 29, 1941.

1535. The Paris office of the American Embassy reports the publication in the Paris press of May 9 of a new ordinance by the occupying authorities dated April 26, 1941 and modifying their ordinance of September 27, 1940 relating to Jews. It is signed by the Commander of the German military forces in France and is applicable from the date of publication. Although the official text is not yet available sufficient information regarding the essential features of the ordinance has been received to indicate that further limitations with regard to the economic activity in occupied France of persons of Jewish origin have been imposed.

You are requested to bring this matter to the attention of the German Foreign Office and to state that this Government assumes in view of its previous communications on the subject, (see Department's telegrams no. 2972, November 8, 1940<sup>66</sup> and 104, January 11, 1941,) that its application will not apply to American citizens engaged in business in France. A definite indication of the German Government's position with regard to American citizens in this category should be obtained.

HULL

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<sup>66</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 568.

851.4016/40 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, June 16, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received June 17—5 p. m.]

708. The *Journal Officiel* of June 14, 1941, publishes two new decree laws further amplifying the anti-Semitic statute issued last October (Embassy's telegram No. 773, October 18, 4 p. m.;<sup>67</sup> and despatch 26, October 26, 1940<sup>68</sup>).

Under the new statute the following persons are defined as Jews: (1) descendants of 3 grandparents of the Jewish race; (2) descendants of 2 grandparents of the Jewish race if the person has a spouse who also has 2 Jewish grandparents; (3) persons practicing the Jewish religion as of June 25, 1940, who are descendants of 2 grandparents of the Jewish race.

The new decrees also provide for the registration of all Jews within 1 month's time and provides penalties of imprisonment and fines or both for persons who fail to comply with this requirement. It also further extends the number of professions which are barred to persons of the Hebrew race to include all professions which have a "speculative character" such as banking, brokerage, money changing, loan agencies, real estate loan agencies, etc. Vallat, Jewish Commissioner General for Jewish questions, in a press conference announced that a decree is also being prepared limiting the number of Jews who may practice medicine or law to 2 percent of the total.

He also stated that Carcopino, Secretary of State for Education, has proposed limiting the number of Jewish students to be admitted into the universities to 3% of the total number of students. He added that laws limiting the participation of Jews in business and agriculture are also envisaged.

The decree provides that the Government may make exceptions for persons who have rendered exceptional service to the state or whose family has been established in France for at least five generations and whose families have rendered meritorious service.

There has been no great reaction among the French people to the new decree. As one French Jew who is favorably known to the Embassy and to the Department said "how can one expect any public indignation at these new laws aimed at us when there is such apathy and lack of indignation about what happened to those thousands expelled from Alsace-Lorraine?"

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<sup>67</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 566.

<sup>68</sup> Not printed.

A number of people believe that the Government will take increasing steps to make the lot of persons of the Jewish race more difficult but that it is proceeding slowly to prevent possible public resentment so that it cannot be accused of aping too closely its Nazi masters.

The full texts of the decrees are being sent forward by pouch.<sup>68a</sup>

LEAHY

851.4016/42 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, June 19, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received June 20—10:20 a. m.]

719. Embassy's telegram No. 708, June 16, 8 p. m. The Embassy and Consulates in unoccupied France are receiving inquiries from American Jews as to whether or not they should register as Jews before July 14 under the recent anti-Semitic laws.

Article 2 of the Enabling Act carries penalties of fines up to 10,000 francs and imprisonment in Leipzig as much as 1 year or both for those who fail to comply, adding significantly "these provisions not to affect the right of the prefect to order internment in a special camp, even if the delinquent is French."

The Embassy would much appreciate an early expression of the Department's views in order to give appropriate advice to American residents of Jewish extraction.

LEAHY

851.4016/42 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, June 27, 1941—7 p. m.

515. Your 708, June 16, 8 p. m. You are instructed to address a communication to the French Foreign Office relating to the two new anti-Semitic decree-laws of June 14, 1941 and point out that this Government assumes that the provisions of these decree-laws will not be applied to American nationals in unoccupied France. In the opinion of this Government the provisions of the decree-laws, if applied to American nationals, would tend to divide them arbitrarily into two classes and subject them to differential treatment on the basis of such classification. In making your representations you should call to the attention of the French Foreign Office that it is one of the fundamental principles of this Government to make no distinction between different classes of American nationals on the basis of race or creed, and

<sup>68a</sup> Not reprinted.



uniformly in its relations with foreign nations it has emphatically declined to recognize the right of those nations to apply on their part such discrimination as between American nationals. This principle, furthermore, is applied by this Government to nationals of foreign countries residing in the United States, including Frenchmen. The application to American nationals of the measures referred to would be incompatible with this principle in that it would have the effect of dividing them into two broad classes, namely, Jewish and non-Jewish, and would apparently accord to the former differential treatment of an unusual and prejudicial character with respect to activities and sojourn. This Government assumes, therefore, that, upon due consideration, the French Government will decide that American citizens lawfully residing in France will not be discriminated against on account of race or creed and that they will not be subjected to provisions of the nature of those embodied in the decree-laws in question.

Reference your 719, June 19, 8 p. m. In reply to requests for advice you should explain the attitude of this Government as set forth above and point out that it will maintain this position in any protests which it may make on behalf of American citizens in individual cases. While the Embassy should carefully avoid any action which might be construed as acquiescence in the application of anti-Jewish measures to Americans, it should, in any concrete case brought to its attention by Americans, where the measures have been or are being applied, make appropriate representations. However, you should make clear to the American citizens concerned that each person must decide for himself what preventive action he may consider most useful in connection with his individual case.

It appears from second paragraph of your 719 that failure to register as a member of the Jewish race within the specified period provides for penalties of fines up to 10,000 francs and imprisonment in Leipzig for 1 year. The Department does not understand how a decree-law of unoccupied France can provide as a penalty imprisonment in Germany. You are instructed to report more fully on this phase of the new decree-laws and to protest most vigorously should any attempt be made to imprison in Germany an American resident of unoccupied France.

WELLES

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851.4016/49 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, July 26, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received July 27—11:15 a. m.]

945. Department's 515, June 27, 7 p. m. On July 1 the Embassy addressed a note to the Foreign Minister embodying the considera-

tions set forth in the Department's telegram under reference. The following is a translation of a reply dated July 24:

"Mr. Ambassador:

"By your note of July 1, in compliance with instructions received from the Department of State, Your Excellency set forth the reasons why it appeared to the American Government that the laws of June 2, 1941, should not be applied to America[n] nationals; at the same time Your Excellency requested me to inform you whether it was the intention of the French Government to except American citizens of Jewish origin from the application of these laws.

"Your Excellency is aware that for reasons of national policy the French Government, following the events of June 1940, was led to adopt general measures destined to ensure the recovery of the country. Among these measures it appeared necessary to establish special laws for Israelites, which laws by providing for the examination of individual circumstances, render possible the granting of extensive derogations. It is to this end that the Government decreed the census of Israelites. Under these circumstances the American Government may be assured that the status acquired in France by its nationals of Jewish origin will be maintained in the greatest measure and that specific cases will be examined by the public authorities as liberally as is compatible with the letter and spirit of the laws in question.

"I hope that these explanations will satisfy the Government of the United States of America and provide it with the requested reassurances. F. Darlan."<sup>69</sup>

The Counselor of the Brazilian Embassy has shown us the text of a note similar in substance to ours addressed by his Ambassador to the French Government and latter's reply which is almost identical with the foregoing.

LEAHY

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851.4016/49 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, August 15, 1941—6 p. m.

636. Your 945, July 26, 6 p. m. The answer from the French Government does not agree to treat American citizens as American citizens irrespective of their nationality or religious origin. This is so engrained in the American system of Government that we must insist upon non-discriminatory treatment of American citizens by the French Government as well as by other governments. Consequently it should be made clear that in spite of the somewhat ambiguous language of the French note and its evasion of the requested

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<sup>69</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Navy, and Interior.

assurances, we shall nevertheless expect from it uniform treatment as regards American citizens.

You are requested to present these considerations to the Foreign Office in responding to its note forwarded in your telegram under reference.

HULL

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UNITED STATES CONCERN WITH REGARD TO RESTRICTIONS ON  
OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PARIS AND VICHY; WITH-  
DRAWAL OF AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN PARIS

124.516/345 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 3, 1941—7 p. m.

602. The Department has been informed that by circular note, dated November 11, 1940, the German Embassy at Paris warned all foreign diplomatic missions against the despatch of communications beyond France's frontiers or "demarcation line" through the intermediary of members of missions or any part of their compatriots or by telephone or by telegraph. A further circular has just been sent out by the German Embassy dated February 6 stating that "various incidents having occurred recently the German Embassy has the honor to insist that attention be given to the fact that foreign missions may not send mail to the unoccupied zone except by the official mail service mentioned in the circular of October 19, 1940." "Members of foreign missions and their nationals who carry mail from occupied territory across the frontiers of France or the 'demarcation line' are guilty of a violation of the ordinance of the high army command . . .<sup>70</sup> infractions will result in the immediate loss of the privilege of utilizing the official mail service. In addition, the responsible services will be held accountable for their guilt."

Should the Embassy be required to make use of the official mail service for communication between its Paris and Vichy Offices it would mean that communications would have to be sent through a special German office in Paris unsealed. It is obvious that this system is inappropriate for the transmission of official mail between offices of this Government. If our officers in Paris are to function efficiently as representatives of this Government it is essential that proper means of communication such as are commonly permitted representatives of foreign governments be maintained and that couriers be permitted to carry official mail to the offices of the American Embassy in Paris.

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<sup>70</sup> Omission indicated in the original telegram.

You should immediately take this matter up with the German Foreign Office urging that appropriate means of communication urgently be permitted, preferably by courier to Vichy. You should emphasize the importance of obtaining an early reply as the present situation is untenable.

For your own information, if the Germans will not permit a courier between Paris and Vichy we might be willing to accept the establishment of a courier service either between Paris and Madrid or between Paris and Berlin.

HULL

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124.516/350 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, March 7, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received 9 : 15 p. m.]

876. Department's 602, March 3, 7 p. m. A secretary of the Embassy called on the competent official of the Foreign Office today and was informed that a courier service between Paris and Vichy could not be authorized as the American Embassy at Paris was no longer considered to have diplomatic status and accordingly not entitled to the various diplomatic privileges including a courier service. The official went on to say that the Foreign Office realized the necessity for the various "remnants" of diplomatic missions in Paris to have some means of communication with their embassies and legations in Vichy and that therefore it has established the present official mail service which had taken considerable time and trouble to organize and saw no reason why our Paris office should not make use of it. When the secretary mentioned to him that this official mail service was not the proper means of communication such as are commonly permitted representatives of foreign governments he again referred to the Foreign Office's point of view that our Embassy in Paris had no diplomatic status and that in fact it was doubtful whether any of the remaining missions in Paris would be there much longer. He then referred to the many difficulties that had arisen lately in connection with couriers of various nationalities traveling between Paris and Vichy and to the desire on the part of the German military authorities in Paris to put an end to all courier traffic between these two points. The secretary then suggested as an alternative a courier service between Paris and Madrid or Paris and Berlin. This suggestion the official said would be taken into consideration in the Foreign Office's reply to the Embassy's memorandum but held out little hope that either of these alternatives would be given favorable consideration.

MORRIS

124.516/350 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 28, 1941—2 p. m.

906. Your 876, March 7, 8 p. m. Both Paris and Vichy report that it has not been practicable to utilize the so-called "official mail service" and Paris has not been able to send any correspondence by that route even of a routine and non-confidential nature. You should again take this matter up with the German Foreign Office immediately and point out that although we consider the official mail service not the proper means of communication, we have nevertheless made efforts to utilize it but that even these have failed.

It is essential that some means of communication be found to permit correspondence with representatives of this Government stationed in Paris, to which office a large volume of correspondence is necessary in the protection of American interests in that area. This Government expects that an early solution of the question will be found and that some form of courier service will be permitted. Please emphasize the importance of obtaining an early reply.

WELLES

124.516/357 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 9, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received April 10—3 : 25 a. m.]

1369. My 1266, April 4, 4 p. m.<sup>71</sup> A note was received from the Foreign Office stating that the Embassy's request for the "establishment of a courier service between the representation of the United States in Paris and the latter's Embassy at Vichy" could not be granted because of "fundamental considerations". What these fundamental considerations may be was not stated. I judge them to be nothing more than the oft repeated oral statements that Paris is in the combat zone and that the American representation there is not considered to have diplomatic status in view of the fact that we have an Embassy at Vichy. The note further said that correspondence in the English language could be transmitted through the German courier service between Paris and Vichy thus ignoring the Embassy's representation that while communication in the English language was known to be accepted the staff for handling it in the volume which would be necessary for our Embassy in Paris was totally inadequate.

I do not believe that the Germans are going to yield on this courier question unless they suffer some corresponding obstacle to their own

<sup>71</sup> Not printed.

communication such as difficulty in re-forwarding German courier mail from the Consulate General at San Francisco to Central and South America.

MORRIS

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124.516/357 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 12, 1941—3 p. m.

1060. Your 1369, April 9, 6 p. m., and Paris Embassy's 33, March 31 to your office.<sup>72</sup> You should inform the German Foreign Office of the important quantity of official mail accumulating at Vichy for transmission to Paris and at Paris for transmission through Vichy to the Department and elsewhere, much of which consists of urgent communications respecting the representation of British and other foreign interests in occupied France.

If this latter class of mail is further delayed the German Government must realize the possibility of some reciprocal action on the part of the represented governments when they are informed, as they eventually must be if the present situation continues, that owing to the refusal of the German authorities to cooperate in facilitating communications to and from Paris the Department is no longer able effectively to represent there the foreign interests entrusted to its care with, it will be remembered, the assent of the German Government.

The Department desires you therefore to bring the foregoing considerations to the attention of the Foreign Office in writing and request an immediate reply in writing in order that the represented governments may be informed if the German Government should continue to deny this Government the necessary facilities.

If necessary the Department is agreeable that such communications be forwarded through your office to Paris instead of through Vichy, if this can be safely and expeditiously done.

HULL

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124.516/359 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 17, 1941—6 p. m.

1104. Your 1438, April 15, 5 p. m.<sup>73</sup> While appreciating your concern, the Department feels that if left to conjecture there will be

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<sup>72</sup> Telegram No. 33 was quoted in telegram No. 1080, April 8, from the Ambassador in France to the Department (124.516/358).

<sup>73</sup> Not printed.

greater force in the implication of possible hardship to German nationals held in represented countries than would be the case were the Department to attempt to define the retaliatory measures that the governments of these countries may take if informed of this Government's inability effectively to represent their interests in occupied France because of the refusal of the German Government to provide adequate communication facilities.

The Department is willing to use the official mail facilities provided by the German authorities in occupied France but insists that they be made adequate. Otherwise the Department will have no alternative than to notify the represented governments, and the German Government will in that event have only itself to thank for such retaliatory measures as its uncooperative attitude may invite, the nature and extent of which the Department is unable and considers it unwise to attempt to indicate.

HULL

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124.516/362 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 7, 1941.

[Received May 9—9 a. m.]

1319. From Paris. Berlin's 1266, April 4, 4 p. m., to Department.<sup>74</sup> Further efforts to use the German official pouch service in Paris have resulted in the return of five packages of mail, mostly for Department, accompanied by the following note dated May 2 from that service.

"The letter censorship office, 93 Boulevard du Montparnasse, has the honor to inform the Embassy of the United States of America that in accordance with the circular note of the German Embassy of October 19, 1940, only official mail—the personal letters between diplomatic representatives accredited in Vichy and their offices in Paris and vice versa—can be forwarded through the messenger post established therefor.

The letters which have been delivered here are chiefly destined for other countries beyond Vichy and are therefore kept at your disposal for collection here."

Repeated to Berlin.

LEAHY

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<sup>74</sup> Not printed.

124.516/361 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 8, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 8:57 p. m.]

1802. Department's 1060, April 12, 3 p. m. and 1104, April 17, 6 p. m. In accordance with the Department's instructions a communication was addressed to the Foreign Office on April 18 last in respect to communication facilities between Paris and Vichy. In a communication dated April 31 [30?] the Foreign Office has made the following reply to this mission's representations.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honor to make the following reply to the Embassy of the United States of America in respect to the *note verbale* of the 18th of this month number 2086.

In the *note verbale* it was stated that large quantities of official correspondence which must be sent via Vichy to the State Department or other agencies abroad had accumulated in Paris, while in Vichy mail intended for Paris was being held. A large part of this correspondence consists of urgent communications concerning the protection in occupied France of British and other foreign interests. It was further stated that the forwarding of this correspondence was being hindered by the Germans.

These statements do not appear to be entirely understandable. As must be known to the Embassy of the United States of America the daily courier service between Paris and Vichy has been established by the German occupying authorities in Paris which is at the disposal of the foreign missions still remaining in Paris for the time being and which has also been taken advantage of by the majority of these missions. The same is the case with the corresponding daily service from Vichy to Paris. Contrary to the statement repeated in the *note verbale* of the 2nd of this month from the Embassy, No. 2036, the use of the English language has been permitted in this courier service for a considerable time. Furthermore transfer service is conducted in as obliging a manner as the special conditions in the occupied territory permit. The complaints expressed in the *note verbale* of the 18th of this month concerning the inadequacy of this service approximates [appears?] the more surprising in view of the fact that the courier connection in question, according to the reports of the German Embassy in Paris, has with one exception never been taken advantage of by those members of the American mission still remaining in Paris. This exception concerned a request for forwarding numbered telegrams intended for foreign countries which had to be refused since the official courier services intended only for the transmission of official communications between Paris and Vichy and vice versa. Therefore, it may not also be used for the forwarding of official mail to the State Department in Washington or to other destinations abroad. Similarly it may not be used for the forwarding of private mail from occupied France to the unoccupied territory or abroad.



As to the statement in the *note verbale* of the 18th of this month that a large part of the correspondence being held in Paris and Vichy concerns the carrying out of the protection of British and other foreign interests in occupied France and that in the event of further difficulties concerning the postal connections between Paris and Vichy certain measures will be taken, it is to be remarked in this respect that matters concerning the protection of British and other foreign nationals in the occupied French territory which require diplomatic handling are to be presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Embassy of the United States of America in Berlin. The members of the American Embassy in France temporarily still remaining in Paris do not appear to be competent for these matters. It is therefore not quite understandable how urgent correspondence concerning the protection of foreign interests can have accumulated in Paris as well as in Vichy. Such delays can be avoided if in the future communications concerning the protection of foreign interests are sent only via the Embassy of the United States of America in Berlin and the route between Paris and Vichy and vice versa is avoided."

While open mail communication with Paris is available to the Embassy it is subject to considerable delay and letters are of course liable, if not certain, to be opened. The Department will perceive that the German reply is fundamentally to reinforce its policy tending to strangle the activity and effectiveness of our Embassy at Paris with a view to bringing about its voluntary withdrawal. Not only in this long drawn out Paris question but in general it is becoming constantly more and more evident that the German Foreign Office has settled upon a policy of hampering our communications.

MORRIS

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124.516/361 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 15, 1941—9 p. m.

1378. Your 1802, May 8, 6 p. m. With respect to the German Government's contention that the Department's complaint respecting the inadequacy of the daily courier service between Paris and Vichy and vice versa established by the German occupying authorities is unjustified since with one exception the members of the American staff at Paris have never taken advantage of this service, you should refer to telegram no. 1319, May 7, from Paris repeated to you.

The inadequacy of this service is furthermore established by the German Government's own statements respecting the limitations on the kind of mail that may be forwarded by this means. Any service

which may not be used by the Department's representatives at Paris to communicate with the Department and with the Department's other offices abroad and vice versa is in itself inadequate.

With respect to the German Government's statement that matters respecting the protection of the interests of represented governments should be presented to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Embassy at Berlin and consequently that it is unable to understand how urgent correspondence concerning the protection of such foreign interests could have accumulated in Paris and in Vichy, you should inform the Foreign Office that the Department will of course take up with it through you in the future as in the past matters calling for representations to the central government of the occupying authorities but you should point out that the urgent mail to which reference is made consists of whereabouts and welfare inquiries, instructions regarding the payment of relief, and other administrative matters, which require no representations to the occupying authorities but which are nevertheless urgent and numerous. Many of these communications are circular in nature and to save delay many of them call for the transmission of information, accounts, et cetera, directly to the governments concerned through the Department's offices in other countries which are themselves under instructions to communicate on such urgent routine matters directly with the office at Paris. The German Government should be able to appreciate the understandable desire of relatives and friends promptly to send and receive information respecting the welfare of loved ones, and the anxiety that would develop if this service, including the payment of relief, were to be cut off.

As the German Government's reply to the representations that you were directed to make in the Department's 1060 April 12, 3 p. m., indicates in part a misunderstanding of the situation, the Department has made the foregoing explanation and is withholding action until you have had an opportunity to clarify the matter. Unless, however, the Department's inability to communicate freely and adequately with its representatives at Paris and vice versa is promptly remedied by the German authorities, the Department will have no alternative but to bring the true facts of the situation to the attention of the represented governments as indicated in its 1060, and you should again so inform the Foreign Office.

Four first class and 18 second class pouches have accumulated at Vichy for Paris and about 15 at Paris for the Department and other offices.

HULL

124.51/199 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 20, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 10:37 a. m.]

1971. The following note has just been received from the Foreign Office:

“Following the conclusion of the military operations in France and the transfer of the French Government to Vichy, a section of the Diplomatic Corps chose to remain in Paris although under the general principles of international law there could be no doubt that the foreign missions should have followed the French Government to its new seat at Vichy.

The German Government does not feel able to allow this state of affairs to continue and to allow foreign diplomatic representations (*Vertretungen*) to remain in the area in question which is to be regarded as an extended (*erweiterte*) zone of operations.

The Foreign Office requests the Embassy of the United States of America to ask its Government now to withdraw what is left of its diplomatic representation in Paris. The expectation is expressed that the entire staff of the representation will leave Paris not later than June 10, 1941, and that the premises of the mission will be closed on that date.

After the removal of what is left of the representations in Paris the matters which have hitherto been dealt with by the foreign representations which have remained in Paris with the military commander in France should be taken up with the Foreign Office by the Berlin missions of the countries concerned.”

Repeated to Vichy and Paris.

MORRIS

124.51/200 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 22, 1941.

[Received May 22—4:40 p. m.]

1432. From Paris. During a conversation this morning with Counselor Von Kraft who has just replaced Count Thun as the Diplomatic Corps liaison officer at the German Embassy, he showed me the note from his Foreign Office requesting the withdrawal by June 10 of all remaining units of foreign diplomatic missions still in Paris and expressed the opinion that no officer who has carried on diplomatic functions here since the occupation would be permitted to remain, regardless of any consular assignment they may hold in conjunction with their diplomatic designation. Referring specifically to the American officer personnel still on duty here, he pointed out that

should consular establishments be authorized to remain, which he thinks unlikely, a reduction in the number of those officers assigned here and serving in a purely consular capacity would in all probability also be admitted [*demande*?] and asked to be immediately supplied with a revised list of the present Paris Embassy officers and subordinate staff showing their nationality and functions performed. It is my understanding that of the subordinate personnel only those heretofore engaged on purely consular work will be permitted to stay, but only in reduced number. Please instruct. Plitt.<sup>75</sup>

LEAHY

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124.51/199 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 24, 1941—8 p. m.

1486. Your 1971, May 20, 10 a. m. You are instructed to present in person a communication along the following lines to the German Foreign Office:

“The Government of the United States has given full and careful consideration to the request of the German Government that this Government now withdraw what is left of its diplomatic representation in Paris.

When the French Government left Paris in June 1940, certain members of the American Embassy were instructed to remain there in order that this Government might be in a position to afford proper protection to American citizens who remained in the area occupied by the German military forces, to American official and private property located therein, and to those foreign interests representation of which by this Government has been agreed to by the German Government.

On the departure of the American Chargé d’Affaires<sup>76</sup> in Paris on May 6, American interests in occupied France were left in charge of Mr. Edwin A. Plitt, who took over as American Consul and who has since signed his official communications in that capacity. When informing the German Embassy of his forthcoming departure, the American Chargé d’Affaires in Paris was given to understand that while it seemed advisable, from the German point of view, that the need for American diplomatic representation in Paris had ceased to exist, no doubt obtained in the minds of the German authorities that the multitude of American interests in occupied France required the continuance of American consular representation in that area.

The Government of the United States is prepared on its part to cancel as of June 10 the diplomatic status of any American officials now residing in the occupied area of France.

Should, however, the German Government not agree to consuls remaining in Paris, it should be pointed out that the situation becomes

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<sup>75</sup> Edwin A. Plitt, American Consul in charge of American interests in occupied France.

<sup>76</sup> Maynard B. Barnes.

very complicated. The German Government is no doubt aware of the presence in the region under its military control of over 1400 American citizens, some of whom have been unable to obtain exit visas from the German authorities. There is also a vast amount of property belonging both to American citizens and to the American Government. Furthermore, this Government is responsible to other Governments for the protection of their interests. Consequently, the German Government will no doubt be prepared to guarantee the proper protection of the foregoing American interests; whether this should take the form of permitting American consular representatives to remain in the area or through other suitable guarantees is a matter for further discussion with the German Government which, by virtue of its military occupation, now exercises control in this area."

Should it be indicated that the German request entails the withdrawal of consular representatives as well, you should then make additional observations along the following lines. Whatever solution is to be found, the Government of the United States considers that its position is clear and that if the German Government requires the complete withdrawal of American representation it thereby assumes responsibility for American interests for which it must be held strictly to account by this Government. It will also be incumbent upon the Government of the United States to make appropriate notification to other Governments, the representation of whose interests have been confided to it.

Should the German Government insist upon the withdrawal of all American representation from occupied France, it is assumed that the American Government would be free to take such steps as might be necessary to assure custodial service of official property in that area.

You should likewise point out that there are some 16 to 20 bags of official mail in the Embassy at Paris awaiting despatch to Vichy and to Washington. It is naturally assumed that with the departure of diplomatic personnel from Paris the German Government would give the necessary instructions to permit the departing officials to take this mail with them.

HULL

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124.51/204 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 27, 1941.

[Received May 27—10:44 a. m.]

1477. From Paris. Reference Paris telegram 1432, May 22. Following information obtained from German Embassy officials by Dean of the Diplomatic Corps concerning the closing of diplomatic establishments in Paris:

Most of the Paris units of missions are preparing to leave for Vichy by the end of the first week in June, although the shortness of the time allowed has been protested. German Embassy has requested in addition to complete list of staff already furnished, list of all officers and subordinate personnel designated to leave, showing names, members of family, date of proposed departure, destination, and means of transportation to be employed. Their families must accompany them. The taking out of archives and government funds may possibly be accorded but special permits must be obtained.

All Embassy premises and residences of diplomatic staff to be placed under protection of consular officers. Embassy and Legation premises to be closed and not to be used for consular purposes.

With specific reference to our establishment, I have set forth to German Embassy the practical difficulties of closing the United States Government building and suggested the use of the side door on Rue Boissy d'Anglas and the closing of the main entrance on Avenue Gabriel.

The question of allowing officers with dual commissions to remain in consular capacity only is still in abeyance and may have to be taken up with Berlin Foreign Office in each specific case. I have insisted that Taylor <sup>76a</sup> was transferred here in consular capacity.

Repeated to Berlin. Plitt.

LEAHY

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124.51/207 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 30, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received 7:59 p. m.]

2148. Department's 1486, May 24, 8 p. m. I have just had a lengthy conversation with the competent Foreign Office official with the following result.

1. All officials of foreign governments who were recognized by the French Government in a diplomatic capacity irrespective of whether they were recognized as consular officers and irrespective of whether their functions were actually diplomatic or consular must leave Paris on June 10. No extension of this time will be granted to them. In consequence Edwin Plitt and Tyler Thompson must leave on that date. The following officers will be permitted to remain: Laurence Taylor, George Miller, Laurence Daymont and Charles Anderson as building superintendent looked upon as having equivalent status to an officer (*hochbeamter*). I suggested the name of Daymont as one to be retained but I imagine the Department might

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<sup>76a</sup> Laurence W. Taylor.

substitute Wood, Betts or Weisenburg if preferred in place of Daymont. An American personnel of 15 [11?] persons may also remain bringing the total staff to a permitted limit of 15 persons. The American assistance may be of any category from clerk to messenger or laborer as desired.

2. The main Embassy building must be closed including locking the front door and removing the Embassy coat-of-arms. The consular section with side entrance on Rue D'Anglas may remain open and be utilized for the consular service to be performed. The official told me that this section of the building had formerly been used for consular service but the door had later been closed and the main entrance opened for people seeking consular service. I left under the distinct impression that the foregoing is a limit of concessions which will be obtained. According to the official interviewed this concession is much greater than accorded to any other representation at Paris; all others have been allowed only one or two consular officials with staff of 2 or 3 clerks, less than half of that proposed above. The Embassy buildings of other nations will have to be closed. The official said the greater concession to us is based upon the German Government's recognition of our larger interests including the representation of the interests of foreign governments.

At the outset of my discussion the Foreign Office official was only prepared to allow 2 officers and 3 or 4 subordinates to remain. I managed to raise the figure to 15 all told but I have no hopes of a larger concession. It is my understanding that no personnel of foreign nationality will be allowed to remain in any capacity. It is important to note that the proposal above outlined is to some extent the personal concession of the Foreign Office official with whom I treated and requires the approbation of the superior officials of the Foreign Office. The official asked me to submit this proposal regarding staff and building to the Department and to obtain its reaction thereto. I agreed to do so without responsibility and without any guarantee that it would be acceptable to the Department. I explained that I was not in a position at the present time to state whether the proposed arrangements would come anywhere near meeting the minimum needs of our representation at Paris.

For background I may say that I have reason to believe that the highly placed officials of the German Government who desire the suppression of diplomatic missions at Paris had a more severe outlook and at first were not inclined to allow any representation at all to remain. I believe it to be true that it has only been through the persuasion of experienced diplomatic officials of the German Government that any concession at all may be entertained.

I broached the subject of permission for the diplomatic officials leaving to take with them the accumulated pouches. I will receive an answer as to how that may be treated at my next interview which will

take place as soon as the Department answers this telegram which I request should be as promptly as possible.<sup>77</sup>

Repeated to Paris except confidential code section.

MORRIS

124.51/215a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

[Extract]

WASHINGTON, June 5, 1941—8 p. m.

455. With the closing of the Paris office of the Embassy Vichy becomes the permanent seat of the American Embassy to France. Beginning July 1 Department contemplates placing Vichy on permanent status and making allotments for operating expenses from the regular appropriations. . . .

HULL

124.51/222

*The Vice Consul at Paris (Taylor) to the Secretary of State*

[Extracts]

No. 64

PARIS, July 11, 1941.

[Received August 20.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Department's instructions No. 1083 of May 26, No. 1094 of May 31, 1941,<sup>78</sup> and subsequent concerning the closing of the Embassy at Paris and the establishment of the Consulate General at Paris as a separate office.

On June 10 the Embassy was formally closed. A sign in English, French and German was placed on the front gate which reads "The American Embassy is closed. The American Consulate General is at 3 rue Boissy d'Anglas." The shield over the front door was covered by a piece of sheet metal which was painted to resemble the stone of the building. The front gate and front door were closed and locked. No changes were made at the Embassy residence which had been closed for some time. Special authority was obtained from the occupying authorities to permit Forrest Pfeiffer and his wife to remain as caretakers for the residence in addition to the fifteen American employees permitted to remain as staff of the Consulate General.

<sup>77</sup> In telegram No. 1566, June 3, 4 p. m., the Department informed the Chargé in Germany that it had taken steps to comply with the German requests as to closing the American Embassy in Paris and had telegraphed Vichy and Paris the necessary instructions.

<sup>78</sup> Neither printed.



A consular seal was placed over the door of the entrance at 3 rue Boissy d'Anglas which became the main entrance and the Boissy d'Anglas entrance to the garage was placed in use.

The Consulate General opened for business on the morning of June 6, with the newly selected staff of fifteen in order to take care of public business and permit those who were leaving to finish pending work.

The telegram from Berlin of June 7, indicated that ten French employees would be allowed to remain on the Consulate staff. Ten were selected and their names sent to the Department for approval, but they were transferred and put to work in the new organization at once. . . .

Respectfully yours,

LAURENCE W. TAYLOR

**SURVEILLANCE BY THE UNITED STATES OVER FRENCH SHIPS IN AMERICAN HARBORS; REQUISITION OF THESE SHIPS UPON ENTRY OF THE UNITED STATES INTO THE WAR**

851.85/209a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, March 31, 1941—6 p. m.

279. You should seek the earliest possible opportunity to see Marshal Pétain<sup>79</sup> and to explain that you are approaching him personally from the standpoint of the friendly interest of this Government in France and in the status of its vessels which have taken refuge in United States ports. Since members of the crews of some of these vessels are outspokenly anti-British the Marshal will recognize the situation as regards the presence of such vessels in American harbors and will appreciate the friendly spirit in which this Government makes the suggestion that these vessels may be asked to accept closer American surveillance, even to the extent of placing guards on board for observation purposes.

If the Marshal however would be prepared to give you an assurance on behalf of the French Government that these vessels have not been, or will not in any way be, damaged by any action of their crews in pursuance from instructions emanating from any French authority, but on the contrary French authorities will specifically forbid any act of vandalism this Government would be disposed to grant these vessels a special position. On the other hand, should the Marshal prefer not to give such assurances it may be necessary to carry out the suggestion outlined above.

<sup>79</sup> Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, French Chief of State.

At an appropriate moment in the course of your conversation, you may clearly emphasize that your Government does not expect that any advantage shall be taken by any member of the French Government of this purely friendly suggestion made direct to the Marshal.

HULL

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851.85/212 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 3, 1941—noon.

[Received 2:28 p. m.]

383. Department's telegram 279, March 3 [31], 6 p. m. I saw Marshal Pétain in the presence of Admiral Darlan<sup>80</sup> this morning and in as much as he always prefers to have something in writing I gave him a French paraphrase of the pertinent portions of the Department's 279. He said that he would prefer to reply in writing and that he would send me a memorandum. Admiral Darlan said that no instructions had been sent from any French authority to damage or sabotage the French vessels now in American ports. Both the Marshal and Admiral Darlan said that they will be prepared to send specific instructions prohibiting such sabotage if we will give assurances that the vessels in question will not be handed over to the British or utilized to aid the British. Presumably the memorandum will embody this suggestion.

Admiral Darlan stated that he had no objection to our inspection or surveillance of the ships but that he hoped we would not place guards on board.

I shall telegraph immediately upon receipt of the promised memorandum.

LEAHY

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851.85/213 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 4, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received April 5—4:51 p. m.]

394. Embassy's telegram 383, April 3, noon. A note which is initiated by Admiral Darlan personally was received at 8:30 this evening. After summarizing accurately the friendly views set forth in the Department's telegram 279, March 31, 6 p. m., the note continues as follows:

“The Government of Marshal Petain has the honor to inform His Excellency, the Ambassador of the United States, that it is disposed

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<sup>80</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Navy, and Interior.

to give and that it gives assurances that not only if acts of destruction and sabotage should be committed on French ships at present in American ports, they would be contrary to the wish and contrary to the instructions of the French authorities, but also that the latter have already sent the most formal instructions to the crews of these ships forbidding such acts.

However in view of the situation resulting for it from the undertakings subscribed in the Armistice Conventions,<sup>81</sup> the French Government again requests that for its part the American Government give assurances that the ships in question may be utilized at any time and exclusively by the French Government which intends in principle to employ them in trade between America on the one hand and the metropolis or French possessions on the other hand. As the Ambassador of France has already pointed out to the Department of State at Washington, these ships will, furthermore, be indispensable for the transportation of the merchandise which is actually the object of negotiations for supply between France and the United States.

Under the circumstances, the assurances requested by the Government of Washington having been given, the French Government feels confident that the measures of surveillance envisaged will not be taken and especially that no guard shall be placed on board the ships, which it would consider an unfriendly act." (The original of this important phrase reads: "*ce qu'il considererait comme un acte inamical*".) "It hopes furthermore that the Federal Government will comply with the request herein above expressed."

LEAHY

851.85/214 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 5, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received April 6—12: 20 p. m.]

397. [From Matthews.<sup>82</sup>] Embassy's 394, April 4, 9 p. m. I called on Rochat<sup>83</sup> this afternoon and told him that I was frankly worried at the trend in Franco-American relations and that I wondered whether the French Government realized fully our present psychology and our determination first and foremost to take whatever measures seemed necessary or desirable for our own security and our effort to see that the Axis is defeated. French policies and the attitude of the French Government were consequently invariably first measured in the light of these objectives. I enlarged on this theme and called to his atten-

<sup>81</sup> German-French Armistice Agreement of June 22, 1940; for text, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. ix, p. 671.

<sup>82</sup> H. Freeman Matthews, First Secretary of Embassy in France.

<sup>83</sup> Charles Antoine Rochat, Acting Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

tion the recent recall of the Italian Naval Attaché at Washington<sup>84</sup> and the text of the Department's note<sup>85</sup> rejecting German and Italian protests for the recent ship seizures as indications of our frame of mind. I said that I had felt impelled to make this friendly call by the wording, particularly the last paragraph, of Admiral Darlan's note of yesterday. I pointed out that we felt that we had shown special consideration toward French ships in our ports because of our confidence in Marshal Petain and in any assurances that he might give me. I feared, therefore, that the phraseology of the French note would strike the Department as unappreciative, to say the least, particularly the statement that the placing of armed guards on the ships in question would be considered "as an unfriendly act". This strong phraseology, I said, struck me as singularly inopportune at a time when the French Government is asking so much of us and showed a failure really to understand our seriousness of purpose.

He said that, speaking quite frankly and off the record, he had expected my visit and that he quite agreed that the phrase was unfortunate. It had not been in the original draft but, he said, had been inserted by Admiral Darlan himself. He went on to say that the Admiral looked upon the question "from the sailors' viewpoint" and that the phrase was "sailors' phrase". Admiral Darlan had not meant it in any sense of a threat but rather to express the view that, having given the assurances we requested, if thereafter armed guards should be placed on the French ships it would hurt the pride of the French Navy and Merchant Marine. He asked especially that I send this telegram in an effort to remove any erroneous "impression" the unfortunate wording of the note may have caused. He added incidentally, that the pertinent instructions to avoid any sabotage had been sent from Vichy last night.

Rochat went on to say that he was continually pointing out the "risks" (as far as we are concerned) involved in present French policies and he hoped with some success. His task is not an easy one. Matthews.

LEAHY

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851.85/214 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, April 10, 1941—5 p. m.

310. Your 397, April 5, 6 p. m. The statements made by Matthews to Rochat are approved by the Department. It is suggested that you

<sup>84</sup> See pp. 802 ff.

<sup>85</sup> Notes of April 3 to the German Chargé and the Italian Ambassador, vol. I, pp. 461 and 462, respectively.

seek an early opportunity to see Admiral Darlan and reiterate to him what Matthews has already told Rochat. This Government cannot be expected to give any assurances in return for instructions from the French Government to the officers and crews of French ships in American harbors forbidding acts of sabotage by them. Our statutes make it a felony for the master or any other person in charge or command of a vessel, foreign or domestic, or for any member of the crew or other person within the territorial waters of the United States willfully to cause or permit the destruction or injury of such a vessel. The statutes further authorize the authorities of this Government to take possession and control of any vessel and to remove therefrom the officers and crews when such action is deemed to be necessary to protect the vessel from damage or injury or to prevent damage or injury to any harbor or waters of the United States. Admiral Darlan apparently does not understand that this is a statutory requirement and that the competent authorities have no other choice than to place guards on such ships when there is evidence that acts of sabotage are under contemplation. You should point out to Admiral Darlan that this is a legal requirement and not a question of policy which can be followed or overlooked as the situation may make desirable. The United States Government naturally expects that foreign governments will neither abet nor condone attempts at sabotage on the part of the crews of foreign ships in American waters.

While the Department is willing to accept Rochat's explanation that the unfortunate phrase contained in Admiral Darlan's note of April 5<sup>85a</sup> is a "sailors' phrase", even with this explanation it has left an unfortunate impression of Admiral Darlan's mental attitude.

HULL

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851.85/215 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

[Extract]

VICHY, April 14, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 9 : 20 p. m.]

438. Department's telegram 310, April 10, 5 p. m. I called on Admiral Darlan this morning and conveyed to him the viewpoint set forth by the Department. He said in reply that his note had not accurately expressed his thoughts. He fully recognizes our right under our laws to place guards on the French ships in our ports; what he had meant to convey was that, inasmuch as instructions had now been sent to the French officers and crews to refrain from any acts of sabotage,

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<sup>85a</sup> See telegram No. 394, April 4, 9 p. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 527.

if following such assurances from the French Government armed guards should be placed on those ships, such action would be interpreted here as lack of consideration toward the French Government. (He did not make any further reference to the request contained in his note that French ships in our ports should be permitted to be utilized by the French Government.)

LEAHY

851.85/262

*The French Ambassador (Henry-Haye) to the Secretary of State*  
[Translation]

WASHINGTON, May 26, 1941.

Referring to the note<sup>86</sup> which he is addressing on this date to His Excellency the Secretary of State, the Ambassador of France has the honor to call the Secretary's attention to the not very friendly character of the unilateral decision made without advance notice by the United States Government, which led, on May 15th last, to the taking over by the Coast Guard of the French merchant ships lying in American ports.

Although this measure has been presented as a mere extension of the surveillance exercised over the ships from the piers, the French Government nevertheless considers that it is contrary to the arrangements contemplated in the exchange of notes with the Ambassador of the United States that took place on April 3rd last at Vichy.<sup>87</sup> Under the terms of those notes, the Federal Government agreed to grant to the French vessels in its ports "a special position not permitting either guards on board or even, closer surveillance, if the French Government would give the assurance that explicit instructions have been or will be given, strictly prohibiting any act of sabotage or destruction with respect to those ships".\*

As the Federal Government knows, such instructions have been laid down, strictly observed by the crews, and have not been revoked since then. Under these conditions, the French Government must protest against the measure taken unilaterally on May 15th by the United States Government, in virtue of which the French merchant vessels in American ports are still occupied by the Coast Guard.

Having fulfilled completely the engagements undertaken by it in its note of April 3, 1941, it has the honor to ask the United States

<sup>86</sup> Dated May 27, p. 181.

<sup>87</sup> See telegrams No. 383, April 3, noon, and No. 394, April 4, 9 p. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 527.

\*Unfortunately the English original was not available to the translator.—Tr's note. [Footnote in the file translation.]

Government to be good enough to insure, on its part, the strict application thereof and to withdraw the armed guards who have been placed on board the French merchant ships.

Moreover, the French Government has learned with surprise of the stopping and seizure by a British cruiser of the tanker *Schéhérazade*, which had left Baytown (Texas) on May 12th for Casablanca. This seizure was made although the British Government had granted one navicert for the ship and another one fully covering the cargo, and although free passage to Morocco had been guaranteed by the United States Government.

Mr. Henry-Haye would be grateful to His Excellency the Honorable Cordell Hull if he would be good enough to intervene urgently with the British authorities with a view to having the French tanker released and allowing the latter to continue its voyage toward Morocco, in accordance with the agreement entered into on May 9th,<sup>88</sup> which is confirmed by the personal note addressed to His Excellency the Secretary of State on the same day.

Mr. Henry-Haye is happy [etc.]

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851.85/262

*The Secretary of State to the French Ambassador (Henry-Haye)*

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of the French Republic and has the honor to refer to the latter's communication of May 26, 1941 concerning the measures taken as regards French vessels now in ports of the United States. As stated in a previous communication made to the French Government in April, this Government pointed out that whereas this Government would be disposed to grant these vessels a special position in the light of assurances to be obtained from the French Government, it was nevertheless pointed out that the presence of these vessels in American harbors constituted a special situation. The action taken relates only to a simple extension of surveillance exercised within the domestic jurisdiction of the United States.

As soon as the Government of the United States is convinced that the Government of France is a free agent in the exercise of control over French vessels in American ports and will not exercise such control in a manner detrimental to the interests of the United States, immediate consideration will be given to the removal of the guards that have been placed on the vessels in order to assure the public safety of the United States.

WASHINGTON, June 30, 1941.

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<sup>88</sup> No record of agreement found in Department files.

851.85/371

*The Assistant Secretary of State (Long) to President Roosevelt*

WASHINGTON, November 15, 1941.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: With reference to your memorandum of November 11, 1941, enclosing the recommendation from the Secretary of the Navy <sup>89</sup> that notice of taking immediate possession of French vessels in the United States ports, particularly the *Normandie*, be given the French Government, I have given careful consideration to this recommendation. Before proceeding to requisition these vessels I believe that certain preliminary steps should be undertaken in the light of our present relations with the French Government.

The Maritime Commission has before it a proposal initiated by the French Government which would place five of the nine vessels now immobilized in American ports into service under American charter. The others would be utilized in an approved service. It would seem desirable to await the outcome of these negotiations before proceeding to requisition the vessels. If the negotiations fail because of the refusal of the German Armistice Commission to permit the French Government to dispose of its own vessels, we would then inform the French Government that it is not a free agent in this matter and proceed to take over these eight ships.

The *Normandie* has up to the present remained outside the scope of these discussions. I suggest that since the *Normandie* is of such importance to French prestige, we make a preliminary effort to purchase the vessel. I understand the Secretary of the Navy is prepared to pay a fair price having in mind the original cost of the vessel which latter would be far in excess of any price it could command at the present time.

There is attached a telegram to Ambassador Leahy <sup>90</sup> directing him to approach the French Government in this matter, which may be sent if you approve. If this course of action meets with your approval the Secretary of the Navy will be so informed.

Faithfully yours,

BRECKINRIDGE LONG

851.85/371a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, November 17, 1941—1 p. m.

850. You are requested to inform Marshal Pétain that the question of the use of the French vessel *Normandie* has become of urgent in-

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<sup>89</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>90</sup> *Infra*.



terest in this country on account of its continued immobilization and consequent deterioration at a time when shipping space is badly needed.

A proposal has been made by private interests in this country to purchase the vessel taking into consideration its original cost which price would probably be in excess of any sum that could be realized for the vessel under present conditions. You should urge upon the Marshal favorable consideration of this proposal, pointing out that if some arrangement cannot promptly be made a situation could develop where it might be necessary for this Government to requisition the vessel. Before proceeding to do so, however, it would be preferable to explore immediately this suggested sale.

HULL

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851.85/379 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 10, 1941—noon.

[Received 4:47 p. m.]

1517. Department's 850, November 17. Following is summary of Foreign Office note of December 9:

1. If German Armistice Commission consents, France disposed authorize sale of *Normandie* reserving the right to repurchase under following conditions:

*a.* France will purchase in the United States petroleum products, foodstuffs and cotton goods with sale proceeds not exceeding one-third for each category. Purchases will be shipped to French North and West Africa upon resumption of economic plan.

2. [*b.*] If France unable obtain German consent, departure three freighters from Mediterranean as stipulated paragraph 1 of proposals made November 1<sup>91</sup> by Maritime Commission to Henry-Haye, United States would:

Either renounce this stipulation while maintaining the other proposals of the Maritime Commission November 1;

Or permit chartering three freighters from Mediterranean to Spain for Spanish American runs which Germans might accept more readily.

*c.* If France able obtain German consent departure three freighters from Mediterranean for United States-North Africa line, number French freighters in United States to be released and assigned this line to be four instead of three, French freighters chartered by Maritime Commission being reduced to four plus *Normandie*, tankers from Martinique to be chartered remaining three.

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<sup>91</sup> Not printed.

2. Foreign Office will inform Embassy as soon as possible of definitive German position concerning departure three freighters from Mediterranean for North Africa-United States run.

Copy and translation of this note being forwarded airmail.<sup>92</sup>  
Repeated by airmail to Algiers and Casablanca.

LEAHY

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851.85/384a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, December 12, 1941—11 p. m.

920. The following press release is being issued today: <sup>93</sup>

“As a measure of necessary protection to the crews and vessels, arrangements have been made to remove the French crews of all French vessels now in United States ports. This action does not preclude return of the crews to any vessel the resumption of service of which may be determined.”

It has been explained to the French Embassy that this measure was determined as necessary for the safety not only of the ships but of the crews themselves and that it does not apply to any of the vessels which may be engaged in supply service to the French West Indies. It was further pointed out that should the North African service be resumed the crews of the *Leopold L. D.* and the *Ile de Ré* could promptly be returned to that vessel.

You may wish to convey the foregoing promptly to the French Foreign Office.

HULL

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851.85/389

*The French Ambassador (Henry-Haye) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, December 13, 1941.

The Ambassador of France has the honor to take note of the verbal assurances given to him by the Department of State relative to the immediate release of the crews landed from the French merchant vessels which were immobilized in the ports of the United States and the maintenance of the previous legal status of the vessels in question on board which the French flag continues to fly.

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<sup>92</sup> Note and translation transmitted to the Department by the Ambassador in his despatch No. 628, December 10; received January 13, 1942.

<sup>93</sup> Department of State *Bulletin*, December 13, 1941, p. 519.

In spite of the provisions in question and the prior notice of some hours given before the landing of the crews, the Ambassador of France finds himself obliged to note that the decision of the Federal Government is of a unilateral character and, while awaiting the instructions of his government, he is constrained to make all reservations regarding the measures which have been taken and the consequences which may result therefrom. He would be grateful to His Excellency the Secretary of State if he would be good enough to make known to him the measures which the Federal Government intends to take to safeguard and, if the case arises, to make compensation for the material interests which have been jeopardized by this actual dispossession.

Mr. Henry-Haye is happy [etc.]

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851.85/388b : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, December 13, 1941—5 p. m.

927. With reference to the removal of the French crews from the *Normandie* and other French merchant ships now in the United States ports, consideration is being given to an early requisitioning of the *Normandie*, the plan to purchase having been subjected to impracticable conditions.

Please telegraph urgently your views regarding the effect such a step at the present juncture would have upon the French Government particularly in connection with the use of the French fleet or other measures of military assistance for which the Germans might be pressing.

HULL

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851.85/383 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 15, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received 11 : 39 a. m.]

1544. Your 927, December 13, 5 p. m. German propaganda has already informed the French Government that we have already seized the *Normandie*.

In my opinion this Embassy should be directed to inform the French Government that its proposal for sale of ship is impracticable because of conditions imposed and that vessel will be requisitioned under same terms applied to the *Kungsholm*.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Exercising the right of angary, the United States took over the Swedish Motorship *Kungsholm* on December 12, 1941, promising to make just compensation to the owners. For press release regarding seizure, see Department of State *Bulletin*, December 13, 1941, p. 519.

We are informed in regard to conditions regarding *Kungsholm* only through radio broadcasts that "adequate compensation will be paid".

While I do not believe that requisitioning of the *Normandie* will of itself have any material effect on prospect of use by Axis of French Fleet or bases, it will be used as an argument by the Germans and the collaborationists of the Vichy Government in an effort to stir up anti-American feeling.

LEAHY

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851.85/383 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, December 15, 1941—10 p. m.

932. Your 1544, December 15, 11 a. m. You should inform the French Government that at 2 p. m., E. S. T., December 16, 1941, the Maritime Commission will proceed to the requisitioning of the S. S. *Normandie*<sup>95</sup> under conditions similar to action taken in the case of the *Kungsholm* and that just compensation will be made to the owners. You may further explain that this action is in line with the expressed willingness of the French Government to permit the United States to acquire the vessel although the conditions imposed could not be accepted in view of the present belligerent status of the United States.

You should make the aforesaid communication to the French Government at approximately the same time as the French Ambassador here will be informed, namely at 12 noon, E. S. T., December 16.

HULL

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851.85/388 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 19, 1941—11 p. m.  
[Received December 20—6:15 p. m.]

1577. Arnal<sup>96</sup> asked us to call at the Foreign Office this evening and delivered the following note:

"With reference to the *aide-mémoire* delivered on December 17 by the Counselor of Embassy of the United States, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honor to inform the Embassy that this *aide-mémoire* calls forth the following reply from the French Government:

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<sup>95</sup> Title and possession of the *Normandie* was taken for the United States on December 16, 1941, by the United States Maritime Commission acting under authority conferred upon it by the President by an Executive Order of June 6, 1941, issued pursuant to the Act of Congress of June 6, 1941, 55 Stat. 242.

<sup>96</sup> Pierre Arnal, Minister Plenipotentiary in the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

On December 9 the French Government offered to cede the *Normandie* to the Federal Government 'with privilege of repurchase,' under reserve of the granting of counterparts, the first of which provided for utilizing the proceeds of the sale of this liner for the purchase in the United States of supplies destined for North Africa, and the second, the adjustment of the proposals made on November 1 by the President of the Maritime Commission of the United States to the French Ambassador concerning the utilization of French tonnage in American ports.

In its above cited *aide-mémoire* the Embassy of the United States apprises the French Government that 'because of the entry of the United States into war the conditions set forth by the French Government covering the transfer of the *Normandie* to the American Government could not be accepted' and that on December 16 the Maritime Commission proceeded to the requisition of this ship.

The French Government regrets that the Federal Government felt it necessary, without awaiting the conclusion the negotiations, to take a measure of this nature, which is contrary the provisions of the notes exchanged on April 3-4, 1941, under the terms of which the Federal Government manifested its willingness to accord a 'special position' to French ships in the United States under reserve of certain engagements undertaken by France on April 4, 1941, and strictly observed.

The French Government therefore considers it its duty to raise a formal protest against the requisitioning of the *Normandie*.

The Embassy of the United States adds, it is true, that the requisitioning of the *Normandie* resulted from the consent given by the French Government to the purchase of the vessel by the United States and has been carried out under conditions similar to those applied in the case of the Swedish SS *Kungsholm*, the owners of the *Normandie* to receive 'just compensation'.

The French Government makes all reserves as to the fact that it is supposed to have given its consent to the purchase of the *Normandie* by the United States, since this consent was dependent on two counterparts, neither of which has up to the present been granted.

Considering that, under these conditions, it remains the owner of the vessel, it would like to conclude an agreement with the Federal Government as to the 'compensation' offered for the requisitioning of the vessel. It would be willing to accept that such 'compensation' be paid during the full period of utilization of the *Normandie*, by the Maritime Commission, at fixed dates and in amounts to be determined by mutual agreement, and for which it would like to receive proposals of the Federal Government. It would desire, moreover, that the sums, in dollars, paid in this connection, be utilized for purchases, on the American market, of products of various descriptions destined for Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Finally, it should be provided that in the event of the loss of the *Normandie* due to acts of war, or any other cause, the French Government would be entitled, at the end of hostilities, to a compensation covering an equivalent tonnage.

This latter request which had not been expressly formulated in the note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of December 9, is justified by the entry into war of the United States, subsequent to the delivery

of this note, and which evidently subjects this vessel to risks which were not anticipated prior to this entry into war.

As regards the other French vessels now lying in ports of the United States, the French Government notes the assurances given to M. Henry-Haye, under the terms of which the former status of these vessels will be maintained. At the same time, it expresses the desire an agreement may be reached at an early date with a view to the utilization of these vessels under conditions which would permit an increase in the rhythm of transports to French North Africa."

Arnal, who delivered this note, said that he could tell us unofficially that while the French Government had "felt it necessary to make a formal protest against the requisitioning of the *Normandie* it understood that the entry of the United States into war had created a changed situation insofar as foreign vessels in American ports were concerned.["] He went on to say that the *Normandie* represented more than a mere ship to France: It was symbol of the days of France's power and greatness. For this reason the French Government hoped that the American Government would take the view that title to the vessel is still vested in French hands and that it is only requisitioned by the American Government "for the duration of the emergency". This, he said, would create an excellent impression in France.

He added that under these circumstances there was no reason for the United States to pay a lump sum for the purchase of the vessel and that the French Government on the contrary would like to have a fixed sum paid at regular intervals for the "use of the *Normandie*". This money would be in the nature of "rental" and would be applied to purchases for North Africa. "France's maritime situation after the war will be extremely difficult and we will need ships" he said. "For this reason in the event of the *Normandie* being lost we wish to have an equivalent amount of tonnage returned to us." He added that in the event of its loss the French Government did not mean that a vessel the size and tonnage of the *Normandie* would be returned in its place but that a number of vessels with a total tonnage equivalent to the *Normandie* would be delivered to France.

LEAHY

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[Subsequent to the requisitioning of the *Normandie* an agreement was reached between the Maritime Commission and the French Ambassador under which compensation for the vessel was deposited to the credit of its owners in a blocked account in the United States Treasury, and at the end of the war the *Normandie* was to be resold to the previous owners or their successors at a price to be mutually agreed upon.]

CONCERN OF THE UNITED STATES OVER THE CONTROL OF THE WIRELESS RADIO STATION AT ST. PIERRE AND THE SEIZURE OF ST. PIERRE AND MIQUELON BY THE FREE FRENCH FORCES

851A.74/4 : Telegram

*The Minister in Canada (Moffat) to the Secretary of State*

OTTAWA, November 3, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 7 : 52 p. m.]

282. The Canadian Government's worry about the possible misuse of the Saint Pierre-Miquelon wireless station has been accentuated by recent sinkings far to the westward of any previously reported. In the circumstance they desire to send some civilian wireless specialists from the Department of Transport to Saint Pierre-Miquelon to control all messages sent. If the Administrator<sup>97</sup> agrees no problem arises; if he refuses there will be a strong demand here for unilateral Canadian action.

I reminded Robertson<sup>98</sup> of his assurances that Canada would take no action in Saint Pierre-Miquelon that would embarrass us in relation to the Act of Habana<sup>99</sup> or our Western Hemisphere policy. The Canadian plan with its implications seemed to me to come close to creating the type of situation we had in mind. He said that the British Government and the Free French Government were pressing Canada hard, but under questioning indicated that the British would prefer to have the Free French take over the administration rather than any unilateral action by Canada. This would relegate the problem to one of domestic French politics, would not allow any charge of British imperialism vis-à-vis the French Empire to gain ground nor raise questions under the Monroe Doctrine.

The Canadian Legation is going to approach the Department tomorrow morning but the instructions to McCarthy<sup>1</sup> do not carry the background given above. No approach will be made to the Administrator at Saint Pierre-Miquelon for at least 24 hours.

MOFFAT

<sup>97</sup> Gilbert de Bournat.

<sup>98</sup> Norman Robertson, Canadian Under Secretary of State for External Affairs.

<sup>99</sup> Convention on Provisional Administration of European Colonies and Possessions in the Americas, concluded July 30, 1940, Department of State Treaty Series No. 977, or 54 Stat. (pt. 2) 2491.

<sup>1</sup> Leighton McCarthy, Canadian Minister.

851A.74/5

*The Canadian Legation to the Department of State*

[WASHINGTON,] November 3, 1941.

## MEMORANDUM

The Canadian Legation has been requested to bring the following information informally to the attention of the Department of State.

In the opinion of the Government of Canada, a serious potential danger to the safety of trans-Atlantic shipping arises from the existence at St. Pierre of a short wave transmission station which is able to communicate in cypher or in code with the authorities in Vichy. The Government of Canada have under consideration a proposal that Canadian personnel should be stationed at St. Pierre to control all outward messages from this station and to prevent the use of cypher or of any code which they are not able to read. This Canadian personnel might also be charged with inspecting the radio equipment of fishing boats and other ships based on the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, in order to make sure that their equipment is not capable of long-distance transmission. They would also exercise supervision over the other radio stations at St. Pierre.

It is assumed by the Canadian authorities that the Permanent Joint Board on Defence United States and Canada<sup>2</sup> would undoubtedly approve of this step, but it is not considered desirable that action should be delayed for a month until the Board holds its next meeting.

This information is communicated in view of the intimate interest of the Government of the United States, both in the protection of trans-Atlantic shipping and with the status of French possessions in this hemisphere.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For correspondence concerning the establishment of the Joint Board on Defense, see *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. III, pp. 144 ff.

<sup>3</sup> John D. Hickerson of the Division of European Affairs in a memorandum of November 24, stated that on November 8 the Canadians were informed orally that the Canadian memorandum of November 3 "had been noted and we had no comments to make." He added: "This was intended and so understood by the Canadians as constituting a green light for them to go ahead." (841-8595/58)



851A.74/12-541

*The Canadian Legation to the Department of State*<sup>4</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] December 5, 1941.

There is quoted below the text of a message sent on December 4th by Mr. Mackenzie King to Mr. Winston Churchill.<sup>5</sup> In communicating this message to the Government of the United States, Mr. Mackenzie King states that he would be glad to receive an expression of the views of the Government of the United States on the matter at their earliest convenience.

"We have had under consideration for some time the question of arranging for the supervision of wireless transmitting stations in Saint Pierre and Miquelon because of our concern about possible danger to convoy movements. This matter was first brought to the attention of our Government in a communication from the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom suggesting that the Free French naval forces should take over the islands and place them under Free French administration. For various reasons this step appeared to us at the time to be inappropriate. The Canada-United States Permanent Joint Board on Defence unanimously agreed on November 10th that the existence on the islands of an uncontrolled and high-powered wireless transmitting station constitutes a potential danger to the interests of Canada and the United States.

"We have felt that the matter might be best approached by having a senior official of the Department of External Affairs visit Saint Pierre and inform the Administrator that Canada, in the interests of Canadian security and, in fact, of North American security generally, considers this supervision essential and to express the hope that the Administrator will see his way clear to cooperate. Should the Administrator object to this, such a rejection would appear prima facie evidence that the suspicions with respect to the use to which the transmitting stations on the islands may be put are well founded.

"The question would then immediately arise as to the course to be taken as a consequence.

"In that connection we are considering the advisability of sending to the islands either with the senior official or subsequently upon receipt of word from him, four technical radio inspectors. These latter would be under the charge of a member of the Royal Canadian Navy, probably of petty officer rank, who would himself be responsible to our Acting Consul in Saint Pierre. The technical radio inspectors would be directed to pre-censor all incoming and outgoing wireless and cable messages and to supervise all radio transmitting stations on the islands. It is proposed that they should be taken to Saint Pierre in a

<sup>4</sup> Handed to the Under Secretary of State (Welles) by the Canadian Minister-Counselor (Wrong).

<sup>5</sup> Prime Ministers of Canada and the United Kingdom, respectively; Mr. Churchill's reply to this message was in effect that it would be desirable for Free French Forces to land and control the radio station on St. Pierre-Miquelon rather than for the Canadian Government to take action in what might create an embarrassing political situation, but that no action would be taken unless the consent of the American and Canadian Governments were obtained (851A.-01/32).

corvette or a minesweeper. The Administrator would then be informed that the Canadian Government attach such importance to this matter that in the circumstances the Commander of the corvette had been instructed to leave a versatile detachment of ratings in the island in charge of the petty officer to protect the technicians and to see that there is no interference with the supervisors in the performance of their duties.

"I recognize that, with relations between Vichy and Berlin what they are just at this time and with the situation in the Orient what it is, action of this kind might be interpreted by Vichy as an effort by Canada to take control if not possession of the islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, a French colonial possession; and that Vichy might seek to find in the incident, particularly at the moment when Darlan<sup>6</sup> is collaborating so closely with Hitler, an excuse to hand over the French fleet to Germany as a means of protecting French colonial possessions.

"The situation has its bearing, of course, on what is taking place in North Africa and also upon the attitude which the United States has taken towards French colonial possessions in the Western Hemisphere and particularly in the Caribbean.

"In the circumstances, I have felt that any action on Canada's part in the matter should be delayed until after we had ascertained the views of the Governments of the United Kingdom and of the United States in reference thereto. I shall be grateful to receive at your earliest convenience an expression of your own views in the matter. Meanwhile, I am making a similar request of the Government of the United States."

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851A.74/12-841

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Samuel Reber of the Division of European Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] December 8, 1941.

Mr. Wrong called at the Department of State this morning in order to discuss with Mr. Atherton,<sup>7</sup> Mr. Hickerson,<sup>8</sup> and Mr. Reber the proposals of the Canadian Government with respect to the control of wireless installations at St. Pierre which were included in the memorandum given by Mr. Wrong to Mr. Welles on December 5th.

Mr. Atherton mentioned the previous approach made to the Department of State on this subject, concerning which the Department had replied on November 8th that the information had been noted and that they had no comments to make. He then said that the question had been discussed at a meeting of the Permanent Joint Board on

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<sup>6</sup> Adm. Jean François Darlan, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Navy, and National Defense.

<sup>7</sup> Ray Atherton, Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs.

<sup>8</sup> John D. Hickerson, Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs.

Defence on November 10th. At this meeting consideration had been given to a plan whereby the Canadian Government would request the Governor of St. Pierre to permit Canadian civilian inspectors to supervise the activities of radio stations in the Islands. The request would be presented as in the interests of the Islands, since rumours were circulating that the radio stations had been used to transmit information about ship movements, rumours which the Governor himself would doubtless wish to dispel by acquiescing in the Canadian proposal. It was recognized that the Governor would probably refuse. The Canadian spokesman would then inform the Governor that unless he agreed, Canada would not permit the release of any funds to purchase supplies for the Islands. Mr. Hickerson had agreed at Montreal to recommend, on the request of the Canadian Government, that the United States Government co-operate in this economic pressure.

Mr. Atherton continued that the United States Government is strongly of the opinion that this line of action should be tried before the more drastic procedure set forth in the Canadian memorandum of December 5th is even considered. He added that the United States officials feel that there is a good chance that economic pressure would produce the desired result, particularly since the Governor could undoubtedly be led to believe that his acquiescence under protest might avert more drastic action.

Mr. Wrong replied that he did not have full information on the reasons which had led the Canadian Government to omit the possible use of economic pressure from their proposals to deal with the situation. At present, there was no direct evidence that the wireless installations were being used to transmit information about shipping movements to Vichy for German use. He had heard that the Canadian Naval authorities were concerned lest, after the initial approach to the Administrator, which would probably be rejected, the transmission of shipping information might be either commenced or extended if there was an interval of some length between the first approach and the placing of Canadian personnel on the Island. He pointed out that the Islands were only about 75 miles from Argentia and that the United States Naval authorities had a very direct interest in seeing that the use of wireless at St. Pierre was rigidly supervised. The United States officials agreed that this was true and that the United States Navy is concerned over this unsupervised radio station.

After further discussion it was suggested by the representatives of the Department of State that the following course might be adopted by the Canadian Government. The approach to the Administrator could be made in three stages, the use of the second and third stages depending on the replies made by him. It would not be necessary to

allow much time to elapse between each stage, and if it were essential the entire approach might be made during one day. First, the Administrator could be interviewed by some senior Canadian representative, who could tell him in a friendly manner that there were rumours that the wireless station was being employed in a manner inimical to our interests, especially through the transmission of cypher and code messages. It could be represented to him that while doubtless these reports were unfounded, he would wish to give no possible cause for apprehension. Therefore, he was being asked to grant facilities for civilian Canadian radio inspectors to take up their residence in the Island in order to supervise transmissions from the station.

In the likely event of the refusal of the Administrator to agree, it could immediately be pointed out to him that the Islands were dependent for their economic existence on funds released from Canadian and United States control, that the Canadian Government were prepared to prevent the further release of funds until wireless transmissions were effectively supervised, and that they had good reason to believe that the Government of the United States would take parallel action. The use of this threat would give the Administrator an opportunity to reverse his decision. He could excuse himself to his own Government by saying that he had to choose between Canadian supervision of the wireless installations and starvation for the islanders, and that he preferred the first to the second choice.

In the event, however, that the Administrator still was obdurate, a third stage could be employed to bring pressure upon him. He could be told not only that the release of further funds would be refused, but also that the Canadian authorities would record every message transmitted from the wireless station, and if any of these messages were in code or cypher or contained matter of assistance to the enemy, he would be responsible for any consequences which might follow. Any departure from these conditions could, if necessary, provide an occasion for the despatch of Canadian personnel to the Islands.

Mr. Atherton suggested that at the appropriate moment the French Minister to Canada should be informed of the situation and the steps being taken to meet it. He said that he felt it important to give the Vichy authorities no ground for contending that their representative had been slighted or ignored.

Later in the day Mr. Atherton informed Mr. Wrong by telephone that he had discussed this question with Secretary Hull, who approved a cautious course for the present along the lines suggested by the United States officials.

851A.74/12-1541

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Hickerson)*

[Extract]

[WASHINGTON,] December 15, 1941.

Mr. Moffat<sup>8a</sup> called me on long distance telephone at about 5:30 Washington time yesterday afternoon. He said that at the request of Vice Admiral Nelles, Chief of the Canadian Naval Staff, he had had an informal conversation with Admiral Muselier<sup>9</sup> who it will be recalled is No. 2 to General de Gaulle<sup>9a</sup> in the Free French movement and who is now in Ottawa. Admiral Muselier told Mr. Moffat that he wished to discuss with him informally the following three subjects:

(1) *St. Pierre and Miquelon.*

Admiral Muselier told Mr. Moffat that he had orders from General de Gaulle which would enable him to land forces and take over the islands but that as far as he was concerned he was not going to act until he was sure that the proposed action was agreeable to the Governments of Newfoundland, Canada, and the United States. He intimated strongly but did not say explicitly that his action in the islands had the approval of the British Government. I asked Mr. Moffat what naval forces Admiral Muselier had. He replied that he has three corvettes on this side but that the movements of the vessels must be approved by the British Admiralty.

Mr. Moffat said that in the Department of External Affairs there was a division of thought regarding action in St. Pierre; one branch favoring direct action by Canada along the lines discussed with us and the other favoring action by the Free French. He continued that the Canadian Government had not yet received a reply to its urgent telegraphic inquiry of Mr. Churchill proposing action by Canada; this telegram was quoted to us in the Canadian Government's memorandum of December 5. He said that from reading the memoranda of the conversations we had had with the Canadians here he implied that we favored action by the Canadian Government and inquired whether that was a correct assumption. I told him that it certainly was as regards my own views and that I believed Messrs. Atherton and Dunn<sup>10</sup> also agreed that it would on the whole be preferable for Canada to act; I added that in my opinion this was not a good time for

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<sup>8a</sup> J. Pierrepont Moffat, Minister in Canada.

<sup>9</sup> Vice Adm. Emile Henry Muselier, Commander in Chief of the Free French Naval Forces.

<sup>9a</sup> Gen. Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French.

<sup>10</sup> James Clement Dunn, Adviser on Political Relations.

the Free French forces to act in this hemisphere. I continued, however, that I would confer with other officers in the Department and get in touch with him perhaps on Tuesday<sup>11</sup> if we had any further views to express.

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851A.74/12-1641

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Atherton)*

[WASHINGTON,] December 16, 1941.

Under instructions from Mr. Welles I called Minister Moffat on the telephone this morning and advised him that Mr. Welles had been in consultation with the President on matters which Mr. Moffat had inquired about through Mr. Hickerson last evening. I informed Mr. Moffat that the President did not favor a policy whereby the Free French were permitted to move in on the St. Pierre-Miquelon situation, that in this specific instance this was the issue at stake but that if later the question arose as to the Free French moving in on other French territorial possessions in this hemisphere, that with reference to recent exchanges between Washington and Vichy, in so far as it was foreseeable now the attitude of this Government would undoubtedly be the same.

I added as regards the discussions which the Department of State had recently carried on with the Canadians, the President entirely approved the tenor of our conversations, specifically as regards the radio station of St. Pierre-Miquelon, that the Canadians in the first instance should use persuasion but that failing that force might be used in order that there might be Canadian control of the radio station. In both these instances the radio station was the objective in this the Canadian issue vis-à-vis the St. Pierre-Miquelon situation.

The conversation being over the international telephone was necessarily somewhat guarded, but Mr. Moffat stated that he was very grateful for having such definite and speedy instructions.

In conclusion, he said he thought he understood the Department would not favor his facilitating a visit of Admiral Muselier to Washington. I said that there was no doubt on this point that the Department of State would not be favorable to such a visit by this Admiral.

R[AY] A[ATHERTON]

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<sup>11</sup> December 16.

851.33/246

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

[WASHINGTON,] December 16, 1941.

Last evening Mr. Hayter<sup>12</sup> of the British Embassy called on me at his request. He showed me in strict confidence a telegram from London which stated that there was a question of the Free French naval forces, which ordinarily were doing naval patrol work in the Atlantic but which were now in Canadian waters, moving in on the Island of St. Pierre-Miquelon and occupying it for the Free French. The idea thereby was to control the radio station without forcing the Canadian Government to take action in what might be an embarrassing political situation. This movement of the Free French was approved by the Prime Minister but the telegram went on to state that no action would be taken unless the consent of the Canadian and American Governments were obtained. I gave Mr. Hayter the Department of State's background on all this matter and this morning telephoned Mr. Hayter that the question had been discussed here and I was authorized to inform him that the President did not favor a policy whereby the Free French were permitted to move in on the St. Pierre-Miquelon situation. I then added as regards the discussions which the Department of State had recently carried on with the Canadians that the President entirely approved the tenor of our conversations, specifically as regards the radio station of St. Pierre-Miquelon; that the Canadians in the first instance should use persuasion, but that failing that force might be used in order that there might be Canadian control of the radio station. I reminded Mr. Hayter that the British Government and ourselves were interested in the maintenance of relations with the Vichy Government and certainly any action by the Free French in moving into French possessions in this continent with the approval of the British and American Governments would be bound to be detrimental. Mr. Hayter said he assumed this might be referred to other French possessions in this hemisphere other than St. Pierre-Miquelon and I replied that certainly in so far as was foreseeable now, particularly at this moment when Marshal Petain<sup>13</sup> had given certain memoranda assurances, copies of which have been transmitted to the British Embassy, the attitude of this Government would undoubtedly be the same. I said that he must realize the situation existing as regards Martinique which had been discussed at more than one occasion with the British Embassy and he admitted he understood all the implications of the situation therein.

<sup>12</sup> W. G. Hayter, First Secretary of the British Embassy.

<sup>13</sup> Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, French Chief of State.

In conclusion, I very carefully reviewed all the points of our discussion in order that there might be no confusion in his mind.

R[AY] A[ATHERTON]

851A.01/33

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Hickerson)*

[WASHINGTON,] December 17, 1941.

Mr. Moffat called on long distance telephone at three o'clock this afternoon and referred to recent telephone conversations with Mr. Atherton and me in regard to Mr. Moffat's talk with Admiral Muselier, of the Free French movement, who is now in Ottawa. Mr. Moffat said that he had talked with Admiral Muselier again today, basing his remarks on the instructions which Mr. Atherton gave him over the telephone yesterday.

As regards our decision in respect to St. Pierre and Miquelon, Admiral Muselier said that he accepts this decision with regret and reluctance and that he will take no action. The Admiral believes we are making a mistake and that action by Canada may create a bad precedent which will be seized upon by Darlan. However, that decision has been made and Admiral Muselier accepts it.

As regards our view about the inadvisability of the Free French moving in on other French territorial possessions in this Hemisphere, Mr. Moffat said that Admiral Muselier made no comment.

Mr. Moffat said that Admiral Muselier talked at great length, however, on the question of the French vessels which have been taken into protective custody by the United States. This matter was raised with the Admiral in his talk with Mr. Moffat on December 15 and is discussed in the memorandum of conversation of that date between Mr. Moffat and Mr. Hickerson.<sup>14</sup> Mr. Moffat said that Admiral Muselier had apparently been keenly desirous of using the ships as an excuse for coming to the United States and that the Admiral received with obvious disappointment the word that we did not think it would be a good idea for him to visit this country at this time. Admiral Muselier thereupon said that he considered it most important that two French officers attached to his staff visit the United States at once to confer with Free French leaders in New York and perhaps Washington and to be in a position to give advice concerning the experience in other allied countries in regard to French ships. The Admiral has therefore applied for visas for these two French officers to visit the United States. They are: Capt. de Frigate Heron

<sup>14</sup> The portion of the memorandum relating to the question of French vessels is not printed.



d'Illevosse (who is traveling on a British certificate of identity); Capt. de Corvette Maurice Quedrue (who is believed to have a French passport); this officer is in Montreal and is coming to Ottawa tonight; his papers will be in the Legation tomorrow.

Mr. Moffat recommends that he be given authority by telephone as soon as possible to issue these visas. Mr. Moffat feels that since we have said "no" to everything else that Admiral Muselier has proposed, and since these visits would seem to be quite harmless at the worst and of some little value at best, the visas ought to be granted.

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740.0011 European War 1939/17778

*The Commander in Chief of the Free French Naval Forces (Muselier)  
to the American Minister in Canada (Moffat)*<sup>15</sup>

[Translation]

OTTAWA, December 17, 1941.

MR. MINISTER: In our interview of this morning you informed me of the point of view of the Government of the United States as to the attitude to take with regard to the wish of the population of St. Pierre-Miquelon to join Free France and with regard to the serious threat to the safety of Atlantic convoys resulting from the existence of cable and wireless communications between Vichy and St. Pierre.

You let me know that the American Government did not consider the moment opportune to carry out the wish of this population in order that repercussions on the policies of the Vichy Government might be avoided. The solution favored by the Government of the United States is the local establishment of a Canadian control of communications.

The desire of Free France has always been to do nothing which could embarrass the policies of the American Government. This desire is, if possible, strengthened in the present phase of the common struggle against Japan, Germany and Italy. That is why I desired to come to an understanding with your Government before taking action. However, I feel it my duty to call to your attention the consequences of the message which you were kind enough to transmit to me. A population of five thousand inhabitants is subject to increasing oppression while its most ardent wish is to join the side of the democracies. A source of important recruiting is closed to the Allied naval effort (amounting to the crews of about fifteen corvettes).

Moreover, a supervision is to be established on French territory, a supervision which will be considered by French public opinion in France and throughout the Empire as derogatory to national sov-

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<sup>15</sup> Copy transmitted to the Department by the Minister in Canada in his despatch No. 2328, December 20; received December 23.

ereignty, and will certainly be made use of by Nazi inspired propaganda which is trying to create the belief that the goal of the Allies is to seize the French colonies. This supervision might also be used as a pretext for a similar demand by Germany on certain French colonies.

On the other hand, joining Free France would have given hope and courage to all Frenchmen who are well aware of our policies of defending the integrity of the French Empire and of participation in the world effort against the totalitarian powers.

Accept [etc.]

E. MUSELIER

*Vice Admiral, Commander in Chief of  
Free French Naval Forces  
National Commissaire of the Navy and  
the Merchant Fleet  
Member of the Council of Defense of  
the Empire*

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851A.01/15 : Telegram

*The Consul at St. Pierre-Miquelon (Pasquet) to the Secretary of State*

ST. PIERRE-MIQUELON, December 24, 1941—8 a. m.

[Received 3 : 27 p. m.]

Three Free French corvettes and submarine *Surcouf* under the command of Admiral Muselier entered early this morning to occupy St. Pierre-Miquelon. No difficulties anticipated.

PASQUET

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851A.00/50a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*<sup>16</sup>

WASHINGTON, December 25, 1941.

968. The Secretary of State issued the following statement today:

“Our preliminary reports show that the action taken by three so-called Free French ships at St. Pierre-Miquelon was an arbitrary action contrary to the agreement of all parties concerned and certainly without the prior knowledge or consent in any sense of the U. S. Government.

“This Government has inquired of the Canadian Government as to the steps that Government is prepared to take to restore the *status quo* of these islands.”

Please bring this to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

HULL

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<sup>16</sup> Repeated on the same date to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom as telegram No. 6021, and to the Consul at Fort de France, Martinique, as unnumbered telegram.

851A.01/17 : Telegram

*The Minister in Canada (Moffat) to the Secretary of State*

OTTAWA, December 25, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received 11 : 45 a. m.]

313. I am told this morning at the Department of External Affairs that the Canadian Government was shocked and embarrassed by the action of Admiral Muselier in occupying St. Pierre-Miquelon. When he was recalled from Ottawa to London on the 18th he had despite a natural disappointment accepted the veto against occupying the islands and had asked for air transportation across the Atlantic. He was on his way to Newfoundland to take a bomber when the incident occurred. The Canadian supposition is that when the unconfirmed reports of Petain's resignation reached him he decided to take the bit in his own teeth regardless of American or Canadian wishes. The Canadians feel that his action was so close to a breach of faith on the part of Muselier that it cannot fail to embarrass their future relations with the Free French. Mr. Mackenzie King is particularly upset and plans to discuss the subject in Washington tomorrow.

MOFFAT

851A.01/13 : Telegram

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

LONDON, December 25, 1941.

[Received December 25—4 : 47 p. m.]

6221. Your 6021<sup>17</sup> just received and has been brought to the attention of the Foreign Office. I am informed that the action taken was against the instructions and orders of the British Government.

WINANT

851A.01/16 : Telegram

*The Consul at St. Pierre-Miquelon (Pasquet) to the Secretary of State*

ST. PIERRE-MIQUELON, December 25, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received 3 : 36 p. m.]

Admiral Muselier states he will continue to maintain lighthouse service and give freedom of movement to American and Canadian air-planes patrolling St. Pierre-Miquelon if he can be assured of being informed of any movements of French naval vessels based on Martinique owing to possible danger of disguised planes and ensuing danger

<sup>17</sup> See footnote 16, p. 551.

to his fleet. If no assurances can be given lighthouses will be extinguished and he states that he will be obliged to order the establishment of a limited channel of approach for airplanes. Any proposed visit of naval vessels should be announced beforehand. Plebiscite now being held. Large majority is expected in favor of De Gaulle.

PASQUET

851A.01/19 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 26, 1941—noon.

[Received 6:48 p. m.]

1608. We delivered to the Foreign Office this morning the text of the Department's statement regarding Saint Pierre and Miquelon (Department's 968<sup>18</sup>). Rochat<sup>19</sup> expressed appreciation for the prompt action our Government was taking and said that he hoped the *status quo* would be reestablished as rapidly as possible. He said that this action is in violation of the agreement governing the *status quo* of French possessions in the Western Hemisphere<sup>20</sup> and if these islands are left in the hands of the Gaullists, the Germans can use this as a pretext for insisting on stationing German forces "in other French colonial possessions to protect them."

We said to him that information had come to our attention which would seem to indicate that while the French Government was on the one hand urging us to resume immediately our program of economic assistance for North Africa, it was on the other hand also giving consideration to the possibility of turning over certain gasoline and supplies from North Africa to Axis troops in Libya (Embassy's 1605, December 25, 1 p. m.<sup>21</sup>). We expressed the opinion that such action would be in complete violation of the French Government's agreement regarding economic assistance for North Africa and would certainly cause most serious repercussions in the United States.

Rochat replied evasively that he could not enlighten us as he has no information concerning this possibility. He added that such questions do not fall within the scope of his activity (Rochat, when he is not able to give us information, invariably resorts to this strategy). He did say, however, that he could give us positive assurances that up to the present time no such deliveries have been made.

Repeated to Algiers for Murphy.<sup>22</sup>

LEAHY

<sup>18</sup> Dated December 25, p. 551.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Antoine Rochat, Secretary General, French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>20</sup> See note from the French Ambassador, August 14, 1940, and reply, August 30, 1940, *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, pp. 499 and 500, respectively.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 501.

<sup>22</sup> Robert D. Murphy, Counselor of Embassy in France, temporarily at Algiers.

851A.00/48

*The Consul at St. Pierre-Miquelon (Pasquet) to the Secretary  
of State*

No. 79

ST. PIERRE-MIQUELON, December 26, 1941.

[Received December 29.]

SIR: I have the honor to report that owing to the fact that the Brown code, the only one in the possession of this office may not be considered strictly confidential, I have asked the Department if it would send a seaplane to carry this despatch to Washington because at present there are no safe or other means of mail communication for the transmission of strictly confidential information. I did not wish, for obvious reasons, to entrust this communication to the French naval vessel *Alysse* which left this port this afternoon for St. John's where it is to start the escorting of a convoy out of that port with the *Aconit* which is to leave here during the night to join the same convoy at St. John's.

On several occasions I have seen Admiral Muselier since his landing at St. Pierre at 8 a. m. December 24, 1941 on board his vessel the corvette *Mimosa*. The two other corvettes were the *Alysse* and the *Aconit* which together with the submarine *Surcouf* formed the raiding party. I was on the wharf when the *Mimosa* docked and while raiding parties were despatched to occupy the telephone exchange, the wireless station, the *gendarmerie* and the Western Union cable offices an officer stated to me that Admiral Muselier would like to meet me. We talked for a few minutes during which he announced that he had come under orders of General de Gaulle to occupy St. Pierre-Miquelon, hoped that there would be no bloodshed and that although my position might be irregular I should continue to operate as heretofore and that any messages I cared to send would be despatched without censorship restrictions as soon as he was properly organized. I have effectively sent all the cables which I desired to despatch although the first one was delayed until he himself had telegraphed his arrival to General de Gaulle in London.

The Admiral called on me during the early afternoon of the 24th to introduce Mr. Alain Savary, who is operating as commissioner (*Commissaire*) replacing Administrator Gilbert de Bournat, at which time he was accompanied by his chief of staff. I have not returned the call first of all because I did not wish to appear in any way as welcoming the "invader" and secondly because I meet the Admiral frequently on the streets when he never fails to talk to me and he calls at the office when he has something of interest to communicate to me. Later in the day I received a communication from the Admiral (Enclosure No. 1 and translation enclosure No. 2<sup>23</sup>) informing me officially that under

<sup>23</sup> Not printed.

orders of General de Gaulle he answered that day the appeal of the inhabitants of St. Pierre who were tired of being submitted to an administrator with nazi tendencies and who were desirous of rallying Free France. No acknowledgement was made of this communication because none seemed advisable nor necessary.

On the day of his arrival, the Admiral announced by posters that a plebiscite would be held in St. Pierre the following Christmas day from 8 a. m. to 2 p. m. later prolonged to 4 p. m. The plebiscite was effected in perfect calm and according to several impartial eyewitnesses including Mr. Wolfert, a correspondent of the North American Newspaper Alliance, New York no irregularities were possible. As stated in my telegram of yesterday<sup>24</sup> the two questions printed on the ballots were "*Ralliement à la France Libre*" (Rally to Free France) and "*Collaboration avec les puissances de l'axe*" (Collaboration with the axis powers). The final figures are: 650 for rally to free France, 10 for collaboration with the axis powers and 140 void ballots (instead of 100 as stated in my telegram). It now appears that between 815 and 820 were the maximum total numbers of eligible voters instead of the first estimated 950. Today the plebiscite was held at Sailor's island where 63 voted for rally to Free France, none for collaboration and 3 ballots were void. Tomorrow, weather permitting, the plebiscite will be held at Miquelon where similar majorities to those of St. Pierre and Sailor's island are anticipated.

Several persons to whom I have talked and one who wrote to me, mentioned that they did not consider the ballot a fair one owing to the nature of the choice given, stating that no opportunity was given to those who would have voted for the Vichy Government or fidelity to Marshal Pétain. These objections certainly have some basis of truth but even so it is my opinion that the de Gaulle majority would have been approximately 75 per cent instead of the 98 per cent registered.

This afternoon Admiral Muselier called on me accompanied by his chief of staff to set forth in strict confidence the following information which he requested me to ask the Department not to communicate to the British government for fear that it may reach General de Gaulle at this time. The Admiral read and allowed me to take a copy of his letter of December 17, 1941 addressed to the American Minister at Ottawa (it is assumed that the Department has this communication and owing to lack of time a copy is not transmitted). He states that he wrote this letter for record purposes and to set forth his desire, which he claims to have communicated to General de Gaulle, to refrain from the occupation of St. Pierre unless he had the approval of the American and Canadian governments. The approval was not

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<sup>24</sup> Not printed.

forthcoming and General de Gaulle was allegedly so advised by the Admiral and he was then reportedly instructed to return to London and cease all negotiations with foreign powers. The Admiral then referred to the second sentence of the second paragraph of his letter of December 17th wherein he states that "the solution adopted by the government of the United States is to establish a local Canadian control of communications". He added that this solution would have been a mistake which would have had serious repercussions and establish a precedent for the Germans to follow permitting them to effect various forms of control over other French colonies, such as Dakar and Casablanca, which would have been dangerous to the safety of the American hemisphere.

The Admiral states that he then proceeded to Halifax and reserved three places in transatlantic planes due to depart for England today or tomorrow. However at Montreal he received either on the 19th or 20th a telegram dated December 18th from General de Gaulle, parts of which he read to me, ordering him to occupy the islands of St. Pierre-Miquelon and inform no one. The Admiral states that he is not a gangster and considered, together with his two executive officers, refusing to obey the order because he did not wish to effect the occupation without American and Canadian approval. However the three officers decided that failure to obey would have necessitated their resignation and resulted in the disintegration of the complete free French naval forces which the Admiral states are held together largely because of his personal following. Rather than do this, he risked the occupation as a soldier carrying out a formal order because de Gaulle allegedly told him that he took total responsibility for the action. The Admiral did not anticipate such a reaction from the United States and Canada as has been heard over the radio since the occupation but now that the plebiscite has taken place, withdrawal from St. Pierre would immediately lay open the de Gaullists to terrible reprisals from the limited but powerful Vichy followers. He then stated that in his present position he felt bound to stay and would defend the islands against any attacks by the Vichy, British and or American fleets and that his followers were determined to fight to the last man. He quickly added that he hoped the situation would never come to this because he had never and did not wish to have to give the order to French sailors to shoot at their brothers. As regards the United States he informed me that his wife was a descendant of Lafayette and that it would be repulsive to him to have to fire on American ships because of the long record of historic friendship existing between the two nations.

The Admiral desired this information to be known to the American government because he is convinced that General de Gaulle's order

was that of a dictator and that he is certain that the General did not even consult the National Committee of Free French at London of which he is the president but issued the occupation order under his own responsibility. My informant then added that now that he had acted he would see the action through but upon his eventual return to London that he would resign as a protest against the unilateral order given to him by the General without the prior approval of the United States and Canada. The reason for his planned resignation is that Free France is on the side of and fighting for democracy to crush totalitarianism and he thinks the General's action was not democratic enough to fit in his ideal of France.

Admiral Muselier at first wished the information to be transmitted as not coming from him but I told him that I would only pass it on if I could state that he himself had been my source of information. He finally agreed requesting that the British government be not advised because he did not wish the General to know now about his plans as previously stated. He then left me and as he was going out of the door a messenger handed him a telegram which had just arrived from the General and again in the strictest confidence he read the renewed congratulations transmitted and a passage to the effect that the British government was now in complete accord with the action taken.

My Canadian colleague also had a visit from the Admiral on the same subject but I do not believe that he is aware of the contents of the Admiral's letter of December 17th referred to previously and consequently I shall not mention its existence.

The Admiral plans to keep the corvette *Mimosa*, his flagship, and the *Surcouf* in St. Pierre until the colony is running smoothly again and its protection assured.

I then asked Admiral Muselier what financial arrangements he expected to make to continue the supplying of this colony and he replied that the New York Free French committee was conducting negotiations to that effect but that in any event the General would be making suitable arrangements. This point, of course, has been brought up by several local residents but the Admiral is relying on Prime Minister Churchill's promise to finance territories coming under the control of the Free French.

Respectfully yours,

MAURICE PASQUET

851A.00/46

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] December 26, 1941.

The British Ambassador<sup>25</sup> called at my request. I referred to the substance of my press conference today, a transcript of which is hereto

<sup>25</sup> Viscount Halifax.



attached.<sup>26</sup> I then said that it is very important to work out a solution to the matter of the Free French seizure of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, so as to avoid a serious flare-up, which would have repercussions in many ways. I suggested that it might well be possible to get an agreement with Governor Robert <sup>26a</sup> at Martinique, approved by the Government at Vichy, to allow three or four experts of Canadian nationality to form a commission to supervise messages passing over the radio station on these islands; that if this could be done the British could then consider requesting the Free French to withdraw from these two islands, and Great Britain and Canada, in particular, could then praise very highly the part the Free French had taken by occupying the islands in securing this agreement for supervision. This would be a good face-saving proposition.

The Ambassador proceeded to talk for several minutes giving his reasons why nothing should be done about this occupation by either Great Britain, Canada or the United States. I replied that it is a choice, according to him, between ratifying the unlawful act of the Free French, which took place in absolute violation of their pledges to Great Britain, or the United States' throwing overboard the entire problem of Vichy and French Africa which we have been nursing for a considerable period and without such efforts on our part Germany would probably be in occupation of north or west Africa, or both, now and during most of the past 12 months. The Ambassador then said he saw the force of that position. I replied that his Government was perhaps more interested, if possible, in the Vichy angle of this matter than the United States. He seemed agreeable to the idea of my discussing a proposed agreement with the French at Vichy with Prime Minister Mackenzie King, and if agreeable, Prime Minister Churchill could then be requested to join and carry out the part of Great Britain as above set forth.<sup>27</sup> I thanked him and said I would give the matter attention later on in the day.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

851A.00/47

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] December 26, 1941.

The French Ambassador <sup>28</sup> called at his request and thanked me for my press statement <sup>29</sup> yesterday in regard to the occupation of St.

<sup>26</sup> Not printed.

<sup>26a</sup> Adm. Georges Robert, Governor of the French West Indies and Supreme Commander of the French Islands in the Western Hemisphere.

<sup>27</sup> Prime Minister Churchill was in Washington at the time. Correspondence regarding this Washington Conference is scheduled for publication in a subsequent volume of *Foreign Relations*.

<sup>28</sup> Gaston Henry-Haye.

<sup>29</sup> See telegram No. 968, December 25, to the Ambassador in France, p. 551.

Pierre and Miquelon by Free French forces on Wednesday last.<sup>30</sup> I proceeded then to speak to the Ambassador along the lines of what I said later at my regular press conference today. I stated to the Ambassador that it would be bad policy for us to do any talking to the press—either he or I—until there is an opportunity for further conferences and consideration of the matters in controversy; that it might be very injurious to his country, as well as ours, if the press greatly exaggerates the matters in question and distorts and otherwise confuses the entire situation as it relates to this matter. I then said that naturally there was nothing for me to say to him at this time in addition to what I said yesterday in my press statement and the substance of what I am giving to the press today, for the manifest reason that I have had no opportunity for conferences with the appropriate officials of the governments interested.

I then emphasized to the Ambassador that, of course, I am advancing no suggestion to him now for the attention of either his Government at Vichy or Admiral Robert at Martinique; that I am merely calling attention to the real facts of the matter; the facts are that until day-before-yesterday the sole question up for consideration had related to the supervision by the Allied Governments of the wireless station on these two French islands. It was contemplated that this would be effected by a friendly arrangement providing for a commission of three or four experts, preferably Canadians, which would act without interfering in any way with the territorial or the political affairs of the two islands. I did not proceed any further except to state that there was nothing more I could say in addition to what I said yesterday and proposed to say to the press today. A copy of the transcript of my press conference is hereto attached.<sup>31</sup>

The Ambassador always talks considerably when he emerges from my office and meets the press, and I do not know what he has said today relative to our conversation.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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851A.00/49

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*<sup>32</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] December 27, 1941.

The French Ambassador called at my request. I said at the outset that I had nothing new to say to him more than had been said to the press the day before about the seizure by the Free French of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon; that I was hoping to say a few

<sup>30</sup> December 24.

<sup>31</sup> Not printed.

<sup>32</sup> Substance of this memorandum was transmitted to the Embassy in France as telegram No. 972, December 27, 6 p. m.

words to the press after the Ambassador left and that I would send him a copy of my remarks by messenger.

I then said to him that my own country, along with Canada and Great Britain, has become increasingly concerned for some time about the possibilities of the use of the wireless station on these two islands to the detriment of our and their shipping, which moves up the coast in one continuous procession almost, on its way across the North Atlantic and that they were just in the act of bringing the matter up with the officials governing these islands. I emphasized that it is very important that the French officials clear up this matter against any possibility of injury by signals to enemy vessels on the high seas; that the French Government on the islands should be only too glad to take the necessary steps to do so either by closing down this wireless station during the war, with some Canadians there as observers, or, if it is desired to operate the station, to agree to two or three Canadians and an American to be attached to our Consulate, who would exercise the necessary authority over the operation of the station to assure Great Britain, Canada and the United States against any possible injury. I said that this would not interfere at all with the sovereignty of the Government, whose sovereignty only extends to internal affairs, but would relate to the international phase of the operations of this wireless station. I then stated that it had been contemplated before the seizure this past week that the Government would be approached in a friendly manner for the purpose of entering into such a friendly agreement as I have just described.

The Ambassador said that he felt disposed to recommend earnestly to his government and to Admiral Robert, the Governor of the St. Pierre and Miquelon islands, such a settlement as would either involve shutting down the wireless station, with a Canadian guard over it, or an agreement granting sufficient authority to two or three Canadians and an American official attached to the Consulate to see that no messages or signals in the least injurious to the shipping of the British, the Canadians and the Americans could take place.

I then said to the Ambassador that the Governor of these islands has made himself personally offensive to Canada and to some of the people on the islands and that it would be desired that he be transferred to some other island and that another governor be assigned to take his place. He said he would undertake to see that this be done but would like in the same connection to have a short time in which to do it so that it might not be made a part and parcel of the transaction relating to the wireless. He stated that he would send these recommendations to his Government and to Governor Robert.

It was expressly agreed that he was to say nothing about this matter in any way when he went out of my office. I further said to him that

I could not undertake to say whether the British and the Canadians would agree to this proposal; that I must first get it from the French Government and then approach the other governments and see whether they will agree.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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851A.00/50

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] December 27, 1941.

The Prime Minister of Canada called and I repeated to him my conversation with the French Ambassador about the plan for the settlement of the controversy growing out of the seizure of the St. Pierre and Miquelon islands by the Free French. I said that if and when I received a satisfactory reply from the French I would then take it up with the Canadians and the British. He seemed more or less acquiescent, without expressly saying so, in the proposed terms of the French.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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851A.01/25 : Telegram

*The Consul at St. Pierre-Miquelon (Pasquet) to the Secretary of State*

ST. PIERRE-MIQUELON, December 29, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 11:22 a. m.]

Referring to the Consulate's despatch of December 26, No. 79, plebiscite Miquelon held yesterday: 69 in favor of Free France, 4 collaboration, 72 void, total vote of islands of St. Pierre-Miquelon 783, 14, 215 respectively. Submarine patrols coasts during the night.

PASQUET

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851A.01/27 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, December 29, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received December 30—2:30 p. m.]

1628. We called on Rochat this afternoon and conveyed to him the substance of the Department's telegram No. 972, December 27, 6 p. m.,<sup>33</sup> concerning the restoration of the *status quo* in St. Pierre-Miquelon.

Rochat said that while he appreciated the steps which Washington had taken with a view to restoring the legitimate regime in St. Pierre-Miquelon, the French Government is obliged to take the position that the *status quo ante* must be restored and that subsequently the condi-

<sup>33</sup> See footnote 32, p. 559.

tions in the Department's telegram under reference would be examined in a most friendly and sympathetic manner. He said that he felt sure that a satisfactory formula could be worked out in connection with the use of the radio there and also in connection with an American observer but that the French Government could not comply with our request to withdraw the Governor of the island. He indicated, however, that it was possible that at some future time a replacement would be named.

He said that a telegram was sent to Henry-Haye at noon today conveying to him the position of the French Government as he had just outlined it to us.

LEAHY

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851A.01/72

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] December 29, 1941.

The British Ambassador called at his request. He informed me that he had discouraging news from his Foreign Office about the de Gaulle seizure of the St. Pierre and Miquelon islands, in which it was reported that public sentiment was gaining rapidly in favor of that act not only in the United States but in Britain and other places and that his Government was very fearful of injuring the de Gaulle movement in Africa, especially, if they should resist in any way the desire of de Gaulle to hold on to the islands. I reminded him that in the first place it violated the broad basic doctrine of intervention by force in other countries on the part of an invader—a very broad doctrine that Britain, the United States and other countries have used to denounce Hitler and the Japanese for violating by invading and seizing territory that did not belong to them and destroying its sovereignty as well as its territorial integrity under well-established law; that the de Gaulle group is not recognized by virtually any country in this Western Hemisphere and therefore it is not a controversy between fellow Frenchmen so far as this hemisphere is concerned; that all of the twenty-one American nations have a definite agreement entered into at Havana<sup>34</sup> in regard to European colonies and possessions in this hemisphere. This agreement rests on the non-use of force, and that to let the de Gaulle occupation continue unchallenged would mean that de Gaulle would probably undertake to capture other French

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<sup>34</sup> Convention on Provisional Administration of European Colonies and Possessions in the Americas, concluded July 30, 1940; Treaty Series No. 977, or 54 Stat. (pt. 2) 2491.

colonies, such as Guadeloupe and French Guiana and that furthermore Admiral Robert, the Governor of all French colonies in this hemisphere would probably take his large cruiser and go up and relieve St. Pierre and Miquelon, et cetera, et cetera, and, finally, the whole basis of the good neighbor policy as built up in the American republics during the past nine years would be repudiated by the United States with the unthinkable repercussions of injury that would occur through Latin America just at the present pivotal stage of a conference of all foreign ministers at Rio de Janeiro.<sup>35</sup>

I said that, furthermore, without going into details, it would be necessary for this Government at once to withdraw Admiral Leahy and all other Americans, including Murphy, who have been working in French North Africa with such splendid results, and that these would all be booted out by the Vichy Government, if they were not previously withdrawn. The result would be the loss to Britain and the United States of much valuable information that these Americans have obtained by keeping in touch with the Vichy Government and, with its permission, with the north African and related situations. I said it is unthinkable to me and to my Government that all of these benefits to the British and American Governments should be junked and thrown overboard in order to gratify the desire of the de Gaulle leaders, who, in open violation of their pledge to the contrary, suddenly seized and occupied St. Pierre and Miquelon by force, thereby inflicting on Great Britain and the United States unimaginable injury to their military defensive situation in this hemisphere and in French Africa. I said that it could be made perfectly plain to de Gaulle that he is inflicting such injury without any cause whatsoever; that if the Vichy French should offer a suitable agreement to Great Britain, Canada and the United States to safeguard the wireless station against the possibility of its use to the detriment of the three Allied nations, it would be entirely consistent for de Gaulle to be thanked for his contribution in bringing this about, which it might be said was his chief purpose in occupying the islands, notwithstanding other minor purposes he might also have had in mind, and that he is now free to vacate these islands and move on to some other act of service to the Allied governments. There would be no further question of face-saving arising. The Ambassador said he well understood the situation and that he would undertake to get it more fully and accurately before his Government.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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<sup>35</sup> The conference opened at Rio de Janeiro, January 15, 1942.

851A.01/58

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

[WASHINGTON,] December 29, 1941.

Participants: Mr. Ray Atherton, Department of State.  
Mr. Adrian Tixier, Free French Commissioner,  
Washington.  
Mr. Boegner.<sup>36</sup>  
Mr. Samuel Reber, Department of State.

Mr. Tixier called today at his request. He confirmed what he had already reported to us over the telephone that he had no information previous to the occupation of St. Pierre Miquelon by the Free French forces and had wanted us to realize that he had issued no statement from the Free French quarters here although they had frequently been pressed to do so. He then said he would like to give me a memorandum<sup>37</sup> under instructions from General De Gaulle which I read in his presence and said I could not accept because it was entirely based on an erroneous fact that at the moment of the occupation of the Island no government held any assurances from General De Gaulle that such an occupation would not take place. (This was the first information the Department had received from General De Gaulle to the effect that he had withdrawn his assurances regarding forcible occupation of the Islands.) I then went on to explain to the Free French Commissioner that on December 17 Admiral Muselier had had a long discussion with the American Minister in Ottawa<sup>38</sup> who had explained to him fully the point of view of this Government and received assurances from Admiral Muselier that he would not occupy St. Pierre Miquelon without the consent of the Canadian and American Governments and that this assurance to the American Minister had never been withdrawn nor the similar assurance which was made to the Canadian Government as well. I then informed M. Tixier that on December 22 we had been officially informed by the Canadian Government<sup>39</sup> that all plans they were envisaging for future discussions as to the wireless station on St. Pierre Miquelon were to be suspended and that meanwhile all action by the Free French forces to occupy the Islands had been abandoned. It was in these circum-

<sup>36</sup> Etienne Boegner, representative of the National Committee of Free French.

<sup>37</sup> Not found in Department files.

<sup>38</sup> See memorandum of December 17 by the Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs, p. 549.

<sup>39</sup> This information was transmitted in a telephone conversation between Mr. Wrong, Canadian Minister-Counselor, and Mr. Atherton on December 22; no record of conversation found in Department files.

stances I explained to the Free French Commissioner that we felt we were amply reassured and that therefore we were loath to believe that the ships which forcibly seized St. Pierre Miquelon on Christmas Eve were vessels acting under authority of the Free French National Committee.

RAY ATHERTON

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851A.01/79

*The French Ambassador (Henry-Haye) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, December 29, 1941.

By order of his Government, the Ambassador of France has the honor to impart to His Excellency the Secretary of State the following communication drafted at Vichy December 27:

"The French Government has noted with satisfaction the declaration whereby the American Government disapproved the action undertaken against St. Pierre and Miquelon.

"But it deems that the condition of political and pecuniary dependence in which the Gaullist leaders find themselves with respect to the Imperial authorities and the support which ex-Admiral Muselier must have received in English or Canadian territory impose upon it the obligation to request of the Governments concerned the immediate reestablishment of the *status quo ante*.

"Such reestablishment would involve in the first place the evacuation of the territory by the Gaullist mercenaries and the reinstatement of the Governor in his functions.

"The French Government would attach the greatest value to obtaining at this time precise indications as to the measures taken to this end by the Governments concerned."

Mr. Henry-Haye is happy [etc.]

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851A.01/29

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] December 30, 1941.

The French Ambassador called at his request.

He said he came in to give me the reply of his Government in regard to a settlement of the St. Pierre-Miquelon matter arising from the recent seizure by force of these islands by the Free French. He proceeded to translate the note<sup>40</sup> which seemed to refer a number of times to the question of sovereignty, a matter apparently of primary concern to the Vichy Government. He then made some refer-

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<sup>40</sup> *Supra*.



ence to a communiqué that the Vichy Government had put out today further dwelling on the question of its sovereignty. At this stage I interrupted his reading and said that I did not see how it was worthwhile for him to read any further on the question of sovereignty, since it was apparent that nothing could be gained by making that the central point and consuming time until the whole situation gets quickly out of hand—something the Ambassador must see and recognize.

The Ambassador then said that his Government was expecting Admiral Robert to handle the settlement of this matter. I replied that the Ambassador must realize that while this is an exceedingly small matter on the surface, in the present critical war situation, it is a highly explosive question which calls for immediate settlement. I added that it was with this in mind that I had asked the Ambassador to come in on December 27 and had suggested that this question could and should be settled amicably and in a spirit of cooperation on the part of all concerned, that announcement would be made accordingly, and that the occupants who seized the property could be requested by some appropriate government to withdraw, thereby restoring the *status quo* as it was before the seizure by force. This action would thus clear up the matter in a mutually satisfactory way. I said that if this step were not taken promptly, reckless people and publicity seekers will inflame the public everywhere and make the matter of greater difficulty and injury to all governments concerned.

The Ambassador sought to repeat that his Government expects Admiral Robert to make a suitable settlement and that it was merely reiterating its position as regards its sovereignty and making that public. I replied that the foregoing, as well as his remarks to the press correspondents when he left my office after his last call, was quoted in the press. I then added that if Great Britain and Canada should reply that their lives were at stake in a world war and that no European country having sovereignty over territory in the Western Hemisphere could be permitted to operate a wireless station with possibilities of signaling the enemy on the ocean, screening the whole matter with a statement about sovereignty, such a theory will not stand up for a moment; similarly if they replied that no device can be operated within the limits of such territorial boundary in a way to inflict possible major injuries even on the nearby high seas, such action cannot be supported by any theory of law, reason or practice. I then said that if the French Government cannot proceed straight to the point, as my original suggestion outlined for a settlement on a friendly basis, it would be most unfortunate for all of the governments involved; that Admiral Robert really needs no time to

consider a matter of agreeing to a plan to safeguard this wireless station against possible injury to the merchant fleets passing up and down the Atlantic coast; and that this is a matter that calls for quick action, if it is not to get out of hand.

The Ambassador then began to talk loudly about French sovereignty and that France was a great country and must be treated accordingly. I interrupted him to say that when I am being subjected to every sort of abuse even in this country in an effort to safeguard the whole situation by friendly and amicable settlement, just and fair to all, the only thing I received by way of a reply was a stump speech from the Ambassador about the greatness of the French nation and that soon it will be too late to handle this matter on its merits and in a proper spirit because of its explosive possibilities.

I then said that I could not hope to retain much influence with the British and the Canadians if the entire matter is to be approached in this tone and manner by the French Government, particularly as the British and Canadians are fighting for their very lives and will not be interrupted or interfered with by such questions and conditions.

The Ambassador inquired why I had not worked out this proposed agreement about the wireless station with Admiral Robert, who is the High Commissioner of all of the French islands on the Atlantic Coast. I replied that the failure to do so thus far is not the question and it does not affect the merits of the matter. I might say that I was hopelessly engrossed with the Japanese and other emergency problems during past weeks and when Admiral Horn <sup>41</sup> went to Martinique recently to discuss the continuance of the pending *status quo*, this special matter was not given him in his instructions. The Ambassador indicated the belief of himself and his associates that there was no danger to shipping from the operation of the wireless. I replied that everyone must agree that there were possibilities of danger and it does not suffice for the Ambassador and his associates to feel satisfied that there is no danger, especially when Great Britain, Canada and the United States know that, from the recognized possibilities of danger, injury and destruction could result. In other words, they are not satisfied as to the absolute safety of their shipping. I reemphasized that the purpose was a friendly arrangement to satisfy everybody without injury to anybody. I said that I had already indicated to the Ambassador that there was bitter feeling toward the Governor of these islands and yet his Government has seen fit to confer a Cross of Honor on him just at the moment when we are attempting a friendly settlement. The Ambassador smiled and said nothing.

The Ambassador said he would take up the matter further with his Government and report back to me as quickly as possible. I reminded

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<sup>41</sup> Rear Adm. Frederick J. Horne of the United States Navy.

him of my strong objection to every act and utterance of Japan which were in violation of the sovereignty and all other valuable rights and privileges in Indochina, and concluded by saying that I had sought to be entirely fair with the Government of Vichy under very trying circumstances and much criticism and that if his Government appreciates this situation at all, as it should appreciate it, it will come forward at once and offer a fair and reasonable and friendly adjustment such as we have been discussing.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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851A.01/67

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Samuel Reber of the Division of European Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] December 30, 1941.

Mr. Tixier called at my request this afternoon. I explained that I had been instructed to inform him that there had been apparently certain misunderstandings with regard to the significance of the expression "three so-called Free French ships" used in the press communiqué of December 25.<sup>42</sup>

I referred to Mr. Atherton's conversation with Mr. Tixier on December 29, when it was explained to him that when this Government was informed of the occupation of St. Pierre-Miquelon, it was slow to believe and hence to state that the ships were actually Free French ships in the absence of certainty that they were, and in view of the assurances which this Government had been given by Admiral Muselier. I went on to say that the phrase was used to avoid designation of the ships as those acting under the authority of the French National Committee and there was no intention to reflect upon the Free French movement in any way. I asked that Mr. Tixier be good enough to communicate this explanation to General de Gaulle.

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851A.01/51

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Adviser on Political Relations (Dunn)*

[WASHINGTON,] December 30, 1941.

Mr. Hoyer Millar, First Secretary of the British Embassy, came in this afternoon by appointment to say that one point which the British Foreign Office wished to make clear with respect to the St. Pierre-Miquelon situation was that from the point of view of security and

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<sup>42</sup> See telegram No. 968, December 25, to the Ambassador in France, p. 551.

safety of British shipping and the war situation, the British military authorities had not thought that control and supervision of the radio stations on those islands were sufficient but that a control of the islands themselves was necessary.

I told Mr. Hoyer Millar that there was every reason to believe that some arrangement might have been satisfactorily arrived at in order to take care of any dangers to shipping or war activities of the British, Canadian, or American interests, but that the interjection of the Free French authorities into the situation had caused unnecessary difficulties in connection with commitments and policies of this Government in this hemisphere. I said I felt sure there was unanimity on the part of the British, Canadians, and ourselves as to the need for all proper measures to insure the safety of our ships and there would have been no question about all necessary protective measures having been adopted.

Mr. Hoyer Millar asked whether any reply had been received from the French on the proposed formula the Secretary and Mr. Mackenzie King had agreed upon. I said that I knew the Secretary had received the French Ambassador today but I did not know whether the Secretary had received from him any definite word as to the French attitude toward this proposal. I said I still hoped that some solution would be arrived at that would take care of the interests of all concerned. Mr. Hoyer Millar said that he hoped so also but that it was difficult for the United Kingdom Government to insist on the Free French getting out of the islands now that they are in.

J. C. D[UNN]

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740.0011 European War 1939/18075 : Telegram

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

LONDON, December 31, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received December 31—1:28 p. m.]

6286. Last night I had a long talk with Eden <sup>48</sup> covering his Russian trip. His papers covering the detailed conversations with Stalin are not available as he had only one original which had gone to the printer in order to have copies made for Cabinet distribution, but I hope to send you a detailed statement tomorrow. The substance of his messages which he forwarded here I have already transmitted to you.

Incidentally we discussed the Saint Pierre and Miquelon situation. He told me that he realizes the Free French had gotten off base and had made a mistake but he hoped that in considering the incident

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<sup>48</sup> Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

we would relate it to the total war situation and he felt it would be a mistake to humiliate De Gaulle or to build up the Vichy Government at this time. He told me that he had information which made him feel that the Germans would use such a position to do damage to supporting elements in France. I told him I would transmit his estimate of the situation to you.

In your message No. 5885, date December 15, 7 p. m.<sup>44</sup> you cabled me to ask him to contact our Embassy in Moscow. He did this and had several talks with our people there.

WINANT

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**PROTESTS BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT REGARDING LEND-LEASE AID TO FREE FRENCH IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA AND SENDING THERE OF AMERICAN MILITARY AND NAVAL OBSERVERS**

740.0011 European War 1939/11716 : Telegram

*The Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon) to the Secretary of State*

LEOPOLDVILLE, June 6, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received June 6—1: 46 p. m.]

The High Commissioner of Free French Africa <sup>44a</sup> confirms radio broadcasts from New York that Vichy forces have established wireless station and bases at N'Guimi and Zinder, Niger Colony, and that German forces are now occupying Murzuch in Libya. He believes that an attempt may be made to cut the line of supply from Nigeria to Egypt through Fort Lamy and El Fasher. He says that the Free French forces will defend the Chad but have very little equipment.

MALLON

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740.0011 European War 1939/11796 : Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, June 8, 1941—noon.

[Received June 10—7: 05 a. m.]

680. My 583, May 25, 4 p. m.<sup>45</sup> General de Gaulle <sup>46</sup> has submitted to me informally through an intermediary a memorandum of which a summary follows with the statement that it might be of interest to the Government of the United States. I have sent the General merely a simple acknowledgement.

1. So far as it is possible to formulate a concept of the present war it may be observed that it consists at least, in its military aspect, of

<sup>44</sup> Vol. I, p. 197.

<sup>44a</sup> Gen. Marie Eugene Adolphe Sicé.

<sup>45</sup> Not printed.

<sup>46</sup> Gen. Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French.

operations whose points of departure are air bases which are progressively advanced toward the sources of power of the opposing side. The advance is effected by combined operations of mechanized air and land forces under conditions assuring communications with the world's arsenals.

2. If the United States were obliged to place in action its military power the question would arise as to the air bases of which it could take advantage for the purpose of operating progressively against the territories of Europe and especially of Italy and Germany.

3. At first glance Great Britain would seem to serve as a base for operations against Europe. Actually, however, the British Isles do not offer favorable conditions for the deployment of American military forces. The particular character both moral and political of an eventual participation of the United States in the war, the enormous importance of such participation and the existence of certain differences between the American and English peoples in respect of their temperament, ideas and methods leads to the conclusion that although the aims of the two peoples are identic and their efforts convergent, nevertheless it would be desirable that their fields of action be not totally combined. Moreover, the area of the British Isles would not be sufficient for such a super-position and their geographic position bears limited strategic possibilities. Finally, communication between the United States and England is rendered precarious by the enemy.

4. It is in Africa that the United States should normally choose a zone in which it could establish bases for operations. Space in Africa is almost limitless and communication between American and African ports is easy and sure. Theoretically North Africa could have constituted the best zone for such a purpose. It is now too late. Since the Germans have established a foothold in Tripoli and control the Vichy authorities in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia and since Vichy is daily collaborating more closely with Germany it would be purely delusive to contemplate a methodical establishment of American bases in this region. Even in the unlikely event [of?] certain Vichy authorities in North Africa entering the war on the side of the Allies this region would be so exposed to the aerial centers of the enemy that an American attempt to establish bases there undoubtedly would be nipped in the bud.

5. French West Africa with its principal port, Dakar, is under the control of Vichy and it is likely that the enemy could keep this area closed to the Americans. Egypt is now the center of a great battle and no longer offers the relative security necessary for military preparations on a vast scale and of long duration.

Consequently central French Africa may be envisaged as a base for the deployment of American forces. British Nigeria, the Anglo-

Egyptian Sudan, Eritrea, Delhi and the block of Free French territories including Chad, Cameroun, Gabon and Oubangui now constitute the normal zone for points of departure of vast inter-Allied operations in Africa, operations of which American power could form the principal constituent. The Belgian Congo, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika which from France epitomize good lines of communication with South Africa would complete this zone in depth.

6. In respect of the block of Free French territories the ports of Douala and Pointe Noire are available for the unloading of war materials and for assembling aircraft. Airfields in these territories now adequate for 150 planes could be easily and greatly enlarged. Railway and automobile communication link together in all seasons the principal cities (Brazzaville *et al.*) of this area.

7. Free France is willing to welcome on the territories which it administers in Africa for the accounts of France any installation which the United States may desire to establish there in anticipation of the latter's military participation in the war. A commission which would be sent either secretly or openly by the United States Government with the view to study this question at first hand would receive every possible facility from the Free French authorities.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/11871: Telegram

*The Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon) to the Secretary of State*

LEOPOLDVILLE, June 9, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received June 10—5:53 p. m.]

Referring to my telegram of June 6, 4 p. m. The High Commissioner of Free French Africa has sent me a memorandum to the effect that the following with spare parts and ammunition is urgently needed for the defense of Free French Africa: 6 transport or ambulance twin engine airplanes Douglas or Lockheed type; 10 bombing planes of the type Glenn Martin; 60 Pom-Pom guns or similar anti-aircraft guns of small caliber; 40 anti-tank guns of about 1-inch caliber.

MALLON

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740.0011 European War 1939/11872: Telegram

*The Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon) to the Secretary of State*

LEOPOLDVILLE, June 10, 1941—noon.

[Received 4:25 p. m.]

Referring to my telegrams of June 6, 4 p. m. and June 9, 10 p. m. [*a. m.*], the Governor General of the Belgian Congo <sup>46a</sup> has asked me

<sup>46a</sup> Pierre M. J. Ryckmans.

to inform the Department that an attack from the North on the line of support to Egypt through Matadi, Leopoldville and Stanleyville could not be successfully defended with [*without?*] more military equipment. He asks that this be given full consideration in passing on orders for military supplies now being placed through the Belgian Embassy.

MALLON

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740.0011 European War 1939/11872: Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon)*

WASHINGTON, June 28, 1941—11 p. m.

Your telegrams of June 9, 10 a. m., and June 10, noon. In practical result, the question of military supplies for both the Free French Colonies and the Belgian Congo is treated by our Government as part of the problem of aid to Great Britain to be delivered under the terms of the Lend-Lease Act.<sup>47</sup> The technical status of these two areas is, however, somewhat different as it concerns procedure. Aid to the Free French Colonies is handled from the inception as an integral part of aid to the British and is therefore wholly indirect. On the other hand, aid to Belgian Congo is handled through direct requests initiated by the authorized representatives of the Belgian Government. However, under the system for coordination of inter-Allied purchasing which has been set up, these Belgian requests are referred to the British Supply Council here for endorsement; so that the practical outcome is about the same in either case.

In view of these facts, you should, in the case of Free French Africa, suggest to the appropriate authorities that in the future they should refer such requests to the British. In the case of Belgian Congo, however, such requests can be initiated by the Belgians themselves through their own representatives in this country.

Any useful information which you may wish to convey concerning the needs of either area will of course be welcomed by this Department and, whenever expedient, will be brought to the attention of the proper authorities.

WELLES

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740.0011 European War 1939/11872

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] July 8, 1941.

The British Ambassador<sup>48</sup> called to see me this morning at his request.

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<sup>47</sup> Approved March 11, 1941; 55 Stat. 31.

<sup>48</sup> Viscount Halifax.



The Ambassador first handed me a memorandum which had been given to him by Monsieur Pleven in representation of the Free French. The Ambassador requested that consideration be given to the suggestions contained in this memorandum of Monsieur Pleven and particularly urged that some moral support be given by the United States to the Free French movement. I told the Ambassador that I would be glad to consider the views advanced by Monsieur Pleven but that at first glance it seemed to me that it would be difficult for the United States to maintain diplomatic relations with Vichy and, what was far more important, cooperative relations with the authorities in North Africa <sup>49</sup> if anything in the nature of official recognition were to be given by this Government to the Free French Committee.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

[Enclosure]

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY M. PLEVEN ON BEHALF OF GENERAL DE GAULLE AND THE COUNCIL OF DEFENCE OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE, JULY, 1941

The first fact to which attention should be drawn in any appreciation of the position of the Free French African Empire is the paramount importance of the moral factor.

The whole foundation of the Free French movement is a moral one. The African colonies, to-day under the administration of General de Gaulle and the Council of Defence of the French Empire, rallied at the end of August of 1940 around men who were animated solely by motives of honour and patriotism. On the other hand, the quasi-unanimity of local popular sentiment, which made possible the spontaneous rallying to Free France of French Equatorial Africa and the Cameroons, was helped by the fact that the European population well knew that the French and British possessions in Africa are so closely interlinked that the breaking of normal relations between the two Empires is bound to bring economic ruin and render useless the arduous efforts of the French settlers and planters.

It is therefore quite understandable that, next to the preoccupation of throwing as much of their weight as they can in the War, the main concern of the population of Free French Africa would be the economic problems arising from a complete change in every direction.

It must be realized that the decision to oppose the armistice has cut those territories from their normal outlets and from their sources of supply which were in metropolitan France. The heavy protection enjoyed by the products of the French colonies on the home market

<sup>49</sup> For correspondence on this subject, see pp. 206 ff.

had favoured the development of the production of cotton, cocoa and coffee, for which new markets have now to be found. On the import side, practically all manufactured articles and goods can now only be procured from the United Kingdom or the United States of America.

Further, Free French Africa is subject to incessant Vichy propaganda, stressing the alleged favourable economic conditions of the Vichy territories. This propaganda emphasises that shipping facilities, which are so absolutely essential to the economy of all African territories, are more accessible to Vichy colonies than to the Free French. The same propaganda advertises the successes of the enemy against British shipping in an effort to persuade the Free French colonies that the scarcity of shipping will soon deprive them of the means of receiving their most essential requirements.

The British Government's policy vis-à-vis the Free French Empire has constantly borne in mind these factors. Generous economic agreements have been concluded with General de Gaulle and the Council of Defence of the French Empire. Under these agreements, essential crops are purchased, or at least sufficient quantities of them, to safeguard the economic structure of the country. This policy has been very successful and has allowed the colonies to increase their useful contribution to the war effort. It has allowed them to maintain a balanced budget and the population highly appreciates the assistance which has been given to them by their British Allies through this period of crisis.

However, the intensification of sea warfare and the rationing of British industrial production, are creating new problems for which the assistance of the United States Government will be extremely valuable, particularly in view of the moral considerations which have been outlined at the beginning of this memorandum.

It is a well known fact that the hopes of the French colonial population are turned towards the United States. This is true in Vichy territories and it is even more so in the Free French colonies. The colonies which rejected the policy of capitulation feel that they have shown by their decision that they are pinning their faith to the solidarity between the democracies. They also felt that their action would help Great Britain by demonstrating to the American people that France, where she was free to do so, remained by the side of Britain in a war fought for the defence of freedom. They have been eagerly expecting some sign that this was understood in the United States. The arrival of comforts sent by the Free French Relief Committee in the United States of America to the men and to the hospitals has caused great enthusiasm and gratitude, but now that the territories come more and more into the war orbit, now that Vichy has broad-

cast its intention to attack the Free French Colonies, it would be an immense encouragement to the men who feel that they have maintained the flag of France in the War, in accordance with the true French spirit, if some measure of economic assistance from the United States of America could be granted to those territories which carry on the struggle against aggression.

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There are many ways, in which the United States could help, and the following is only an indication of some of the measures which might be considered:—

1. Shipping: An American Company, the Barber Line, keeps a regular service with the West African Coast. It would be very helpful if the United States authorities exercised their influence to ensure that the Line called regularly in Free French harbours, and particularly at Pointe Noire and Duala, and that some space be reserved on ships making those calls. At present, it is necessary to open negotiations with the Line in order to arrange for any individual ship to call at the Free French harbours.

The Colonies can export to the United States a number of products needed by the ever increasing war effort, for instance: native or plantation rubber, tin ore, lead ore, rutile, cocoa, timber, etc.

2. French colonies require medical supplies and quinine, in substantial quantities. The French have always been reputed for the high standard of their colonial medical services in their fight against sleeping sickness, yellow fever and other dreaded tropical diseases. In the Free French colonies, this great struggle is going on simultaneously with the war effort. It is now increasingly difficult to obtain from the United Kingdom the necessary supplies of quinine and medicine, and the only alternative source is the United States of America, but the payment in United States dollars raises difficult problems.

3. The French Colonial Service has allowed Colonial Officials to take their families to most parts of Africa. In the Tropics, condensed milk is a necessity to European children. The annual peace time demand in the French Cameroons was 153,000 kilos and in French Equatorial Africa 253,000 kilos. Again, exports of condensed milk, from the United Kingdom, are more and more restricted and it seems that the supply can now only come from the United States of America.

4. Other food items, which become more and more difficult to obtain from the United Kingdom, are canned and bottled meat, dried and salted and smoked fish, rice, fruit preserves and juices.

5. In the field of manufactured goods, practically every sort of article is required in small quantities. There are, however, some main articles which are very important from the point of view of the war effort and must be procured in the United States:—

(a) A great programme of strategic roads is being carried out in Chad and North of Oubangui. These roads might become exceedingly important in connection with the development of the war in Lybia. Through lack of equipment, this work immobilises many men belonging to the Army and who should be in fighting units. By obtaining certain machinery from the United States of America many valuable men could be spared.

(b) The development of sea warfare in the Gulf of Benin and in the South Atlantic, makes it a necessity to improve the equipment of the harbours of Duala and Pointe Noire. Pointe Noire is bound to become of considerable importance as it is linked by an excellent railway to the Congo; it has a deep water harbour which has just been completed but it requires lifting equipment and storage facilities.

(c) Much of the automobile transportation is done with lorries and cars of American make. Spare parts are needed and also gradual replacement of the lorries.

(d) A good many tools, such as spades, matchets, etc., are required to carry on essential work. Also a certain amount of equipment for the numerous air bases which exist in Free French Africa, but have not been equipped for the heavy traffic which war is bringing to those territories.

(e) Broadcasting equipment is also needed to allow a French voice not controlled by the enemy to be heard.

A special item is constituted by Tobacco Leaf. This is a product which interests exclusively the natives who must have something to buy with the proceeds of their work. The normal annual peace time demand in the French Cameroons is about 250,000 kilos, and in French Equatorial Africa about 110,000 kilos. The Free French territories have been short of stock for some time and the demand at the moment is heavy; in fact, these territories are willing to take any supplies they can possibly obtain. Tobacco is not available in South Africa and all Nyasaland tobacco is taken to the United Kingdom with the exception of small quantities which are shipped to the Gambia and Sierra Leone. Therefore the United States is the sole source of supply.

It can be estimated that five or six million dollars would meet the various items necessary to the Free French Colonies during the next twelve months. If this amount could be made available to them, under the Lease-Lend Bill, orders could be placed through the British Supply Council in complete agreement with the British authorities.

It should be noted that no mention is made in this note of war weapons, which the British Government is already supplying to the Free French Colonies and for which, according to necessities, adequate arrangements are made under British-American orders and British allocation under the Lease-Lend Bill.

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An announcement that it had been decided to grant the Lease-Lend benefits to the Free French Colonies would consequently have a beneficial effect in two directions.

First, it would bring great encouragement to those men as has happened to others who, brave men before them, incurred the odium of being stigmatised as traitors when they decided to oppose capitulation and have since that date been fighting by the side of their British Allies in Lybia, and Erithrea, in Abyssinia, in Syria and on the high seas.

Secondly it would demonstrate to the colonies under the control of Vichy that effective American assistance is extended to all those who refuse surrender.

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740.0011 European War 1939/11872

*Memorandum by Mr. Samuel Reber of the Division of European Affairs to the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] July 21, 1941.

Mr. Welles has asked that discussions with the British looking forward to the supply of Free French territories in Africa be instituted. He considers that the aid should be treated as part of assistance to Great Britain under the Lend-Lease bill. He agrees that any announcement may be postponed for the present.

Consequently, the British Embassy has been informed of this and requested to nominate a representative who, in company with a Free French official, will be asked to get in touch with you to work out the details.

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740.00118 European War 1939/490a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon)*

WASHINGTON, August 8, 1941—8 p. m.

Colonel Harry F. Cunningham, Infantry, has been detailed as a Military Observer to French Equatorial Africa, and will depart at an early date. Please extend appropriate assistance and grant him facilities for sending information to War Department by code.

HULL

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740.00118 European War 1939/532 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon)*

WASHINGTON, August 21, 1941—10 p. m.

Department's August 8, 1941. Lieutenant Commander John Mitchell, United States Naval Reserve, assigned Naval Observer to French Equatorial Africa to conduct a survey of air routes. He will accompany Colonel Cunningham. Navy Department states Lieutenant Commander Mitchell was first commissioned an officer in United

States Naval Reserve December 19, 1940 and date of present rank November 29, 1940.

HULL

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740.00118 European War 1939/538a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon)*

WASHINGTON, August 25, 1941—8 p. m.

Department's telegram of August 8, 8 p. m. Laurence Wilson Taylor, a Foreign Service Officer of Class 8, will accompany Colonel Cunningham on the mission to French Equatorial Africa and the Camerons for the purpose of establishing direct contact with the local authorities.

Colonel Cunningham and Mr. Taylor will desire to consult with you on various matters pertaining to this area and you are requested to be in touch with them upon their arrival on the SS *West Lasharway* at Pointe Noire at the end of September as they will desire to communicate with the Department through your Office. You are requested to lend all appropriate assistance and to accompany them on such part of their mission as you deem advisable or necessary.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/14468j : Telegram

*The Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon) to the Secretary of State*

LEOPOLDVILLE, August 28, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received 4:25 p. m.]

General de Gaulle told George Weller, *Chicago Daily News*, and Karl Quigley of the United Press in an interview at Brazzaville, August 25, that he had offered the use of the ports of French Equatorial Africa to the United States Government and that the information could be released. Story was cabled to *Chicago Daily News* and Quigley received telegram today from United Press requesting confirmation. At the same time General de Gaulle telegraphed from Lagos trying to stop the story.

General de Gaulle told me August 26 he had made the offer through the American Minister at Cairo<sup>50</sup> but he intimated that the matter was confidential.

Designation of Military Observer to French Equatorial Africa was known in Brazzaville before the Department informed this office and it has been reported to the press by Weller.

MALLON

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<sup>50</sup> See telegram No. 680, June 8, noon, from the Minister in Egypt, p. 570.

740.0011 European War 1939/15742: Telegram

*The Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon) to the Secretary of State*

[Extract]

LEOPOLDVILLE, October 8, 1941—midnight.

[Received October 10—9:48 a. m.]

. . . . .

For Miles<sup>51</sup> from Cunningham.

"Cable from General de Gaulle asks that President be informed of his deferential gratitude for having sent a mission to Free France as well as his deep thankfulness for the great things America has already done and the greater things America will do for the sake of liberty. Full text will follow by pouch. Will send one more cable before leaving on extended reconnaissance of entire territory by all available means.

MALLON

740.00118 European War 1939/821

*The Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon) to the Secretary of State*

No. 251

LEOPOLDVILLE, October 20, 1941.

[Received December 2.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to my telegram of October 3, 1941<sup>52</sup> and to report that Colonel Harry F. Cunningham, Lieutenant Commander John Mitchell, and Foreign Service Officer Laurence W. Taylor arrived at Pointe Noire on October 2, 1941. The Mission left Pointe Noire by train and arrived at Brazzaville on the morning of October 3. The welcome both at Pointe Noire and at Brazzaville was extremely enthusiastic and was followed by a round of formal receptions and dinners.

The Free French authorities had been looking forward to the arrival of the Mission with great excitement. As far as I could ascertain there was no talk of its involving any form of official recognition, but was viewed rather as a friendly gesture of aid—intangible if not material. General Sicé the High Commissioner of Free French Africa put it very aptly in his formal speech of welcome when he said that the Mission brought a message of hope . . .<sup>53</sup>

It is the opinion of the writer that in selecting a chief of the Mission no better choice could have been made than Colonel Cunningham. He has a fluent knowledge of the language and has shown a pro-

<sup>51</sup> Brig. Gen. Sherman Miles, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Military Intelligence).

<sup>52</sup> Not printed.

<sup>53</sup> Omission indicated in the original.

found understanding of the French people and their temperament. A gentleman of the old school, he struck exactly the right note and made his position solid from the start. As one officer said to me: "He is not only intelligent and articulate, but he has the priceless gift of being a good listener."

Colonel Cunningham and Lieutenant Commander Mitchell left on a tour of the territory on October 14 and will be gone for over a month. Mr. Taylor is remaining at Brazzaville for the time being.

Respectfully yours,

PATRICK MALLON

740.00118 European War 1939/735a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon)*

WASHINGTON, October 23, 1941—11 p. m.

For Colonel Cunningham from General Miles. You should avoid any publicity, particularly press interviews. Your duty is strictly confined to fact finding and you head no mission. Brazzaville Sedgewick despatch which appeared in Oct. 16 *New York Times* is called to your attention. [Miles.]

HULL

740.00118 European War 1939/754 : Telegram

*The Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon) to the Secretary of State*

LEOPOLDVILLE, November 2, 1941—11 p. m.

[Received November 3—10:42 a. m.]

For Miles from Cunningham.

"Reference your October 23, 11 p. m. Have given only one press interview to Sedgewick *New York Times* whom I know and trust. Statements made to him were based on facts which I have found and verified. I saw his copy before he sent it and it had my approval based upon my knowledge and judgment. I am not responsible for whatever news editor may have done with his text. As to my duty I have spent 16 hours per day finding and classifying facts in a country where most people cannot work more than 6 or 8 per day and my conscience is clear. We are received everywhere as 'American Mission' and arithmetic having made me senior member I am recognized as Chief of Mission. Before I left United States, Atherton, State Department, said to me 'Remember, you are Chief of the Mission'. Have just completed over 8,000 kilometers of fact finding and results will follow day by day. Leave again Wednesday<sup>54</sup> for more fact finding. [Cunningham.]"

MALLON

<sup>54</sup> November 5.



740.0011 European War 1939/17091

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

[WASHINGTON,] November 6, 1941.

The French Ambassador<sup>55</sup> called to see me this afternoon at his request.

The Ambassador read to me a communication from his Government alleging that the American officials who had recently gone to the Free French colonies in West Africa constituted an official mission with the implication that such mission constituted recognition of the de Gaulle jurisdiction in those territories. I said I felt I need only refer the Ambassador to what I had said before on this same subject, namely that these Americans were going for purposes of investigation and that their going did not imply any official recognition of the de Gaulle régime.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

740.00112 European War 1939/4074

*The French Ambassador (Henry-Haye) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, November 19, 1941.

His Excellency the Under Secretary of State informed the Ambassador of France, during their conversations of October 3<sup>56</sup> and of November 6, that the mission sent by the Federal Government to French Equatorial Africa was strictly for the purpose of obtaining information.

The information in question was communicated to the French Government.

In reply, the Ambassador was instructed to advise the Federal Government that, even though it lacked an official character, the mission in question was, nevertheless in the eyes of the French Government, for the purpose of contacting the dissident authorities and that the unfriendly character of the step was heightened by the participation in the mission of officers and officials who were on active duty.

Mr. Henry-Haye avails himself [etc.]

<sup>55</sup> Gaston Henry-Haye.

<sup>56</sup> No record of conversation of October 3 found in Department files.

851.24/251

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

[WASHINGTON,] December 5, 1941.

The French Ambassador called to see me today at his request.

The Ambassador, by instruction of his Government, made a formal protest against the assistance which this Government was now giving under the terms of the Lease-Lend Act to the Free French. To this protest I made no reply.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

740.0011 European War 1939/17478 : Telegram

*The Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon) to the Secretary of State*

LEOPOLDVILLE, December 12, 1941—11 p. m.

[Received December 13—1:01 p. m.]

For Miles from Cunningham.

"High Commissioner has just asked General de Gaulle for permission to occupy Madagascar making landing in south which is unfortified. British to furnish transport and naval support.

I suggested Hitler will likely demand something of Spain, and Portugal must follow Spain. Alert should therefore be given to be prepared for following: Free French occupy Spanish Guinea and Cabinda; British occupy Fernando Po and Santome; Belgians and South Africans occupy Angola. Colonies listed are weakly held by poor units, plans are prepared and warning will go out today.

In view of situation my work would be greatly facilitated if I were designated liaison officer with British, Free French and Belgians for West and Equatorial Africa and Governments concerned were promptly notified. Information would thus be given me more readily and military planes of all three forces would be available for my movements. Suggest that if possible Signal Corps codes be sent me by next clipper to permit more direct communication with you.

Since cashing drafts may become difficult suggest that instead of having Higgins deposit confidential funds in bank to my credit as requested in clipper letter just leaving suggest you send me \$1,000 confidential funds in cash by next clipper.

If plan for occupation Martinique and Guadeloupe is carried out, most strongly recommend that representative of Free France for example Deseyes accompany expedition to become in name High Commissioner of the islands for Free France. Value of such for propaganda and counterpropaganda will be obvious. [Cunningham.]"

MALLON

740.00118 European War 1939/867b : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon)*

WASHINGTON, December 13, 1941—9 p. m.

“From General Miles for Cunningham. Your telegram December 12 received. Return to Washington by first available transportation. You are not authorized to make any suggestions of military or diplomatic moves to any foreign representatives.”

HULL

740.00118 European War 1939/866 : Telegram

*The Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon) to the Secretary of State*

LEOPOLDVILLE, December 15, 1941—11 p. m.

[Received December 17—3:48 p. m.]

Personal for Miles. Cunningham, Brazzaville, requests that the following be communicated to General Miles M. I. D. exactly as received and not paraphrased.

“Reference your December 13, 9 p. m. Request that your peremptory order be reconsidered and revoked. I know that it was issued under pressure of work and was based upon misunderstanding.

I have never expressed any opinion nor made any suggestion to any foreign representative without the prior reservation that the opinion or suggestion was a purely personal one and then only in reply to direct question in informal conversation. I never participate in official conferences.

My efforts to conform with recent State Department instructions to keep cables as brief as possible and my assumption that I am credited with normal intelligence and discretion have obviously resulted in ambiguity in my most recent cables.

The suggestion concerning Africa reported in my cable of December 12 was a purely personal one made in answer to General Sicé's question as to what I thought were possible Hitler moves which would affect West and Equatorial Africa, and it suggested merely the issuance of a warning order to be prepared to execute promptly plans which I knew to be in existence, if and when rapidly changing conditions made such execution imperative. When asked informally for a personal opinion, to reply that I am not authorized to have an opinion or make a suggestion to representatives of national groups which are aligned with us in the common effort to defeat the common enemy, would imply either that I am an ass or that my country is in the war only half-heartedly. I admit neither implication.

Incidentally the colonies listed in my cable of December 12 would constitute very serious threats to American shipping if in enemy hands or the hands of tools of the enemy and my personal suggestion with regard to them was a definite contribution to our national security. Their commendation [*The recommendation*] concerning Martinique and Guadeloupe was addressed to you and not to any foreign representative. It was based upon my knowledge and understanding of the Free French psychology.

It must be appreciated that here in this very large and very important territory I am alone as the only military representative of a power which is recognized as the leading power in the world today and which is believed to be in the war to win the war and the peace which will follow. Also it is recognized here that thanks to my travels I know Free French Africa better than almost anybody in the territory. Consequently when I am asked a question I simply cannot refuse to answer for to do so would be to refuse to contribute what I can to the common cause.

I quote two telegrams received during the past few days: (1) From British West African Headquarters, Accra dated December 6: 'The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief will be pleased to see Colonel Cunningham between the 15 and 31 January. He will arrange for the Colonel to tour this headquarters'. I replied at once that I would report to the General on or about January 15 and I am informed that orders have been issued to place a plane and a staff officer at my disposal to visit Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and Nigeria during the period noted. While en route here I received instructions from both State and War to visit General Giffard at his convenience and the quoted telegram informs me of the General's convenience. (2) From Free French liaison officer Freetown dated December 13: 'Colonel Morin arrived December 12 en route to Free French Africa and Syria, his mission being to confer Colonel Cunningham, and wishes to know if he will find Colonel Cunningham in Brazzaville about January 1'. Colonel Morin has come from General de Gaulle's London headquarters and brings tentative lists of Free French requirements in arms and munitions. Upon receipt of the quoted telegram which requested an immediate answer I replied that I shall be in Brazzaville on January 1, confidential date of the arrival of Colonel Morin's ship.

Also General de Gaulle has informed me several times that he will be in Brazzaville toward the end of December and wishes to see me. I have informed him that I shall be here at the time. Surely you do not wish me to cancel these three meetings which have been carefully prepared and coordinated by important persons who know what I have contributed and can continue to contribute to the common cause.

I enjoy the confidence of the Free French to a degree which my British colleagues envy and wish they could approach; I enjoy the confidence of Generals Giffard, Hawkins and Woolner and General Giffard's staffs here and in Leopoldville to a similar degree. We are all in this war together and we must all work together and you surely do not wish to throw away intimate and invaluable relations which have taken 3 months of labor and much money both public and private to establish and nourish.

I informed General [Sicé,] High Commissioner, of your peremptory order (in strictest confidence) and he stated that 'if you leave, the Free French effort here has been wasted. The effect of your departure upon the morale of officers and troops, all of whom know you, would be disastrous'. To the troops here America represents rightly or wrongly their great and only hope for armament and to them rightly or wrongly I am the present symbol of that hope. If the symbol which they know were to be removed, a very serious blow would be struck at a brave and competent force which occupies a strategically important position. In the interest of the ultimate victory of free people I request that your order be reconsidered and revoked.

Complete order of battle for Madagascar which I am now working on will go to you by next clipper. Latest order of battle for Vichy West Africa is en route to you by clipper. Latest information on Dakar will be cabled in next few days.

Tanks referred to in your December 9<sup>56b</sup> are sample of lack of understanding of local Spears mission. Tanks are the things which Free French Africa has least need for and one Lockheed Lodestar or one Glenn Martin Maryland would be worth more now than a dozen tanks in this country. [Cunningham.]”

MALLON

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740.00118 European War 1939/886: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Leopoldville (Mallon)*

WASHINGTON, December 20, 1941—4 p. m.

For Colonel Cunningham. In view of the fact that your information is adequate for our purposes and that consultation is desired, it is necessary for you to return immediately. In foreign eyes, you cannot assume observer status again since you have been put in a position beyond that of observer.

HULL

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<sup>56b</sup> Unnumbered telegram of December 9, 5 p. m., to the Consul at Leopoldville, not printed.

REQUESTS BY FRANCE FOR INTERVENTION BY THE UNITED STATES  
REGARDING BRITISH BLOCKADE OF FRENCH SOMALILAND

740.0011 European War 1939/10601 : Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, May 2, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received May 4—11:37 a. m.]

392. The Legation's despatch No. 2351, February 18, and my despatch No. 8, April 9.<sup>57</sup> The Legation has received a confidential report that the Governor of French Somaliland recently renewed a proposal to the British that on the condition that no Free French troops enter French Somaliland cooperation could be effected between the British and the French in respect of the use at [of] the port of Djibouti, transport, and other matters.

The Legation understands that the British are reluctant to accept cooperation on this basis, point out that the French and Italians cooperated when the latter held the surrounding territory and consider that the question can be solved satisfactorily only if the territory becomes Free French. No precise information is available to the Legation at present as to the final decision which the British may take in the premises but in this connection it should be noted according to available information practically all Free French troops which have been in North and East Africa are being concentrated in Palestine.

KIRK

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740.00112 European War 1939/2674

*The French Ambassador (Henry-Haye) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, May 5, 1941.

The Ambassador of France has the honor to inform His Excellency the Secretary of State that last February the Ambassador of France at Madrid <sup>57a</sup> approached the Embassy of Great Britain in Spain with a view to obtaining authorization for the free passage from Madagascar to Djibouti of a French cargo vessel laden with food supplies intended for the French colony of the Somali Coast. The British Government at that time replied in the negative to the *démarche* made by Mr. Pietri.

During the past three months, the food situation of our colony has become even more acute; on the other hand, in view of the altered

<sup>57</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>57a</sup> François Piétri.

situation in West Africa, the British Government could no longer justify a refusal based upon the danger that the food supplies in question might fall into the hands of her enemies. Therefore, the French Government would be grateful to the United States Government if it would be good enough to intervene with the British Government to the end that the latter may authorize, as soon as possible, the free passage of the food ship which we propose to send from Madagascar to Djibouti.

Mr. Henry-Haye is happy [etc.]

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740.0011 European War 1939/10709 : Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, May 6, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received May 7—11:32 p. m.]

422. My 392, May 2, 7 p. m. I am given to understand that as matters stand at Djibouti the British have practically abandoned the hope of persuading the French there to make common cause with the Free French and British forces and that the British are now considering whether it would be preferable to attempt to exert pressure on the French in Djibouti by setting up a blockade or to negotiate with the French authorities there for use of the harbor, railway and other facilities along the lines indicated in my telegram under reference. This latter course is being advocated in certain circles on the basis of a belief that once these facilities are granted defense might gradually be developed which would inure to the benefit of the British in a larger way. It is reported that the matter has been submitted to London for decision.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/10848 : Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, May 11, 1941—noon.

[Received May 12—2:16 p. m.]

462. My 422, May 6, 7 p. m. It has been learned from a confidential source that General Cunningham<sup>58</sup> has now been authorized by London to approach the French authorities at Djibouti with a view to ascertaining what concessions they would be prepared to make in respect of the use of harbor, railway and other facilities at that

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<sup>58</sup> Gen. Sir Alan Cunningham, Commander in Chief of the British troops in East Africa.

port. No information is as yet available regarding the progress of such negotiations.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/11676: Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, June 3, 1941—noon.

[Received June 4—10:27 p. m.]

647. My 462, May 11, noon. The Legation has been informed in strictest confidence that General Wavell<sup>59</sup> has submitted for Eden's<sup>60</sup> approval the draft of a letter which he proposes sending within the next few days to the Governor of Djibouti stating that in view of the attitude of Vichy in respect of Syria it can only be assumed that a similar policy would be followed in the case of French Somaliland should the occasion arise and that in the circumstances further negotiation with the Djibouti authorities will be discontinued unless they decide to join the Free French movement. In the meantime Wavell warns that the blockade will be maintained, that efforts will be made to encourage Free French sympathizers in French Somaliland, and that no protests will be entertained regarding the maintenance of Free French forces in the area.

Wavell proposes to state in conclusion that the British have adequate supplies available for immediate shipment to Djibouti should the authorities there decide to rally to the Free French cause. It is understood in this connection that supplies in Djibouti are so low that they would probably only suffice for 2 or 3 months.

It may be observed that Wavell's proposal would appear to be in line with the strong attitude adopted at long last by the British in respect of Vichy following German infiltration into Syria, other evidences of this changed policy being the bombing of Italian ships in Tunisian harbors and the reference in Eden's May 29 speech to Syrian independence.<sup>61</sup> In fact, there are certain indications that steps may even be taken by the British toward according to the Free French movement certain political recognition, a case in point being a plan now said to be under consideration in London for turning over French interests in Palestine to the Free French following the recent withdrawal of consular representatives of Vichy in that country.

KIRK

<sup>59</sup> Gen. Sir Archibald P. Wavell, Commanding General of the British Forces in the Middle East.

<sup>60</sup> Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>61</sup> British Cmd. 6289, Misc. No. 2 (1941): *Speech by the Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden . . . delivered at the Mansion House on May 29, 1941.*



740.0011 European War 1939/11764 : Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, June 8 [7<sup>?</sup>], 1941—3 p. m.  
[Received June 8—3:43 p. m.]

671. My number 647, June 3, noon. The Legation is confidentially advised that the letter which Wavell proposed addressing to the Governor of Djibouti was approved in London and has probably been delivered by this time.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/13299 : Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, July 19, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received July 20—3:27 p. m.]

981. My June 7, 3 p. m. With reference to an item released by Reuter yesterday regarding renewed negotiations for the evacuation of French women and children from French Somaliland, the Legation learns from a British Embassy source that negotiations along these lines are taking place. Furthermore it is stated that the situation in Djibouti has shown marked signs of deterioration recently and that an early collapse would not be surprising. British hopes in this respect are somewhat offset, however, by the fear that, before finally giving in, the French authorities will blow up the harbor and railway facilities at Djibouti.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/13595 : Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, July 31, 1941—10 a. m.  
[Received August 1—9:20 a. m.]

1042. My 981, July 19, 7 p. m. With further reference to the conditions stipulated for the surrender of the Vichy forces in French Somaliland the Legation is confidentially informed that the British have specified that capitulation must be direct to the Free French and that any counter-proposal in this respect will be refused; that the Free French will be provided necessary supplies for the relief of the population following surrender; that persons not wishing to join the Free French will be repatriated but that this privilege will not be extended to persons found guilty of sabotage of harbor or railway facilities which should be handed over intact. It is explained

that the essential differences between the cases of Syria and French Somaliland are that the latter has colonial status and that it is anticipated that capitulation when effected will be without hostilities.

KIRK

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740.00112 European War 1939/3187

*The French Ambassador (Henry-Haye) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, August 12, 1941.

The Ambassador of France presents his compliments to His Excellency the Secretary of State and, referring to his note of June 21 last,<sup>64</sup> has the honor to inform him that the British Command continues to subject our colony of Somaliland to a strict blockade which it tries to justify by the alleged necessity of hindering Germany's seizure of our possession. From this fact the whole population is suffering intolerable privations as time goes on, privations which the decision recently taken by the British authorities, at the repeated instances of the International Red Cross, to allow the entrance of a minimum provision of milk, has only very temporarily alleviated.

Recalling that the French Government has on several occasions offered to permit the provisioning of Ethiopia through the port of Djibouti and the railroad, the Ambassador of France appeals to the humanitarian sentiments of His Excellency the Secretary of State and begs to request him to be good enough to use all his influence to have cancelled a measure of a severity which, if maintained, would not fail to have the most serious consequences within a very short time, in view of the desert nature of this colony and the obligation it has of drawing its subsistence from outside.

Mr. Henry-Haye is happy [etc.]

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740.00112 European War 1939/3284

*The French Ambassador (Henry-Haye) to the Secretary of State*<sup>65</sup>

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, August 27, 1941.

The Ambassador of France has the honor to refer to his conversation of the 20th of August with His Excellency the Secretary of State,<sup>66</sup> in the course of which he protested against the inhuman

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<sup>64</sup> Not printed.

<sup>65</sup> In telegram No. 1107, August 29, 4 p. m., the Ambassador in France reported the receipt of a similar note from the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs (740.00112 European War 1939/3267).

<sup>66</sup> Memorandum of conversation not printed.

blockade from which the population of the French Colony of the Somali Coast is suffering, and to his note of May 5 indicating the gravity of the food conditions in this Colony and the reasons why the British Government cannot justify a refusal to allow food to pass through by the risk of seeing it fall possibly into the hands of its enemies.

The Ambassador would be grateful to His Excellency the Secretary of State if the latter would be good enough to obtain from the British authorities free passage for a French vessel coming from Madagascar which would be loaded *exclusively with food* intended for the French Somali Coast.

This vessel would be the *Commandant Dorize*.

The Consul of the United States in Madagascar would receive all facilities for going on board the vessel in question for the purpose of verifying the composition of the goods and the names of the consignees. The French Government would even be prepared to permit the passage on board the *Commandant Dorize* of one of the attachés of the Consulate of the United States who would verify the distribution which would be made at Djibouti of the provisions imported. It would be understood that no further French revictualing vessel would be sent to the Colony except after a favorable report from the Consulate of the United States in Madagascar concerning the use of the goods of the *Commandant Dorize*.

The Ambassador of France would be grateful to His Excellency the Secretary of State if the latter would be so kind as to advise him as promptly as possible of the reception given to this proposal, which Admiral Leahy must have transmitted on his part to the Department of State.

Mr. Henry-Haye is happy [etc.]

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740.0011 European War 1939/14693 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, September 4, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 9 p. m.]

1135. Embassy's telegrams Nos. 1056, August 20, 10 a. m., and 1057, August 20, 7 p. m.<sup>67</sup> Rochat<sup>68</sup> gave us a copy this morning of General Cunningham's letter of August 30, to the Governor of the French Somali Coast and informed us that Henry-Haye had been instructed to approach the Department with reference to the situation at Djibouti and British policy with respect thereto. The French find

<sup>67</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>68</sup> Charles Antoine Rochat, Secretary General, French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

General Cunningham's letter both "brutal and uncalled for" particularly the threat of interning the authorities until the end of the war, and are considerably exercised over it as well as over the "British refusal" to permit foodstuffs to reach the colony from Madagascar. (Please see Embassy's telegram No. 1107, August 29, 4 p. m.<sup>69</sup>) They state that it is absurd to think that any foodstuffs could in any way reach the German authorities. They think that British efforts are apparently designed solely to force the colony needlessly into dis-sidence and have no military justification. Those endeavoring to reach a better understanding with France's former ally, Rochat says, feel that the episode may result in a setback to the recent favorable evolution in this respect.

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/3455

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Samuel Reber of the Division of European Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] September 9, 1941.

A copy of the French Ambassador's communication with regard to the situation in French Somaliland was handed to the British Embassy on August 27.<sup>69a</sup>

On September 8, Mr. Barclay, Second Secretary of the British Embassy, called to explain the position of the British Government in this respect. He stated that conversations regarding the blockade of the Somali Coast had taken place between the British and French Ambassadors in Madrid.<sup>70</sup> On July 6, the British Ambassador<sup>70a</sup> was instructed to reply to a French protest regarding the blockade, stating that the responsibility for the present situation rested entirely with the French Government which had not responded to the British suggestion for the evacuation of women and children from the Colony of Madagascar and to admit small supplies of food pending this evacuation. The British Embassy had been instructed to inform the Department that the British Government could not take the risk that the situation which had developed in Syria and Indo-China would be repeated in Somaliland. The British Government wished further to point out that the decision taken with regard to permitting certain milk supplies to reach Somaliland had been taken before it had been approached by the International Red Cross, although the

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<sup>69</sup> Not printed.

<sup>69a</sup> Note of August 12, p. 591. In transmitting a copy to the British Chargé, the views of the British Government were requested (740.00112 European War 1939/3187).

<sup>70</sup> Sir Samuel Hoare and François Piétri, respectively.

<sup>70a</sup> Viscount Halifax.

French Government had claimed that this decision had only been taken upon the repeated insistence of the Red Cross. Under these circumstances the British Government could not agree to the free passage for a French vessel coming from Madagascar. The British Government also saw no reason to transfer negotiations with regard to Somaliland to Washington from Madrid where direct contact between the two Governments had been established.

This latter consideration, together with the British refusal to permit free passage for the *Commandant Dorize* was communicated to the Counselor of the French Embassy <sup>71</sup> on September 8.

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740.0011 European War 1939/15338 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, September 24, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received 7:55 p. m.]

1223. Embassy's telegrams 1135, September 4, 6 p. m., and 1195, September 18, 11 a. m.<sup>71a</sup> Rochat told us this afternoon that the policy of the British in "starving out the women and children at Djibouti", an area which he said is of "no military importance to them" is having quite "an unfortunate effect in a number of important French circles." Many people, he said, who are not Anglophobe have been "deeply shocked by this evident lack of humanitarian feeling" and he has heard certain criticisms that the American Government "has not exerted its influence with the British" on behalf of the suffering population of that area. (The sufferings are described almost daily with considerable prominence in the local press.) He said, frankly, the Marshal <sup>72</sup> himself was among those "shocked" by the "British starvation policy" and that the question was having a regrettable psychological effect upon him. The paragraph in the Marshal's letter to the President <sup>72a</sup> with reference to the situation in that area was inserted, he said, at the Marshal's specific request.

LEAHY

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740.00112 European War 1939/3723 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, October 24, 1941—1 p. m.  
[Received 2:03 p. m.]

1367. Further instructions are being telegraphed this morning to Henry-Haye to request our intervention with the British to obtain

<sup>71</sup> Léon Marchal.

<sup>71a</sup> Latter not printed.

<sup>72</sup> Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, French Chief of State.

<sup>72a</sup> Dated September 17, p. 432.

some relief for the population of Djibouti. This question, Lagarde<sup>73</sup> tells us, continues to cause much bitterness in Government circles here. He feels that any relaxation of the severity of the blockade against the civilian population of that area might be "particularly opportune" now in view of the "Marshal's present shocked feelings over the mass execution of hostages by the German authorities."

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/16127: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, October 25, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 6:10 p. m.]

1374. My telegram No. 1367, October 24, 1 p. m. Lagarde asked us to call this afternoon and said that following our conversation yesterday word had been received of an "Anglo-Gaullist" advance into French Somaliland from the north. Since this operation seems to be "serious" he said the French "will be obliged to take steps to defend themselves" and he requested that we so inform the Department. (He gave no indication of total French forces in the Djibouti area but did confirm that four battalions of Senegalese troops, which the French last year vainly sought authorization to send to Indochina, are still there.) While he did not appear excited over this development he reiterated that he does not think the British attitude is defensible on any basis of military strategy.

LEAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/16286: Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, October 31, 1941—11 a. m.

[Received November 1—12:28 p. m.]

1674. With reference to recent reports regarding hostilities in French Somaliland a British source advises that the incidents in question resulted from tribal disturbances and that British and Free French troops were not involved. According to the same source there is good reason to believe that the French authorities in Djibouti would be prepared to accord the British privileges for the use of the railway and harbor facilities at Djibouti on condition that the administration of the colony would remain in Vichy hands but the British are unwilling to accept these concessions for fear that by so doing a pre-

<sup>73</sup> Ernest Lagarde, Chief of the Africa-Levant Section of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

edent would be set for the use of Bizerte and other Vichy bases by the Germans.

The view was also expressed that an attack in force against French Somaliland might not be strenuously opposed provided that the operation were carried out by the British without Free French cooperation. It was suggested, however, that the British would be hesitant to make such a move for fear of playing into the hands of Axis propagandists and that according to presently held views no action other than the maintenance of the blockade would be undertaken against Djibouti except in the guise of its being taken over by the Free French as a measure to forestall its possible use by the Axis.

As the Department is doubtless aware there has been considerable publicity given the Djibouti question by the Vichy radio in recent weeks and the situation has been still further dramatized by the installation of a broadcasting station at Djibouti devoted entirely to depicting its "martyrdom".

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/16685

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] November 10, 1941.

The French Ambassador called on the President at the former's request and I was present on the invitation of President Roosevelt. The Ambassador complained again about the British action at Djibouti. He, of course, understands the grounds on which the British action was based, but he was careful not to mention that phase of the matter. Very little was said in reply to him in this regard.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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740.0011 European War 1939/18283

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*

EXTRACT FROM A TELEGRAM FROM LONDON DATED DECEMBER 22ND, 1941

Subject to Free French Agreement we have decided to offer terms for the surrender of French Somaliland on the basis that Administration of the Colony should be handed over to the British and eventually transferred to the Free French. In return we would renew our assurances that we have no intention to annex Colony and would permit repatriation for those who wished it.

WASHINGTON, 26 December, 1941.

## GERMANY

### REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT IN BEHALF OF AMERICAN CITIZENS ARRESTED ON SUSPICION OF ESPIONAGE

811.91262/185 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, March 15, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 9:33 p. m.]

975. Richard Hotelet, American member of the staff of the Berlin agency of the United Press, was arrested in his dwelling at 7:00 o'clock this morning "on suspicion of espionage for an enemy power" and is confined in Alexander Platz Police Station. I immediately sent a member of the Embassy to United Press Office where German secret police were stated to be conducting an investigation. The Criminal Director there took away all the contents of Hotelet's desk but informed the Manager of the United Press that the accusation was directed only against Hotelet personally and not against the United Press and further said it had nothing to do with the legal action taken in the United States against correspondents of the Transocean Service.

A member of the Embassy also went to see the competent official in the German secret police who stated that after the period of inquiry during which Hotelet may not be interviewed, he will be given an opportunity to have legal counsel and to speak with a representative of the Embassy in accordance with the usual practice. He indicated that the case would receive early attention from the prosecuting judge.

Oral representations in Hotelet's behalf were made at the Foreign Office when it was stated that information as to the cause of the arrest would be promptly furnished.

A detailed report follows in air mail pouch leaving Tuesday next.

MORRIS

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811.91262/189 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*<sup>1</sup>

WASHINGTON, March 17, 1941—6 p. m.

803. For Paris. According to a D. N. B.<sup>2</sup> report Jay Allen, American correspondent of the North American Newspaper Alliance, was

<sup>1</sup> The same, *mutatis mutandis*, on the same date to the Chargé in Germany as telegram No. 779.

<sup>2</sup> Deutsches Nachrichten Büro.



arrested together with another unnamed American citizen while endeavoring to cross the demarcation line between occupied and unoccupied France without correct papers.

Please investigate and submit prompt report.

WELLES

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811.91262/205 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, March 18, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received March 19—1: 23 p. m.]

999-1000. My 991, March 18, 1 p. m.<sup>3</sup> From his employer and associates I learn that the German secret police were able to motivate their arrest of Hottelet on certain imprudent relations and very vocal and indiscreet expressions of opposition to National Socialism among both German and foreign circles in Berlin. It is known that some 7 months ago an evident *agent provocateur* tried unsuccessfully to persuade Hottelet to transmit certain documents to England. Schmidt, Chief of the Press Section of the Foreign Office, asserted to a Swedish journalist that 6 months ago he had quite plainly given a warning to Hottelet to change his attitude and cease his activities. Whether in fact such warning was delivered is unknown but Hottelet's employer warned him in general to exercise restraint in his talk and actions. The investigator of the secret police asserted to another United Press correspondent that Hottelet in a voyage to Hungary had consorted with Britishers suspected of being secret agents. From his associates it is known that Hottelet on a voyage to Budapest did see something of the London *Times* correspondent and indiscreetly boasted to presumed friends that he had told of the effect of British air raids over Germany. . . .

The very indiscretion of Hottelet in attitude and expression should be sufficient evidence that he was not a British agent but the strictness of German regulations against communication with enemy subjects gives the secret police latitude to form charges against him, an action to which they were presumably inclined by his unconcealed opposition to the regime and of sympathy for England.

There is some evidence, however, that the arrest or at least its timing was in connection with the indictment of Zapp,<sup>4</sup> Transocean correspondent in Washington. Schmidt, Foreign Office Press Section head, while denying that Hottelet's arrest was in retaliation for Zapp's

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<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

<sup>4</sup> Manfred Zapp was indicted for failure to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (Act approved June 8, 1938; 52 Stat. 631).

indictment told a Swedish correspondent who is head of the Foreign Journalists Association in Berlin that he, Schmidt, had telephoned Ribbentrop\* from abroad a week previously personally recommending that no obstacle be interposed by the Foreign Office to Hottelet's arrest which had allegedly been pending for some time. This telephone call must have occurred therefore about the time of Zapp's indictment. Yesterday a German official in private conversation confidentially suggested to member of the Embassy that the solution was the release of Zapp against the release of Hottelet.

In the conversation above referred to, Schmidt also said that although such proceedings were usually kept secret that in this case the results of the trial would be published, would cause a sensation, and might involve other American journalists. In the interest of Hottelet I think the foregoing should be kept confidential at present except possibly for discreet communication to the responsible officers of the United Press Association.

MORRIS

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811.91262/190 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 18, 1941.

[Received March 18—9:39 p. m.]

841. From Paris. Department's 803, March 17, 6 p. m. Allen, accompanied by another newspaper correspondent, came to Paris last week from Vichy without the necessary authorization. Allen alone was apprehended by German authorities while trying to re-cross the demarcation line back to Vichy.

Allen's action was deliberate and undertaken in full knowledge of the risks that he ran. German authorities take the view:

(1) That anyone deliberately disregarding German military regulations must accept responsibility for his acts and not expect consideration will be given to any special pleading;

(2) that special pleading could have no [apparent omission] anyway in view of the present state of relations between the United States and Germany.

They add that Allen will not be made a martyr by undue harsh treatment but that he may look forward to several months of detention, at least until his escapade loses all news value.

Under the circumstances, I am reluctant to make any official *démarche* as no good could be accomplished and I would only open myself to a rebuff on the ground that a sporting chance imposes a

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\* Joachim von Ribbentrop, Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs.

sporting responsibility. The Germans are also disposed to cite a connection between their attitude in this case and the Transocean case in the United States. Despite the foregoing I still hope that Allen may be able to arrange matters locally before contrary orders are received from higher authorities. Barnes.<sup>6</sup>

LEAHY

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811.91262/197: Telegram

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

BERLIN, March 19, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 10:30 p. m.]

1024. My 991, March 18, 1 p. m.<sup>7</sup> Under Secretary of State Woermann received me at 1 p. m. today. He was polite and cordial. He stated:

(1) The accusation is against Hottelet and not against the United States Press [*United Press?*] office in Berlin.

(2) The case has no connection with the charges against Manfred Zapp.

(3) He believed the charges were grave and sustained.

I asked that Hottelet be released on bail, parole, or any kind of guarantee. He answered this could not be granted. I asked that counsel be allowed at once. He said the law did not permit this, but promised the quickest examination to bring the case forward to the point where the charges may be dismissed or if sustained the accused may engage counsel. I then insisted upon permission for the Embassy to visit the prisoner. The Under Secretary agreed and arranged for an Embassy officer to talk to Hottelet tomorrow at noon. The Under Secretary emphasized that every care was being taken of the prisoner's health and welfare. Yesterday permission was given to Oechsner, United Press Manager, to send special food and some clothing.

I pointed out the perturbation caused in the United States by this arrest. I told him I thought the best thing in the interest of all concerned was to communicate to me the specific nature of the charges and the evidence for the confidential knowledge of my Government which now only knows that a vague general accusation of the grave nature of espionage has been made against its citizen. This request seemed to make some impression on the Secretary who promised to consult the proper persons to determine whether my request could be satisfied.

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<sup>6</sup> Maynard B. Barnes, First Secretary of Embassy in France, in charge of the Embassy office in Paris.

<sup>7</sup> Not printed.

I stressed this point at length and have a small hope that something may come of this request.

No one else was present at the interview.

MORRIS

811.91262/199 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, March 20, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 6:25 p. m.]

1039. Hottélet visited today by Embassy representative who found him obviously well and composed and without complaint as to conditions and treatment. He wished his family and home office assured of his confidence that his case will be settled soon and satisfactorily and he sends best greetings. Arrangements made to provide him with reading matter and desired personal items. Hottélet was reassured that Embassy is following case closely. Local United Press office informed of visit.

MORRIS

811.91262/203a : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, March 20, 1941—6 p. m.

247. A very great amount of anxiety has been created in various circles here because of the arrest of Jay Allen. Mrs. Roosevelt is personally interested in the matter as well as many other prominent persons.

I shall appreciate it if you will investigate the situation yourself and let me have your judgment as to what, if anything, the Embassy can do to expedite his release. I fully appreciate the circumstances set forth by Barnes in his recent messages, but it may be that you feel that something further can be done.

WELLES

811.91262/203 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, March 21, 1941—noon.

[Received 12:05 p. m.]

1061. In continuation of my 1021, March 19, 5 p. m.,<sup>a</sup> Embassy has been verbally informed by German Foreign Office that Jay Allen of

<sup>a</sup> Not printed.

North American Newspaper Alliance twice crossed the demarcation line between unoccupied and occupied France without the permit required by existing German regulations and that he was arrested while attempting to return to unoccupied France by crossing the demarcation line clandestinely. Allen is at present under arrest at Chalon-sur-Saône. No information is as yet available in respect to the other American allegedly arrested with Allen. Foreign Office believes case is not one for intervention since Allen's offense is a clear violation of well-known regulations. According to the Foreign Office the Embassy in Paris is fully informed.

Embassy withholding further action pending the receipt from the Embassy in Paris or from the Department of more complete information.

MORRIS

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811.91262/206 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 22, 1941—noon.

[Received March 22—11:05 a. m.]

329. Department's 247, March 20, 6 p. m. Immediately upon learning of Jay Allen's arrest I brought the matter to the attention of the French Foreign Office. You will appreciate since Allen went to the occupied zone without any authorization whatsoever and since he is in the custody of the German authorities, the French are in no position to help in obtaining his release.

I have again requested Barnes to take every appropriate step which in his judgment will facilitate obtaining Allen's release and he is also endeavoring to obtain permission for a member of the Embassy staff to visit Allen.

Under the circumstances I can see nothing further that can be done.

LEAHY

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811.91262/210 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 24, 1941.

[Received March 24—3:25 p. m.]

895. From Paris. Department's 247, March 20, 6 p. m., to Vichy. I have asked the American Press Association in Paris to communicate in writing to the German authorities the facts in the Allen case as they are known to the Association and to request that all consideration

possible be given to the fact that Allen was merely doing what any enterprising newspaper correspondent would like to do. The executive committee of the Association is to meet this evening and I am sure it will decide to take this action. In that event I shall communicate a copy of the letter to the German Embassy expressing the hope that the Embassy can recommend to the military authorities the early release of Allen. Barnes.

LEAHY

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811.91262/223 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 28, 1941—8 p. m.

913. United Press reports receiving information that Hottetlet may not be brought to trial before June or July which presumes that charges may be or have been filed. You should urge that the investigation should be brought to an early conclusion and that either the charges should be dismissed or that prompt disposition should be made of his case. Report by cable.

WELLES

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811.91262/218 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, March 28, 1941.

[Received March 29—10:35 a. m.]

940. [From Paris.] Reference Paris telegram 895, March 24: Action outlined has been taken by both American Press Association and Embassy. In my communication to German Embassy, dated March 25, I stated that it was my understanding that the general practice of the military authorities at the line of demarcation is to impose only mild penalties on those persons who clandestinely cross the demarcation line, and that I also understood that of the 60 or more persons arrested in the same vicinity as Allen on the day that he was arrested nearly all have been released either upon the payment of a fine or the completion of a short prison sentence.

The Paris representative of the German Propaganda Ministry orally informed the Press Association yesterday that Allen "would not be subjected either to worse or better treatment because of being a newspaperman or an American." He refused, however, to clarify this

statement in any way and the representative of the press made no mention of my understanding that most of the others arrested at the same time as Allen had now been released. Barnes.

LEAHY

811.91262/202 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, April 3, 1941—3 p. m.

916. For Paris. Your 841, March 18. In order that the Department may reply suitably to the inquiries, which are increasingly numerous and imperative, regarding the present status of the case of Mr. Jay Allen, please telegraph whether (1) any representative of this Government or any private American citizen has been permitted to visit Mr. Allen since his arrest and incarceration at Chalon-sur-Saône; (2) in your opinion it would be wise to make a formal request of the German authorities that an official of this Government visit Allen; (3) you are in communication with him directly or indirectly; (4) he is receiving food; (5) there is any further disposition on the part of the Germans to commute his imprisonment.

HULL

811.91262/230 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 4, 1941.

[Received April 4—8:27 p. m.]

1054. From Paris. Reference Paris telegram 976 [975?], April 1.<sup>9</sup> Axelsson<sup>10</sup> found Allen in good spirits and as well cared for as could be expected in a provincial French prison. The food is satisfactory and he is given the exceptional liberty of leaving the prison with a guard from time to time. Allen's case had not yet been heard but probably will be not later than today. The German authorities at Chalon believe that he will not be given a sentence that will entail more than an additional 10 days or 2 weeks of imprisonment, at the end of which time he will probably be released into the unoccupied zone.

Please inform James, *New York Times*, and North American Newspaper Alliance. [Barnes.]

LEAHY

<sup>9</sup> Not printed.

<sup>10</sup> George Axelsson, representative of the *New York Times* Bureau in Berlin.

811.91262/236 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 7, 1941.

[Received April 8—9:10 a. m.]

1073. From Paris. By telephone to Vichy: Department's 916, April 3, 3 p. m.

1. On April 4 I telegraphed a report containing the facts as they then appeared which would enable the Department to reply to "increasingly numerous and imperative" inquiries referred to in your telegram that crossed mine. News received today states that since the 4th "matters are not going so well". On that day word was given to our friend that those conducting the inquiry are "investigating further the possibility" that the purpose of the trip was "activities not kosher" under the present conditions that obtain.

2. There are so many factors involved with respect to the Department's question number 2 that I am not yet prepared to give a definite reply. I shall consider the query as constituting authority to take affirmative action in the event that I conclude that such would be advisable. In any event, I shall not fail to do all that I can in this case.

3. In this connection I wish to state that since April 3, I have wanted to report that the principle of retaliation, even with respect to persons, is one that this Embassy may soon have to protest against in behalf of numerous persons who do not wear bell-shaped pants. I am now so certain that this principle has an appeal that I can no longer hesitate. I still hope that good sense will prevail amongst those who contemplate such action but being without any assurances on this score I agree with numerous of my acquaintances who are taking the only action possible to safeguard against inconvenience. This situation renders even more difficult an intelligent reply at this moment to the Department's question 2.

4. Please give same dissemination to paragraph 1 and only paragraph 1 of this telegram as you did to my telegram referred to in that paragraph. Barnes.

LEAHY

811.91262/236 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Leahy)*

WASHINGTON, April 9, 1941—8 p. m.

955. For Paris. Your 1073, April 7. The Department appreciates the difficulties of the Allen case and has full confidence in your judgment and that you will exhaust every possibility to obtain Allen's release.

HULL



811.91262/242 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, April 16, 1941.

[Received April 17—3:35 p. m.]

1143. From Paris. Department's 955 April 9, 8 p. m., received today. I have just sent the following letter to Count Thun, diplomatic liaison officer in the German Embassy here :

"On March 25th I wrote to you about the arrest of Mr. Jay Allen, an American journalist, who had clandestinely crossed the demarcation line. I am writing to you again on the subject, first, because Mr. Allen is still in prison at Chalon, secondly, because thus far I have had no word from you about the case, and thirdly, because I have received urgent telegrams of inquiry from the Department of State in Washington. One of the latest of these telegrams states that the Department is receiving increasingly numerous and imperative inquiries concerning the welfare of Mr. Allen from various points in the United States and that the Department must know the latest facts in the case in order appropriately to reply to these inquiries.

I stated in my letter of March 25 that it was my understanding that in general the military authorities on the line of demarcation impose only minor penalties on those persons who clandestinely cross the demarcation line. I added that it was my understanding that of the 60 or more persons arrested in the vicinity of Chalon on the day that Mr. Allen was arrested nearly all had been released either upon the payment of a relatively small fine or upon the completion of a prison sentence of short duration. I now wish to state that since writing to you on March 25 I personally have talked with numerous persons arrested at the time Mr. Allen was arrested who have since been released and who are now in Paris. I therefore cannot avoid the thought that Mr. Allen is being subjected to unusual treatment because he is an American citizen.

I naturally feel an obligation to do the utmost that I can to assure that Mr. Allen is not being subjected to hardship primarily because of his citizenship. Furthermore I have been instructed by the Department of State to exhaust every possibility to obtain Mr. Allen's release especially in view of the fact that I have every reason to believe that there can exist no charge against him except of having clandestinely crossed the demarcation line. In this connection my Government has instructed me formally to request of the German authorities that either I or a representative chosen from my staff be allowed to visit Mr. Allen at Chalon without delay.

I hope that you will find it possible to aid me in the settlement of this case. My specific request is (1) that the German Embassy intervene with the military authorities with a view to effecting the prompt release of Mr. Allen, (2) that authorization be granted permitting a member of my staff to visit Mr. Allen in the prison at Chalon within the next few days.

As Mr. Allen was arrested on March 13 he has already served a prison term of over one month for disregarding German regulations.

I am sure you will comprehend the obligation under which I find myself to keep my Government informed of developments or the absence thereof in this case."

This action was taken upon the receipt of indirect news from Allen this morning that his case has not yet been heard by the military tribunal and that he is apprehensive of further long delay. [Barnes.]

LEAHY

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811.91262/245a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 25, 1941—7 p. m.

1182. Please address a note of the following substance to the Foreign Office :

The American Government has been advised of the arrest on March 13 of Mr. Jay Allen, an American journalist, who clandestinely crossed the demarcation line between occupied and unoccupied France and who at present is detained in prison in Chalon-sur-Saône, France. The American Government, which has received numerous inquiries respecting the welfare of Mr. Allen, instructed its representatives in Paris to investigate this case and to intercede with the German authorities on his behalf.

The American Embassy in Paris, accordingly, addressed two communications under date of March 25 and April 16, 1941 to the Diplomatic Liaison Officer at the German Embassy in Paris, which (1) requested that the German Embassy intervene with the military authorities with a view to effecting the prompt release of Mr. Allen, (2) requested that permission be granted for a member of the staff to visit Mr. Allen in prison, and (3) indicated there was reason to believe that Mr. Allen is being subjected to unusual treatment because he is an American citizen.

A note has now been received by the American Embassy in Paris from the German Embassy in Paris reading in translation as follows :

"With reference to your two letters of March 25th and April 16th, 1941, concerning the arrest of the American journalist Mr. Jay Allen, I have the honor to state that your complaint is unfounded.

"If the American Government intends to express to the Government of the Reich a special desire concerning the case of Mr. Allen, may I suggest that it make application direct to the Foreign Office through the American Embassy at Berlin."

From information available to the American Government it appears that, in general, the German military authorities impose only minor penalties on those persons who clandestinely cross the demarcation line.

It is further understood that of the 60 or more persons arrested in the vicinity of Chalon on the day that Mr. Allen was arrested nearly all have been released upon the payment of a relatively small fine or after a short period of detention. In these circumstances, the continued detention of Mr. Allen would clearly indicate that he is being subjected to more severe treatment than that accorded other persons similarly situated.

The American Government must therefore request the German Government to give immediate consideration (1) to granting permission for a visit to Mr. Allen by an American official and (2) to the release of Mr. Allen at the earliest possible moment.

HULL

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811.91262/245b : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 26, 1941—3 p. m.

1197. With such references as you may deem appropriate to either oral or written communications on the Hottelet case, please address a note to the German Foreign Office indicating the concern of this Government at his continued detention and inquiring when information may be expected as to the charges against him and when it is anticipated that the preliminary investigation will be completed. Request also permission to have a consul visit him in prison from time to time.

Please confirm whether counsel has been obtained.

HULL

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811.91262/244 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 26, 1941—6 p. m.

1202. Reference Department's instructions on the (1) Nelson and Jacobsen,<sup>11</sup> (2) Allen, and (3) Hottelet cases. In presenting these notes to the Foreign Office, you are requested to seek an interview with a high official and to indicate orally that the continued detention in prison of these American citizens without charges being formally presented against them is in marked contrast to the treatment accorded certain German cases in the United States where the accused persons are frequently released on bail. A continuation of this practice on

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<sup>11</sup> Frank Nelson and Ivan Jacobsen, American citizens in Norway, were arrested by German authorities in early December 1940, charged with being in possession of documents hostile to the Government in Norway established under German occupation.

the part of German authorities could ultimately react unfavorably for accused German citizens in the United States. Furthermore, in the case of Allen, you may point out that the time he has already spent in prison would appear to be sufficient punishment for the offense, and this is particularly true in view of the German treatment of similar cases. You may likewise state that the German crews accused of sabotage are allowed frequent access to their consular representatives in the United States.<sup>12</sup>

Please cable full report on German reaction to your representations.

HULL

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811.91262/248 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 2, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received 4:20 p. m.]

1690. Department's 1202, April 26, 6 p. m., 1182, April 25, 7 p. m., 1197, April 26, 3 p. m. and 1198, April 26, 4 p. m.<sup>13</sup> On April 17 last the Embassy addressed a note to the Foreign Office on the Hottetlet case calling attention to the following points:

1. The arrest of Hottetlet on March 15 last.
2. The visit of an officer of the Embassy with Hottetlet on March 20 for which the Foreign Office made the arrangements.
3. The attempt on March 31st of an officer to pay another call on Hottetlet which was unsuccessful, the prison authorities stating that another visit could only be arranged with higher authorities through the Foreign Office.
4. The statements of the competent Foreign Office official on April 4 that for the present permission for a consular officer to visit Hottetlet would not be granted and,
5. The statements on April 4 by the competent Foreign Office official that he was unable to give any information as to when or whether Hottetlet would be brought to trial or even as to when the investigation might be completed.

The Embassy's communication concluded with the statement that in view of the period of Hottetlet's detention this Mission felt compelled to renew its requests: (a) That measures be taken to cause the case to be expedited with a view to having the prisoner either brought to trial or released at an early date and; (b) that permission be granted for a consular officer of this Government to visit Hottetlet at regular and frequent intervals pending the conclusion of the proceedings against him. An early reply was requested but only a routine acknowledgment has been received.

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<sup>12</sup> For correspondence concerning arrest of crews of the *Pauline Friedrich* and the *Arauca*, see vol. I, pp. 451 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Telegram No. 1198 not printed.

The Berlin office of the United Press has engaged local counsel for Hottelet but the attorney in question has not been permitted to visit his client.

In the Nelson and Jacobsen cases the Embassy on March 14th last addressed a note to the Foreign Office informing the latter that this Mission had been informed that the Oslo authorities had completed their investigation and had forwarded the results to the Berlin office of the State Secret Police early in February and that it was further understood that the competent Reich authorities in Oslo had requested the Berlin officials to expedite their decision in the matter so that Jacobsen and Nelson could either be prosecuted before the military tribunal in Oslo or released. The Embassy then requested the Foreign Office, in view of long period of detention of the persons involved, to take the necessary steps to have the decision of the Berlin police authorities expedited. The verbal refusal of the Foreign Office to interfere was obtained by telephone on April 10, and reported to the Department in my 1452 of April 16th last.<sup>14</sup>

With respect to the detention of Jay Allen, Embassy was informed by the competent Foreign Office official on March 21st last that the Foreign Office did not regard the case as one for intervention. The substance of the Department's 1182, April 25, 7 p. m., will be communicated to the Foreign Office when these cases are taken up.

From the foregoing it may be observed that the action suggested by the Department has already been largely covered by the Embassy's previous representations with the exception of the Allen case. In order to avoid giving the impression that the new notes in the Hottelet and Nelson cases are partly repetitions of those that have gone before I propose to tie them up closely with the latter in wording. But I wonder whether the Department in order to make it entirely clear to the German authorities that these new notes constitute a direct advance in our position relative to the treatment of these Americans would not consider authorizing me to state in each note that unless the respective requests should be clearly acceded to within a reasonable time we would be forced to assume that there was no intention on the German side to accede to them and to consider the cases on that basis. The presentation of the notes would be accompanied by the oral statements indicated in the Department's 1202.

In this latter regard I feel that the effectiveness of my oral observations might be increased if I had more detailed information concerning the number and treatment accorded German seamen and other citizens under Federal arrest or enjoying bail.

MORRIS

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<sup>14</sup> Not printed.

811.91262/248 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 6, 1941—9 p. m.

1288. Your 1690, May 2, 3 p. m. The delivery of additional notes to the Foreign Office on the Hottelet and Nelson and Jacobsen cases is left to your discretion. In discussing these cases orally, you may merely refer to the Embassy's previous notes on these cases if you judge this more desirable.

The Department concurs in the suggestion made in Section 3 of your 1690 but recommends that the statement be made orally at the same time you discuss these cases in accordance with the Department's 1202.

Seventeen members of the crew of the *Pauline Friedrich* are detained at the Immigration Station in Boston. The master and 9 others of this vessel have been charged with sabotage under Section 502, title 18 of the United States Criminal Code. Bail for 5 has been fixed at \$20,000 each and for other 5 at \$10,000 each. As bail has not been posted all 10 are detained.

Forty-three of the crew of the *Arauca* are detained at Miami, Florida, where deportation proceedings are pending. No charges of sabotage have been made against this crew. Both crews have free and continuous access to their consular officers.

Manfred Zapp and Gunther Tonn of Transocean News were indicted for failure to register under Foreign Agents Act.<sup>15</sup> Zapp was released at once under \$5,000 bail and Tonn under \$3,000 bail. As they are released on bail they, of course, have free access to their consular representatives.

HULL

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811.91262/268 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 10, 1941—noon.

[Received 3:48 p. m.]

1823. Department's 1288, May 6, 9 p. m. I visited Unterstaatssekretär Woermann yesterday and presented additional notes on all three cases. In the protracted conversation which followed we discussed in detail the treatment of these prisoners as well as of the Germans who have been detained in the United States. Woermann undertook to give personal attention to our complaints and requests with respect to the imprisoned Americans; but to what extent this

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<sup>15</sup> Foreign Agents Registration Act, approved June 8, 1938, 52 Stat. 631.

will be effective will doubtless depend on the decision of others. I understand that Zapp is a personal friend of Ribbentrop and it is also reported that the Reich Chancellor <sup>15a</sup> himself has shown active personal interest in these cases.

Woermann seemed to be aware of the further measures reported to have been taken against Zapp and other Germans in the United States during the last few days and I am sure that in any decisions which may be made here the possible repercussions on the treatment of those Germans will carefully be considered. I might add that the deportation of Zapp prior to the conclusion of the proceedings against Hottelet might seriously jeopardize our efforts to protect the latter's interests.

The German Government are bitter according to Woermann's statement over the treatment accorded to members of the crew of the *Pauline Friedrich* at Boston. They are also incensed over the cases of the four German aviators taken off the *President Garfield*. They feel that these men were first detained in an improper way and then tricked into taking passage on an American ship from which it was known that they would fall into Canadian hands. Finally the incident of the handcuffing of Gohoke [*Gohlke*] and Rottman at Niagara Falls <sup>16</sup> still rankles badly in Berlin where it is regarded as an insulting and gratuitous humiliation of German officers and I feel that it too had had an effect on the position of our citizens in custody.

As suggested in my 1310, April 7, 2 p. m., and 1341, April 8, 7 p. m., <sup>17</sup> our own position might be considerably improved here if I were able to give the Germans any authoritative explanation of the action of our authorities at Niagara Falls.

MORRIS

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811.91262/280 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, May 19, 1941—4 p. m.  
[Received May 20—12:40 a. m.]

576. Paris telegram 1214, April 23 <sup>18</sup> as [*and?*] previous. Some days ago a member of the Embassy staff received a letter from Jay Allen which had apparently been smuggled out of Chalon stating that he had been informed by the German authorities at Chalon that they were prepared to let him go and that he was now being held at the

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<sup>15a</sup> Adolf Hitler.

<sup>16</sup> These two German officers escaping from military imprisonment in Canada were refused sanctuary in the United States and were returned across the boundary line to Canada.

<sup>17</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>18</sup> Missing from Department files.

request of French authorities for an affair involving a document purloined from a Ministry in Vichy. The letter added that he has been questioned in his jail by a French police inspector. In the light thereof the Embassy immediately took the matter up with the Foreign Office and insisted on knowing whether Allen's fears were well founded.

We have been officially informed by the Foreign Office that Allen's detention does not spring from the French authorities and that it is not being prolonged at their request. Allen is implicated in an affair other than that which caused his arrest by the Germans, the Foreign Office stated, which may give rise to steps being eventually taken against him by the French authorities following his release by the Germans.

We understand from other sources that four people are under arrest in Vichy on charges of purloining from the Ministry of the Interior of a confidential document which was shown to Allen.

It is asserted that it was purloined at his request and that in return he paid a sum of money to one of the men—a French journalist now under arrest. In his letter Allen admits having seen "secret" reports but denies that he solicited their purloining and states he gave sum of money to the journalist for another purpose.

Paris has been requested to inform Allen that he is not being held at French request. While he was in Vichy Barnes stated that he understood the Germans intend to release Allen after he has served 3 months, the maximum sentence imposed by the German military authorities for illegal crossing of the demarcation line. Allen was arrested on March 13.

LEAHY

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811.91262/288 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 20, 1941—noon.

[Received 3:40 p. m.]

1974. Reference my cable No. 1823 of May 10, noon, with respect to the detention of Hottelot and other American citizens by the German authorities.

A communication dated May 17 was received from the Foreign Office late yesterday concerning the Hottelot case. The Foreign Office note reads as follows in translation.

"In reply to the *note verbale* of May 9, 1941, No. 2151 from the Embassy of the United States of America the Foreign Office has the honor to recall in this connection the fact that Secretary of Embassy Kennan recently informed himself by telephone conversation with



Consul General Speiser of the Foreign Office in respect to the status of the case of the American national, Hottélet. Secretary of Embassy Kennan was given telephonic information on this occasion to the effect that the case was now dependent on the People's Court and that a court order had been issued.

"In the meantime the Reich Minister of Justice has been requested to permit a member of the Consular section of the Embassy of the United States of America to visit Hottélet from time to time.

"As soon as the decision of the Reich Minister of Justice is known the Embassy of the United States of America will be informed."

Kennan does not recall that the Foreign Office official mentioned the People's Court in the conversation under reference. It was his impression that the official merely stated that Hottélet had been transferred from police custody to "custody for judicial investigation". The Embassy did not consider information given by telephone as sufficiently exact and authoritative for our needs and therefore addressed a written inquiry to the Foreign Office to which the above communication was the reply.

The Department will recall that the People's Court the establishment of which was not effective [*sic*] in the *Reichsgesetzblatt* No. 47 of April 30, 1934, part 1, page 345, was set up for the adjudication of crimes concerning high treason and treason against the country. No appeal is admissible against its decisions. Information concerning this court was contained in despatch No. 1048, [July] 19, 1934<sup>19</sup> and other despatches of that period from this Mission.

The status of the case as described by Hottélet's lawyer is now as follows: The judicial preparation of the case which succeeds the police investigation will be finished before the middle of June. Only upon its completion will the attorney be informed of the charges and be able to prepare the defense. It is not certain that trial will promptly follow on completion of the judicial preparation of the case. A delay of 2 or 3 months may occur before the case will be heard by the People's Court.

The Attorney [stated?] in so far as he can ascertain the German authorities feel they have enough material to pin a charge on Hottélet and there are no indications that the case will be dismissed.

MORRIS

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811.91262/306 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 4, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received 3:28 p. m.]

2194. My 1823, May 10, noon, and Department's 1568, June 3, 6 p. m.<sup>20</sup> The Department will have noted from my 1974, May 20, noon

<sup>19</sup> Not printed.

<sup>20</sup> Latter not printed.

that certain progress has been made in the handling of the Hottelet case which has now passed out of the hands of the police and been turned over to the People's Court. The permission for officers of this Embassy to visit Hottelet from time to time has not yet materialized.

In the Nelson and Jacobsen cases the release of Jacobsen about May 15 as reported in Oslo's 257, 15th <sup>21</sup> shows that the case has finally again received attention at the hands of the authorities.

In the Allen case no progress has been learned of.

In the case of an American citizen, one Anthony Calabrese detained in the Cologne District, considerable improvement took place in the treatment accorded by the German authorities after the Embassy had taken the matter up formally with the Foreign Office on May 14. The case was transferred from the police to the courts and arrangements were made to permit the prisoner to have the services of a lawyer, to receive visitors, to have food sent in, et cetera.

The trial and release of another American citizen in Danzig, one Gustave Schmidt, was reported to the Department in Koenigsburg's No. 15 of May 21.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, the Embassy was pleased to note that in Vienna where an American girl dancer got into difficulties and was charged with assaulting a policeman the case was promptly dealt with and the girl released after a light sentence.

While these facts do not indicate complaints [*complete?*] compliance with our requests in the cases concerned they do show that a certain definite progress has been made since the date of my last conference at the Foreign Office in the matter. I have again brought to the attention of the Under Secretary of State the Embassy's desire for prompt action in the Allen case and its expectation of being allowed to visit Hottelet.

I am keeping in contact with Oslo in regard to the treatment of Nelson.

MORRIS

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811.91262/315 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 10, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received 2: 43 p. m.]

2280. Department's 1445, May 21, 8 p. m. and my despatch 5113 of May 19 last <sup>22</sup> concerning detention of Jay Allen. On May 27 a written communication to the Foreign Office expressed the expectation that a reply would in the near future be made to the Embassy's note of May 8

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<sup>21</sup> Not printed.

<sup>22</sup> Neither printed.

respecting the detention of Allen. Late yesterday a communication was received from the Foreign Office reading as follows in translation:

"The Foreign Office has the honor to inform the Embassy of the United States of America with reference to its *note verbale* of May 8 last, number 2150,<sup>23</sup> that the assumption that the American National, Jay Allen, has been subjected to a more severe treatment than other persons who in the same way as he crossed the demarcation line clandestinely is incorrect. If Allen still finds himself in prison at Chalon-sur-Saône this is for the reason that there are two judicial orders for his arrest: A German order of arrest based on unauthorized crossing of the demarcation line and an order of arrest issued by the French Judge of Investigation in Vichy on the ground of participating in the theft of official French documents (official French documents which had been stolen from French officials were found on Allen). Allen has further through his conduct brought upon himself the suspicion of having engaged in espionage. On this charge an investigation is being carried on against him which has not yet been concluded.

"In respect to a visit to Allen by one of the officials of the American representation in Paris the latter will receive word directly."

Repeated to Vichy.

MORRIS

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811.91262/322 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, June 23, 1941—3 p. m.  
[Received June 24—10: 50 a. m.]

736. Immediately upon receipt of Berlin's telegram No. 2280 to the Department<sup>24</sup> concerning Jay Allen, we asked the Foreign Office whether his status with the French authorities had undergone a change since the receipt of the information reported in our 576, May 19, 4 p. m. Today we were categorically informed that as far as the French authorities are concerned Allen's status is unchanged since the drafting of the Foreign Office communication upon which our telegram under reference was based.

Questioned as to the German allegation that there existed a French judicial warrant of arrest for Allen, our Foreign Office informant replied, after inquiry of the Surêté, that such an order reposes in the hands of the competent state prosecutor but that it had not been and would not be given practical effect until the Germans had disposed of their case against Allen. He added that the latest information received from Chalon by Surêté indicated that "the Germans have not tried Allen, are unable to say when he will be tried and intimate that

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<sup>23</sup> Not printed.

<sup>24</sup> *Supra*.

an exchange of Allen, presumably against some German detained in the United States, is under contemplation[?].

Repeated to Berlin.

LEAHY

811.91262/324 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, June 23, 1941—9 p. m.

1756. The Department has been discussing with the German Embassy here the possibility of effecting the release of Allen, Hottelet and Nelson, in exchange for the release of Zapp and Tonn, representatives of the Trans-Ocean News Service, at present held by the immigration authorities in New York. The Department has been awaiting further information on this matter from Berlin but apparently no definite decision has been taken to date.

You are authorized orally to bring this proposal to the attention of the Foreign Office, stating that this Government is disposed to release Zapp and Tonn and favorably to consider including Rieth, provided Allen, Hottelet and Nelson are released by the German authorities.

WELLES

811.91262/327 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 28, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 12:01 p. m.]

2595. My 1974, May 20, noon. The Foreign Office has orally informed the Embassy that the Reich Minister of Justice has agreed to permit fortnightly visits to Hottelet by an officer of the Embassy. The formal notification of this decision has not yet been received and several days may elapse before the first visit can be arranged.

MORRIS

811.91262/330 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 30, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 9:10 p. m.]

2628. In continuation of my 2595, June 28, 10 a. m., concerning Hottelet. The formal notification mentioned therein has been received today and reads in translation as follows:

"The Foreign Office has the honor to inform the Embassy of the United States of America in reference to the *note verbale*, of May 17

current, R81954, that the Reich Minister of Labor has given permission for a member of the Embassy to visit the American national, Richard Hottelet, approximately every 3 weeks. The conversation must take place in the presence of a judge, must be carried on only in the German language and must not touch on the subject of the charges.

The Embassy of the United States of America is hereby requested to make all further arrangements in respect of the visit directly with the superior state attorney attached to the People's Court."

The difference in the periods to elapse between visits as mentioned in my 2595 and in the Foreign Office note was perhaps the result of a misunderstanding by telephone. Permission for the first visit will be applied for immediately.

MORRIS

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811.91262/331 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State*

VICHY, July 2, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 12:18 p. m.]

795. Paris telegram No. 82, June 28 to Berlin and my 772, June 30, 3 p. m.<sup>25</sup> An American news correspondent in Vichy has received a letter, which he considers authentic, from Jay Allen's usual intermediary (a person who sees Allen frequently in prison) confirming the fact that Allen was sentenced on June 23 to 4 months' imprisonment for one effective and one attempted illegal crossing of the demarcation line with only 1 month of the 3 already served being counted off. This sentence would terminate on September 23, but the letter adds that Allen "believes this alters his situation in no way and that they passed sentence merely to justify his detention. He immediately entered an appeal."

Repeated to Berlin.

LEAHY

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811.91262/334 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, July 7, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received July 8—1:15 a. m.]

2721. My 2628, June 30, 7 p. m. The Embassy has today been orally informed by the Foreign Office that Hottelet will be released tomorrow morning to a representative of the Embassy as the result of an exchange arrangement. While no restrictions are to be placed by the

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<sup>25</sup> Neither printed.

German authorities on his freedom of movement for the next few days the Embassy has been requested to take general custody of him and see that he leaves from Frankfort with the American consular officials. I have discussed the matter with Oechsner, the head of the local United Press Bureau, and he agrees that it is of the utmost importance that no publicity whatsoever be given to Hottelet's release until he has crossed the border into Spain and that even then great circumspection should be shown as to the manner in which it is treated. I propose, therefore, to keep Hottelet quite isolated during intervening days pending his departure from Frankfort and with the exception of Oechsner nothing is being said to anyone in Berlin about his release.

The Foreign Office has said nothing about Nelson or Allen. Hottelet was interviewed on July 3d by Carlton Hurst who reported him well and without complaint of his treatment. The message from his parents was delivered and he sends them his love.

MORRIS

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811.91262/343

*Memorandum by Mr. James W. Riddleberger of the Division of  
European Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] July 8, 1941.

Mr. von Stempel of the German Embassy called late this afternoon and advised me that the German Government has now agreed to the release of Allen, Hottelet, Nelson and Jacobsen against Zapp, Tonn, Rieth and Bürk. He said the four Americans could depart from Germany with the consular group <sup>26</sup> and would be guaranteed safe conduct to Lisbon (I had previously insisted on this safe conduct to Lisbon in view of Allen's uncertain status with the French authorities) provided the four Germans could depart with the German consular party. He stated further than if Zapp could be released at once to liquidate the Trans-Ocean office, the German Government would immediately release Hottelet from detention.

Upon the receipt of this information I got into touch with the Department of Justice and received from Mr. Scofield <sup>26a</sup> their approval of the exchange. Mr. Scofield also said that instructions had been given to release Zapp from detention in order to liquidate his office. Mr. Zapp will be accompanied, however, by an agent of the Department of Justice.

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<sup>26</sup> For correspondence concerning the closing of United States Consulates in Germany and German Consulates in the United States, see pp. 628 ff.

<sup>26a</sup> Lemuel B. Schofield, Special Assistant to the Attorney General in Charge of Immigration and Naturalization.

REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT WITH RESPECT  
TO ITS TREATMENT OF AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE INTERESTS  
IN GERMANY AND IN GERMAN-OCCUPIED AREAS <sup>27</sup>

840.4061 Motion Pictures/120

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

No. 4244

BERLIN, January 16, 1941.

[Received February 11.]

SIR: With reference to the Embassy's telegram No. 4929 of December 5, 6 p. m.,<sup>28</sup> concerning the seizure by the German authorities of seven prints which belong to Loew's Incorporated and which were in the possession of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film A. G. of Berlin, I have the honor to enclose for the Department's information a copy of the Embassy's Note No. 1817 dated January 14, 1941, to the German Foreign Office <sup>29</sup> pointing out that no reply has been received by the Embassy to its urgent Note No. 1727 of December 1940 <sup>30</sup> (the Department's telegram No. 3179, December 2, 3 p. m.<sup>28</sup>), and requesting that the prints which have been seized by the German authorities, in spite of the fact that they have been duly and repeatedly notified of the American ownership thereof, be returned immediately.

Respectfully yours,

For the Chargé d'Affaires a. i.

CARLOS J. WARNER

*Second Secretary of Embassy*

840.4061 Motion Pictures/123

*The American Embassy in Germany to the German Ministry for  
Foreign Affairs* <sup>31</sup>

No. 1825

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the German Reich and with reference to the Ministry's Note (No. Kult K 11425) of December 9, 1940, stating that the competent internal authorities had been requested to give consideration to the question of the protection of American film interests in countries under German military occupation which

<sup>27</sup> Continued from *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, pp. 668-673.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 673.

<sup>29</sup> Not printed.

<sup>30</sup> For substance of note, dated December 3, 1940, see telegram No. 4864, November 28, 1940, 4 p. m., from the Chargé in Germany, *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 672.

<sup>31</sup> Copy transmitted to the Department by the Chargé in Germany in his despatch No. 4266, January 21, 1941; received February 11.

was the subject of the Embassy's Note No. 1675 of November 15, 1940,<sup>32</sup> has the honor to inquire whether the competent internal authorities have now completed their examination of the matter and whether steps have been taken to enable American film distributing agencies to resume operations in the occupied areas, to recover their property which had been attached, and to re-obtain possession of the motion picture films which had been seized.

In the meantime the Embassy has been informed that the German authorities in Amsterdam, in addition to having previously locked the vaults containing the films belonging to two American companies on November 29, 1940, locked the vault containing the films of another American company, Warner Brothers Pictures Corporation of New York, and took possession of the keys thereto. This was done in spite of the fact that the Embassy in its Note No. 1470 of September 13, 1940, informed the Ministry that positive prints of 355 features, 354 trailers, and 702 shorts in the possession of that company's subsidiary in the Netherlands, Warner Brothers First National Pictures, N. V., 778 Keizersgracht, Amsterdam, are the property of the American parent company, Warner Brothers Pictures, Incorporated, of New York. The Embassy also invites the attention of the Ministry to the fact that one of the two companies whose vaults in Amsterdam containing American owned films were previously sealed by the German authorities is the N. V. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film Maatschappij, Damrak 49, Amsterdam, and that this action was taken although in its Note No. 753 of January 11, 1940, the Embassy informed the Ministry that all negatives and positive prints of motion pictures marked with the copyrighted trade mark "Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer" are the property of the American company Loew's Incorporated. Consequently, the action of the German authorities in seizing the above mentioned American owned negatives and positive prints, the American nature of which had been duly notified to the Ministry, would appear to be in arbitrary disregard of American property rights.

In view of the foregoing and in view of the considerations set forth in the Embassy's Note No. 1675 of November 15, 1940, the Embassy is confident that the Ministry will promptly cause to be issued the necessary permits for American film distributing agencies in the occupied areas to resume operations and cause to have released to them their property which has been attached as well as to have returned to them the motion picture films which have been seized.

BERLIN, January 18, 1941.

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<sup>32</sup> For substance of note No. 1675, see telegram No. 4515, October 30, 1940, 7 p. m., from the Chargé in Germany, *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 670.



840.4061 Motion Pictures/108: Telegram

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

BERLIN, January 24, 1941—noon.

[Received January 25—9:15 a. m.]

264. With reference to the Department's telegram number 2998, November 13, 3 p. m.,<sup>33</sup> the following reply has now been received to the Embassy's note of protest.

"The Foreign Office has the honor to inform the Embassy of the United States of America as follows supplementing its *note verbale* of January 9, 1941, in the question of the treatment of American film property in the occupied western areas.

"In the areas in question numerous films of American origin were found which bear a definitely anti-German character and are therefore subject to seizure under the existing provisions of criminal law. The fact that such products were found in large numbers in the areas in question justifies the assumption that the extensive stocks of American films include further specimens of this type. This gave occasion to the German internal authorities to subject the entire American film material to an examination to determine to what extent it bears an anti-German character. This measure made necessary solely by the conduct of the American film industry itself is the reason for the temporary sequestration of its stocks in the western area occupied by Germany. The Foreign Office will not fail, however, to take steps to insure that after the completion of the examination the American companies immediately recover for their free disposition those products against which no objection is to be made from the point of view of criminal law. Their exportation from the occupied areas will then be subject to the regulations applying to traffic in merchandise generally.

"With regard to the future exhibition of American films in the occupied areas the Foreign Office has the honor to point out that the question of the admission of films is to be judged solely from the police standpoint and that accordingly the orders issued in each case by the authorities entrusted with police functions are to be observed.

"The communication addressed by the Consular Section of the Embassy to the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda on October 24, 1940, is accordingly also regarded as answered."

In view of the foregoing reply and in an endeavor to obtain a further clarification of the situation it is suggested that the Embassy be authorized to present another note in the premises which after referring to the Foreign Office's reply would read as follows:

"The Embassy has the honor to inquire whether there has now been completed the examination of American films seized in the occupied areas by the German authorities on the grounds that a large number thereof were of anti-German character. In this connection the Em-

<sup>33</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 672.

bassy has the honor to invite the Ministry's attention to the fact that the films of at least two American companies in the Netherlands were seized over 5 months ago and further that some of the prints seized were of films which had previously been passed by the German censors in Germany so that there would appear to be no basis for the German authorities not to release them for immediate exhibition. The Embassy is persuaded that the Ministry will appreciate the serious prejudice to trade which the seizure of the films has caused and still is causing through the discontinuance for so considerable a period of time of a legitimate American business built up after years of work and investment of capital especially in view of the uninterrupted continuance by German companies of a similar business in the occupied areas and it is confident that if the examination of the films should not by now have been completed the Ministry will take steps to expedite its immediate completion.

"The Embassy takes the liberty of pointing out that the Ministry in its note of January 18, 1941, makes no reference to the attachment of property other than the seizure of American prints belonging to certain film distributing agencies which are wholly owned by American film companies and has the honor to inquire as to the steps which have been taken to have such property released. It is understood that the German authorities have attached the funds of some and have denied to others access to their business records which action would appear to have no connection with the reported anti-German character of some of the films.

"In connection with the foregoing the Embassy reaffirms its confidence that the Ministry will promptly cause to be issued the necessary permits for American film distributing agencies in the occupied areas to resume their operation and cause to have released to them their property which has been attached as well as to have returned to them, after prompt examination, the American motion picture films which have been seized."

MORRIS

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840.4061 Motion Pictures/135

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

No. 4345

BERLIN, February 1, 1941.

[Received February 28.]

SIR: Supplementing the Embassy's despatch No. 4244 dated January 16, 1941, transmitting a copy of a further note to the Foreign Office requesting the immediate return of seven prints which belong to Loew's Incorporated and which were seized by the German authorities from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer A. G. of Berlin, I have the honor to report that the Foreign Office has now finally acknowledged the Embassy's notes of December 3, 1940,<sup>34</sup> and January 14, 1941,<sup>35</sup> stating

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<sup>34</sup> See footnote 30, p. 620.

<sup>35</sup> Not printed.

that "it has requested the competent German internal authorities to give their consideration to the matter and will inform the Embassy accordingly in due course."

Respectfully yours,

For the Chargé d'Affaires a. i.

CARLOS J. WARNER

*Second Secretary of Embassy*

840.4061 Motion Pictures/164

*The American Embassy in Germany to the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs*<sup>36</sup>

No. 2008

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the German Reich and with reference to the Ministry's Note (Kult K F 194/41) of January 18, 1941, concerning the seizure by the German authorities of certain films from the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film A. G., Berlin, which are the property of the American company Loew's Incorporated, has the honor to inquire as to the results of the steps taken by the Ministry in the premises. In this connection the Embassy takes the liberty of pointing out again that the films were seized in spite of the Ministry's kind notification to the competent German authorities "to take careful note of the property rights in question", namely, the ownership by the American company Loew's Incorporated of all negatives and positive prints of motion pictures marked with the copyrighted trademark "Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer" and that no reasons were given and no justification has been made for the seizing of this American property which action on the part of the German authorities would appear to be in arbitrary disregard of American property rights.

BERLIN, March 22, 1941.

840.4061 Motion Pictures/182

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

No. 5292

BERLIN, June 14, 1941.

[Received July 11.]

SIR: With reference to the Department's telegram No. 1565 of June 3, 3 p. m.,<sup>37</sup> instructing the Embassy to make formal general repre-

<sup>36</sup> Copy transmitted to the Department by the Chargé in Germany in his despatch No. 4732, March 26; received April 23.

<sup>37</sup> Not printed.

sentations with respect to the protection of the interests of American motion picture companies in Germany and in Bohemia and Moravia, I have the honor to enclose a copy of the Embassy's Note (No. 2343<sup>38</sup>) in the premises to the German Foreign Office dated June 13, 1941. As may be seen therefrom, the Embassy has requested the Foreign Office to cause a withdrawal of the ban against American films and American film distributing agencies in Germany and in Bohemia and Moravia and to cause to have released their property and motion picture films which have been seized. At the same time all rights of the American interests concerned were reserved.

Respectfully yours,

For the Chargé d'Affaires a. i.  
CARLOS J. WARNER  
*Second Secretary of Embassy*

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840.4061 Motion Pictures/205

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

No. 5919

BERLIN, October 18, 1941.  
[Received November 13.]

SIR: With reference to the Embassy's despatch No. 5292 of June 14, 1941, with respect to the protection of the interests of American motion picture companies in Germany, I have the honor to enclose a translation and a copy of a *Note Verbale* from the German Foreign Office dated October 9, 1941. This German note constitutes a generic reply to the Embassy's various communications on the subject and was written in direct answer to the Embassy's Note No. 2343,<sup>38</sup> a copy of which was forwarded to the Department with the Embassy's despatch under reference.

The Department will observe that the German government has taken the stand that the "sequestration" of American films in Germany has become necessary because of the fact that the American companies have and are engaged in the production of films which are anti-German in character. It might be noted that by analogous reasoning a ban on the exhibition of any German Ufa film in the United States would now be justified, since Ufa films of a distinctly anti-American nature have recently been showing in Berlin. As an example of these, the film "*Reitet für Deutschland*" would be cited, in which Americans were portrayed in a caricatured and ridiculous aspect.

Respectfully yours,

LELAND MORRIS

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<sup>38</sup> Not printed.

[Enclosure—Translation]

*The German Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the American Embassy*

[No.] Kult K F 3270

## NOTE VERBALE

The Foreign Office has the honor to confirm to the Embassy of the United States of America the receipt of *Note Verbale* No. 2343 of June 13, 1941, concerning the distribution and sequestering of products of American film companies in the Reich as well as in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

The *Note Verbale* deals in a general form with the questions of distribution and sequestration of American films, which, as far as the rights of the companies Loews Incorporated Metro Goldwyn Film AG, Berlin, are concerned, were the subject of previous exchanges of Notes. Reference is made to the Embassy's *Notes Verbales* No. 1727 of December 3, 1940, and No. 1811 [1817?] of January 14, 1941, concerning 7 films of the above named firms, which were provisionally replied to by *Note Verbale* (Kult K F 194) of January 18, 1941. The Embassy referred again to the same matter in its *Notes Verbales* No. 2008 of March 22, 1941, and No. 2155 of May 8, 1941.

The Foreign Office takes this occasion, to begin with, to reject most decisively the implied imputation at the end of the *Note Verbale* of March 22, 1941, that American property rights were arbitrarily disrespected and has the honor, with reference to *Note Verbale* No. 2343 of June 13, 1941, to communicate the following. This likewise constitutes a reply to the previous *Notes Verbales*.

*I. Distribution*

It is correct that the Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda felt compelled during the summer of 1940 to order the cessation of the distribution of the products of the Fox-Film AG., the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film AG. and the Paramount AG. in the territory of the Reich. This measure was brought about by the conduct of the companies themselves which, as the Embassy will be aware, long before the outbreak of the European war had begun producing films, whose anti-German character was unmistakable. At the time this fact was noted by German quarters with regret and was temporarily put up with. Whenever a new film of the type mentioned appeared, the Berlin agents of the producing firm in question were repeatedly reminded by the competent German authorities of the loss of the German market which was to be expected if their companies should continue to produce films directed against Germany. The number of these warnings amounted to more than a dozen before resort was had to the embargo, to the legal basis of which the Embassy itself refers.

In this connection, the fact that all or a large part of the American films intended for distribution within Germany had already been passed by the German censorship did not preclude the application of the law, since Art. I of the Second Law amending the German Motion Picture Law, June 26, 1935, expressly authorizes the Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda to forbid even a film which has previously been passed if he considers it necessary for urgent reasons of public welfare.

Since then there have been no indications of any slackening in the anti-German tendency of certain films of the companies mentioned. On the contrary, it has increased and it is particularly evident from reports of the past few months that these firms have further such films in preparation. The Foreign Office therefore regrets to have to state under these circumstances that the reasons which led to the prohibition still exist.

In the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia American film matters are being treated analogously.

## *II. Sequestration*

The Embassy in its *Notes Verbales* speaks erroneously of the seizure of American films. The measures taken by German quarters, however, were sequestration, the character of which the American Embassy has already had an opportunity to ascertain from the *Note Verbale* of the Foreign Office of January 18, 1941 (Kult K 11425/II) concerning the treatment of American film property in the occupied western territories, in view of which the repeated references in the Embassy's *Notes Verbales* "to take careful note of the property rights in question" are superfluous. Sequestration is a police measure which became necessary in view of the production of anti-German films by American film enterprises. It leaves the property rights untouched. The American film prints sequestered in the territory of the Reich and in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia or elsewhere are only subjected to an examination procedure in order to establish whether they have a tendency directed against Germany. Films found to be free of tendency are returned to the property of the individual companies. Disposition thereof will have to be subject to the regulations which have since been issued concerning the blocking of American property.

Responsibility for this development falls solely on the American film enterprises which seek to make a profit from the incitement of hatred between nations. As this activity is directed exclusively against Germany, it goes without saying that German quarters take steps against this scheme. In this connection, respect is granted to private property which is unobjectionable in a political sense.

BERLIN, October 9, 1941.

840.4061 Motion Pictures/205

*Memorandum by Mr. James W. Riddleberger of the Division of European Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] December 1, 1941.

The German note <sup>38a</sup> at least has the virtue of stating clearly why the American film companies were banned and that the reasons therefor still exist. It also draws a distinction between "seizure" and "sequestration" and promises the return of unobjectionable films subject to the German decree of June 24, 1941 respecting the blocking of American property in the Reich. I do not see that any intervention on the part of the Department would change this German attitude in any respect. The German Government was notified that all rights were reserved by the Berlin Embassy's note of June 13, 1941 to the German Foreign Office and, unless it is desired to write a note for the sake of the record, I see no point in pursuing this matter at this time.

It is suggested that a copy of the German note be sent without comment to the Hays organization.

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**CLOSING OF GERMAN CONSULAR AND OTHER OFFICES IN THE UNITED STATES AND OF SIMILAR AMERICAN OFFICES IN GERMANY AND GERMAN-OCCUPIED COUNTRIES <sup>39</sup>**

702.6211/1544

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

[WASHINGTON,] June 16, 1941.

In the absence from Washington of the German Chargé d'Affaires,<sup>40</sup> I requested the First Secretary of the Embassy, Dr. Tannenberg,<sup>40a</sup> to call upon me in his stead.

I handed to Dr. Tannenberg the note dated June 16<sup>41</sup> informing the German Government of the desire of the United States that German consular establishments and other agencies of the German Reich in the United States be closed prior to July 10 and that the officials and individuals connected with those consular establishments and agencies be withdrawn from the United States.

I asked Dr. Tannenberg to read the note in question, which he did.

I then stated to Dr. Tannenberg that he would doubtless have observed that the note did not apply to the German Embassy in Washington nor to the officials connected therewith.

<sup>38a</sup> *Supra.*<sup>39</sup> For similar developments with respect to Italy, see pp. 793 ff. For withdrawal of the American diplomatic mission in Paris, see pp. 512 ff.<sup>40</sup> Hans Thomsen.<sup>40a</sup> Wilhelm Tannenberg.<sup>41</sup> *Infra.*

I further stated that it was the intention of the Government of the United States to accord the most correct treatment to all of these German officials and employees prior to their departure and that it was not anticipated that they would be subject to any form of internment or restriction of their liberty, and that they would have until July 10 to liquidate their personal affairs.

I further stated that the Government of the United States would make every effort to obtain safe conducts from the British authorities so that these German citizens could return to Germany.

Dr. Tannenberg inquired whether the route of return to Germany would be subject to discussion between the two Governments. I stated that this question would be determined as a result of an exchange of views between the two Governments and that I would suggest that Dr. Thomsen or Dr. Tannenberg communicate with Mr. Atherton<sup>42</sup> with regard to this question.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

702.6211/15251a

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

[WASHINGTON,] June 16, 1941.

SIR: It has come to the knowledge of this Government that agencies of the German Reich in this country, including German consular establishments, have been engaged in activities wholly outside the scope of their legitimate duties. These activities have been of an improper and unwarranted character. They render the continued presence in the United States of those agencies and consular establishments inimical to the welfare of this country.

I am directed by the President to request that the German Government remove from United States territory all German nationals in anywise connected with the German Library of Information in New York, the German Railway and Tourist Agencies, and the Trans-Ocean News Service, and that each of these organizations and their affiliates shall be promptly closed.

I am also directed to request that all German consular officers, agents, clerks, and employees thereof of German nationality shall be removed from American territory and that the consular establishments likewise be promptly closed.

It is contemplated that all such withdrawals and closures shall be effected before July 10.

Accept [etc.]

For the Secretary of State:  
SUMNER WELLES

<sup>42</sup> Ray Atherton, Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs.



702.6211/1545

*The German Chargé (Thomsen) to the Secretary of State*<sup>43</sup>

[Translation]

YOUR EXCELLENCY: In your note of June 16th you have requested by order of the President of the United States that the German Reich remove from United States' territory all German nationals in any wise connected with the German Library of Information in New York, the German Railway and Tourist Agencies and the Transocean News Service, and that each of these organizations and their affiliates shall be promptly closed. You have further requested that all consular officers, agents, clerks and employees thereof of German nationality shall be removed from American territory, and that the consular establishments likewise be promptly closed.

As the reason for this measure you have given that it had come to the knowledge of the Government of the United States that agencies of the German Reich, including German consular establishments were continuously engaged in activities wholly outside the scope of their legitimate duties and that these activities had been of an improper and unwarranted character. Their activities would give to the continued presence of these agencies and consular establishments a character which would be inimical to the welfare of the country.

On behalf of my government I reject as entirely arbitrary and unfounded the accusations raised against the German agencies and consular establishments. The measure of the Government of the United States constitutes a violation of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Consular Rights of 1923.<sup>44</sup> Upon instruction of my Government I most vigorously protest against this procedure.

Accept [etc.]

THOMSEN

125.0062/299 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 19, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 9:45 p. m.]

2443. I was called to the Foreign Office at 6 o'clock this afternoon, German summer time, to speak with State Secretary Weizsaecker<sup>44a</sup> who handed to me a note in the first person signed by himself which reads in translation as follows:

"Mr. Chargé d'Affaires: On behalf of my Government I have the honor to inform you as follows:

"For a considerable time the conduct of the American consular authorities in the German Reich and in the areas occupied by the Ger-

<sup>43</sup> Handed to the Under Secretary of State on June 18.<sup>44</sup> Signed at Washington December 8, 1923, *Foreign Relations, 1923*, vol. II, p. 29.<sup>44a</sup> Ernst von Weizsäcker.

man troops has given cause for serious complaint. The Foreign Office possesses extensive material to the effect that a number of these authorities have been guilty of machinations (*machenschaften*) injurious to the State and of an illicit (*unerlaubt*) information service, and have thus acted in a manner entirely incompatible with the duties incumbent upon them toward the country of which they are guests. The Reich Government therefore finds itself compelled to request the Government of the United States of America to take the necessary steps in order that all American officers and all American employees of the consular establishments of the United States in the German Reich as well as in Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, the occupied part of France, in Serbia and in the parts of Greece occupied by German troops may be withdrawn from these areas not later than July 15th 1941 and that the consular establishments may be closed.

"Moreover the Reich Government has ascertained that employees of the American Express Company in the German Reich and in the occupied areas have conducted themselves in a manner contrary to the interests of the German Reich. The Reich Government must therefore request that the same procedure be followed not later than July 15th 1941 with respect to the offices of the American Express Company in the aforementioned areas and to all its employees so far as they are citizens of the United States."

Weizsaecker added orally that all necessary arrangements would be made by the German authorities to permit our consular personnel to depart from Germany and the German-occupied territories within the allotted time and suggested that officers of the Embassy consult the Protocol Section of the Foreign Office with regard to the details of these arrangements. He added that the Consular Section of this Mission would have to cease all contact with the German authorities and that all consular matters requiring such contact would have to be handled by the Embassy proper through the accepted diplomatic channels.

MORRIS

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125.0062/299 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, June 20, 1941—7 p. m.

1734. Your 2443, June 19, 7 p. m. Please address a note as follows to the German Minister for Foreign Affairs:

"Under instructions from my Government, I have the honor to advise you as follows in reply to the Ministry's note of June 19, 1941: The Government of the United States of America categorically rejects the allegations that American consular officials have been guilty of improper activities or that they have acted in a manner incompatible with their duties.

"With respect to the request made in the note under reference, my Government is giving appropriate instructions to effect the withdrawal by July 15, 1941 of all American officers and all American

employees of the consular establishments in the German Reich and in Norway, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, the occupied parts of France, Yugoslavia, and in the parts of Greece under occupation by the German armed forces.”

HULL

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340.1115A/2055a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, June 26, 1941—7 p. m.

1790. As you have doubtless considered, it will be necessary for the Department, in view of the closure of the consulates in German-held territory, to address to the Embassy at Berlin for action whereabouts and welfare inquiries, authorizations remitting private funds for subsistence and repatriation purposes, and other communications which formerly have been sent to the consuls relating to the well-being of Americans in their respective districts. You will appreciate that the Department must continue to provide these humanitarian services at the request of Americans here for their American relatives and friends abroad so long as it is at all possible to do so. The Department hopes, therefore, that you will be able to undertake these services throughout the area from which the consular personnel is being withdrawn; and that, if necessary, you will be able to obtain the cooperation of the German authorities in this connection. In accepting requests for the services referred to the Department will advise the interested persons here of the situation and of the delay which may occur in obtaining replies from the Embassy. Any suggestions or recommendations which you may have to offer in this regard will be appreciatively received and considered by the Department.

WELLES

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[Arrangements were made for the German and Italian consular groups to sail on the American ship *West Point* leaving New York City July 15, 1941, for Lisbon, Portugal, with a safe-conduct pledge from the British, and for the American consular staffs from Germany, German-occupied territories, and Italy to arrive at Lisbon in time to embark on the *West Point* for its return voyage.]

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340.1115A/2159 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, August 12, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received 2:20 p. m.]

3149. With reference to the Department's telegram No. 1790 of June 26; 7 p. m., and other correspondence concerning the future consular work of this Mission, I can only present the following summary

of the Embassy's position with respect to services for Americans in Germany and German-occupied territories.

As far as contact with individual American citizens is concerned the following is the situation. Individuals residing in Germany proper are presumably free to travel to Berlin in so far as they are financially able to do so. In practice, however, such travel from points more than 3 or 4 hours distant by rail is distinctly difficult. Only a select minority are able to obtain berths in sleeping cars. Passenger services are cut to a fraction of their peace time frequency. Through trains are frequently so crowded that even passage through the aisles is impossible. In almost every train hundreds of people are forced to stand for many hours and often whole days or nights in the vestibules or corridors. Subsidiary railway services such as baggage checking, restaurant and hotel accommodations, etc., are reduced proportionately. Thus a journey of only 7 or 8 hours is often a difficult and formidable undertaking.

In no single instance are foreigners residing in occupied territories permitted to leave these territories and proceed to Germany without special permits from police or military authorities. These permits are granted only in the rarest of cases and the tendency thus far has been for this severity of these restrictions to increase as the war progressed. Even for the tiny fraction of American citizens in occupied territories who might succeed in getting permits to come to Germany, travel would present a tremendous problem. From many districts of Yugoslavia, Poland, the Baltic States, Norway, et cetera, travel facilities for civilians are practically nonexistent.

Mail communication within Germany is slow and not entirely certain. Between the occupied territories and Berlin conditions of mail communication are far worse and in many instances mail facilities do not really exist at all.

The transmission of funds in the [mail?] can be carried out in Germany proper with reasonable regularity although only through the observance of considerable red tape. Beyond the borders of the Reich proper such transmission is complicated and in many cases impossible.

The Embassy is unable to approach any governmental authority local or otherwise in the occupied areas or in Germany proper except the German Foreign Office. The Foreign Office itself is overburdened with wartime duties. Only in the rarest instances is it able [to take] action independently on its own responsibility. It is often separated by a whole series of intermediary administrative organs from the authorities which would alone be competent for a given requested action. In endeavoring to further the requests of this Mission the Foreign Office is handicapped by the general political situation as concerns Germany and the United States, the effects of which are

clearly visible in the unhelpful attitude of internal German authorities.

The Department will perceive from the foregoing that (1) this Mission will not be able to render effective service in the area from which the consular personnel has been withdrawn and (2) cannot count on German official support to this end save in exceptional circumstances where the aid of the Foreign Office may be enlisted.

MORRIS

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340.1115A/2193 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, August 20, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 4:17 p. m.]

3236. Reference Department's 1719 [1790], June 26, 7 p. m. and my 3149, August 12, 2 p. m. In the absence of postal or telegraph communications between Germany, German-occupied territory in Russia, the Baltic States and any of the Greek Islands, this Embassy is unable to take any action whatsoever on welfare and whereabouts inquiries concerning American residents in those territories. It is suggested therefore that persons in the United States requesting such services be informed that this Embassy has no means at its disposal of making the desired investigations and that all inquiries of this nature are futile at the present time.

MORRIS

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**REPRESENTATIONS BY THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT REGARDING AMERICANS PULLING DOWN THE GERMAN FLAG FROM THE CONSUL GENERAL'S OFFICES IN SAN FRANCISCO**

[For note of January 18, 1941, from the German Chargé protesting pulling down of the German flag from the Consulate General's offices in San Francisco and note of January 19, 1941, to the German Chargé expressing regret, see Department of State *Bulletin*, January 25, 1941, pages 108 and 109. In a further note of June 25, 1941, not printed, the Chargé was informed that a United States Navy enlisted man had been tried by a Navy court-martial for the offense, had been found guilty, and was serving an appropriate sentence.]

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**AMERICAN CLAIMS AGAINST GERMANY IN THE CASE OF THE SINKING OF THE AMERICAN SHIP "ROBIN MOOR" BY A GERMAN SUBMARINE**

[For President Roosevelt's address to Congress on June 20, 1941, and correspondence between the Department of State and the German Embassy regarding the sinking of the *Robin Moor*, see Department of State *Bulletin*, June 21, 1941, page 741, and *ibid.*, November 8, 1941, page 363.]

## GREECE

### THE AXIS WAR AGAINST GREECE<sup>1</sup>

#### I. Military Stalemate Between Italy and Greece; German Pressure on Greece; British Decision To Send Military Aid to Greece

740.0011 European War 1939/7423 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, January 4, 1941—5 p. m.  
[Received January 4—4: 42 p. m.]

21. At the Foreign Office press conference today in reply to a question as to the effect of the sending of German air forces to Italy it was stated that while naturally no statement could be given out on purely military matters "there was no change in formal German-Greek relations".

MORRIS

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740.0011 European War 1939/7490 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, January 7, 1941—1 p. m.  
[Received January 8—2: 20 a. m.]

6. My No. 4, January 4, 1 p. m.<sup>2</sup> The Department will have observed that Greek Army communiqués have recently been laconic in the extreme. In this connection Prince Peter, chief Greek liaison officer with the British forces, gave Major Baker<sup>3</sup> yesterday an estimate of the military situation in Albania which is considerably more pessimistic than anything of the kind yet received from Greek sources. He said that the Italians are now strongly resisting all along the line on fortified positions which the slowing up of Greek operations, owing to the bad weather and increasingly inadequate transport facilities, have given them time to prepare. He confirmed that the British bombing of Albanian ports has not been effective, giving as the reason that sufficient planes have not been available for mass attack, and estimated that the Italian Army in Albania now numbers upwards of 350,000

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<sup>1</sup> For previous correspondence concerning the Greco-Italian war, see *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. III, pp. 524 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

<sup>3</sup> Maj. Joseph K. Baker, Military Attaché in Greece.

men, approaching double its original strength. In addition he stated that Italian air operations are proving especially effective in the areas immediately behind the Greek front.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/7491: Telegram

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

BERLIN, January 7, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 9:49 p. m.]

48. My 21, January 4, 5 p. m. Over the week end rumors were in circulation in Berlin that British troops had landed on the Greek mainland and that German forces were passing through Bulgaria against the protest but without resistance from the Bulgarian Government. It is possible that these rumors were deliberately inspired for purposes of confusion. Following the receipt of a [apparent omission] Weizsaecker<sup>4</sup> called on the Greek Minister,<sup>4a</sup> stated that the Fuhrer<sup>5</sup> appreciated and reciprocated the greeting. He then inquired why the Greek Government had permitted the British to land troops in Greece. The Greek Minister denied the truth of this report stating that only British quartermaster and aviation units were assisting the Greek land forces. Weizsaecker indicated that the German Government was aware of, and not disturbed by, the presence of British aviation and supply services. To a question as to the origin of the report Weizsaecker made no reply except to suggest that the Minister inquire of his Government.

The Minister received from Athens a denial to his inquiry.

MORRIS

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740.0011 European War 1939/7577: Telegram

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

ROME, January 13, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received January 13—2:52 p. m.]

53. Embassy has received a report that during an audience which the Secretary of the Fascist Party in Albania had with the Duce<sup>6</sup> on January 9, the former tendered his resignation. The Duce insisted, however, that the Secretary retain his post adding that the present situation in Albania would soon undergo a change for the better as the Germans had promised to extend military aid.

PHILLIPS

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<sup>4</sup> Ernst von Weizsäcker, State Secretary in the German Foreign Office.

<sup>4a</sup> Alexandre Rizo-Rangabé.

<sup>5</sup> Adolf Hitler, German Chief of State.

<sup>6</sup> Benito Mussolini, Italian Prime Minister.

740.0011 European War 1939/7737 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, January 17, 1941—4 p. m.  
[Received January 19—8:35 a. m.]

25. The following is for the Secretary of the Navy from Colonel Donovan.<sup>7</sup>

No. 2. Am sending this personal note after consultation with Minister MacVeagh following discussions with the King, Metaxas<sup>8</sup> and Commander-in-Chief Papagos.

Metaxas fears that to anticipate Britain's strengthening her foothold here, Germany may attempt to seize Salonika which attempt Yugoslavia and Bulgaria may not resist.

General Wavell<sup>9</sup> has asked me to say that he has drawn and is drawing heavily on his resources to aid Greece but due to shipping difficulties and to his existing commitments he cannot at this moment do more.

Metaxas says that the name of President Roosevelt exercises great influence throughout the Balkans and that anything which would stress his interest and assurance of support in maintaining position of Greece would vitalize the resistance of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria and probably prevent the German attempt.

More particularly there is needed now for the Greek Army, shoes, socks, uniforms, Ford ton or ton and a half trucks, donkeys of 11 hands high, mountain guns with ammunition, and aircraft.<sup>10</sup>

All here agree that if these supplies or any part could be sent to Greece direct by the President it would give renewed confidence to Greece and would add greatly in maintaining their position not only as a line of resistance but as a line of departure. [Donovan.]

MACVEAGH

740.0011 European War 1939/7722 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, January 17, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received January 19—8:39 a. m.]

26. General Wavell and Air Marshal Longmore of the Middle East Command have been conferring here for the past few days with

<sup>7</sup> Col. William J. Donovan, unofficial observer for the Secretary of the Navy in the Near East and Southeast Europe, December 1940–March 1941.

<sup>8</sup> John Metaxas, Prime Minister of Greece.

<sup>9</sup> Gen. Sir Archibald P. Wavell, Commanding General of the British Forces in the Middle East.

<sup>10</sup> For correspondence on the subject of American aid to Greece, see pp. 669 ff.



the Greek leaders and the chiefs of the Royal Air Force and the British Military Mission to Greece. Topics of the Conference have included, according to reliable information, not only the immediate problem of furnishing army supplies to this country from Egypt but also the possibility of combined operations against Germany either defensive or offensive according as circumstances develop in the near future. As regards the former, results appear to have been largely negative owing partly to the lack of transportation facilities at the moment. Regarding the latter, however, Greek caution seems to have yielded at least to the extent of permitting British reconnaissance visits to Salonika hitherto not allowed for fear of German suspicion and possible reprisal. Furthermore, I understand that a beginning of active military cooperation is under discussion to take the form of British administrative control to increase efficiency in transport and technical services and to facilitate greater and wider efforts on this front if and when undertaken.

British pressure on Greece to adopt a more determined attitude toward risking a war with Germany is being reinforced by a growing belief here in the wholeheartedness and future overwhelming effectiveness of American aid, but its success at this time will doubtless also depend on the results obtained by the present British Military Mission to Turkey which I am informed is endeavoring to secure active participation in the war on the part of that country.<sup>11</sup>

From American correspondents just returned from Crete I learn that the British have now a full division on that island with much motorized equipment in addition to aviation and antiaircraft troops.

MACVEAGH

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740.00118 European War 1939/66 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, January 18, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received January 19—5:40 p. m.]

28. Colonel Donovan has been here for the past 3 days. He has been staying with the British Minister <sup>11a</sup> but I have presented him to the King and the Premier and he has kept me fully informed of his conversations with them and with the British authorities. In a short time he has acquired a remarkably full and clear conception of the situation here, particularly as regards the question of future Anglo-Greek cooperation in this region, and I am glad to report that he has successfully impressed the Greek leaders with the seriousness of Amer-

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<sup>11</sup> For correspondence regarding the attitude of Turkey, see vol. III, pp. 814 ff.

<sup>11a</sup> Sir Charles Michael Palairot.

ica's intention to back up the democracies and the overwhelming support being given to the leadership of President Roosevelt in this matter.

Colonel Donovan is leaving for Sofia today and will proceed thence to Belgrade because of the belief of the British Minister and military authorities here in which I concur that his visit to those capitals, if it is to realize its full possibilities, should not be delayed, but he plans to return here for a trip to the Albanian front before going on to Turkey.

Following the despatch of my telegram number 26 of yesterday the Premier has informed Colonel Donovan that he is now "sure" the Germans will come south and the latter expects developments by March 1 on present indications. General Metaxas has consented not only to allow British reconnaissance of the north of Greece but has agreed to and even advised the preparation of a British expedition to Salonika to be put in motion the instant the Germans cross the Danube. In this connection the British Ambassador at Moscow <sup>11b</sup> has reported to his Government according to information received by the British Legation here that it is becoming less and less likely that Russia will interfere with such a German move in the belief that it would be aimed rather against British than Soviet interests.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/7915 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, January 25, 1941—8 p. m.  
[Received January 26—5: 52 p. m.]

40. The Military Attaché reports that there appears to be no material change in the situation along the front. In spite of reported counter-attacks by the Italians north of Klissoura, the Greeks are consolidating and holding the positions gained in this area and are continuing to threaten the Tepeleni salient. Their morale remains high. There are Italian concentrations north of Pogradetz but Greek intelligence authorities betray no uneasiness being convinced that the Italians are incapable of launching a sustained attack on any worthwhile scale.

In addition Major Baker stated after a personal visit to the docks that two more large ships of about 10,000 tons each which have arrived at Piraeus brought several hundred new one and one-half ton Chevrolet and Ford trucks of Canadian manufacture for the Greek Army as well as general supplies and provisions.

Please inform War Department.

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<sup>11b</sup> Sir Stafford Cripps.

In recent conversations both the Director General and the Political Director of the Foreign Office <sup>12</sup> have assured me that formal relations with the German Government continue unchanged. The Political Director, however, knocked on wood as he spoke. The Greek authorities have taken no cognizance of the German reconnaissance reported in my telegram No. 31, January 20, 8 p. m.,<sup>13</sup> and the Germans have made no official reference here to the allegation broadcast over the British radio that the assassin of a German official in Bucharest was a Greek. In this latter connection the Political Director stated categorically that the allegation is false and again expressed Greek inability to comprehend the mentality of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

There are signs of disappointment among the British authorities here as a result of the staff talks in Ankara referred to in my telegram No. 26, January 17, 6 p. m. On the other hand the Turkish Ambassador appears well satisfied. While professing to have no other information than what has appeared in the press he has just told me that in the Turkish view England should hasten to finish with the Italians in Libya in order to face developments here with more adequate forces and stressed the inadvisability of "provoking" Germany so long as it remains at all possible that the latter's concentrations in Rumania are defensively designed.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/7960 : Telegram

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

[Extracts]

ROME, January 27, 1941—10 p. m.

[Received January 28—8:20 a. m.]

126. My 102, January 22, 7 p. m.<sup>13</sup> According to source heretofore reliable, the only definite decision reached at the Berchtesgaden meeting <sup>14</sup> was for German military support in Albania to ensure prompt and successful conclusion of war against Greece. Strong counter-offensive to be launched soon as weather permits; large numbers Italian troops being called for service Albania, and German soldiers already on way to Italian embarkation ports.

The reference to German military support in Albania is unexpected as our information up to now has been that German intervention in that sector was unlikely.

<sup>12</sup> Andre Delmouzos and Leon Melas, respectively.

<sup>13</sup> Not printed.

<sup>14</sup> Meeting of Hitler and Mussolini at Berchtesgaden, January 19, 1941.

Military Attaché is cabling on reported arrival during last few days of two divisions German troops.

PHILLIPS

740.0011 European War 1939/7994: Telegram

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

ROME, January 29, 1941—4 p. m.  
[Received January 29—3:13 p. m.]

134. A member of the German Embassy staff just returned from Berlin confidentially informed a friend of mine who is the same source on which my 126 was based that concentration of German troops in Rumania is for sole purpose of attack on Greece through Bulgaria. He said "the situation in Greece must be cleaned up". He added it was also purpose of German High Command to send to Libya German reinforcements.

This same German admitted the mistake made at commencement of war in that the German and Italian General Staffs, although represented on a mixed commission, had actually been functioning separately. Hitler had taken position at outset that he had no need of Mussolini's military cooperation with result that German High Command had given little information to Italians. When Italy entered war Mussolini adopted same principle of independent action with result that Germans had not been aware of weaknesses in Italian Army, Navy and Air Force. Now they are fully aware of it and have sent high German experts into every branch of Italian military forces. In addition, so-called "mixed commission" which previously never functioned as unit will hereafter function in this manner although there will be no one supreme commander.

Same German official added that Berlin had no use for any member Italian Government except Mussolini himself.

PHILLIPS

740.0011 European War 1939/8050: Telegram

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

BERLIN, January 31, 1941—4 p. m.  
[Received February 1—3:20 a. m.]

354. In the course of my visit of condolence over the death of General Metaxas<sup>14a</sup> the Greek Minister here informed me that German officials, both military and civil, were utilizing every opportunity and contact to assert to him the precarious situation of Greece, specifically

<sup>14a</sup> General Metaxas died January 29, 1941.

alleging that American help would not be forthcoming in time to be effective and that American planes and other armament were inferior to German.

The German officials had not, I understand, gone so far in their representations to him as to suggest that the Greek Government endeavor to make peace with Italy but it was obvious that they hoped he would believe and repeat to Athens these defeatist ideas.

MORRIS

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868.002/258 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, February 3, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received February 4—8 a. m.]

59. Greek morale has recovered quickly from the shock of General Metaxas' death, the spirit of united and determined patriotism to which he gave expression being still very much alive. He was buried last Friday to the accompaniment of huge crowds but with few signs of grief, honored as a great man who deserved well of his country but in his capacity as dictator unregretted. Dismay over the loss of his military talents has been replaced with a curious confidence that the Greek troops who are still achieving successes will not lack for leadership, the King and General Papagos being at present the chief beneficiaries of this feeling.

In keeping with the prevailing psychology the unexpected appointment of Mr. Korizis<sup>15</sup> has been loyally accepted by the political leaders for the time being and thus the King has been spared certain difficulties previously foreseen as inevitable. His selection of a man without political ambitions or partisan backing may help further to postpone contention. But the most important aspect of the appointment would seem to be that it marks the passing of the dictatorship into the hands of the monarch who in this instance has no use for it or for its Fascist trappings. If the war permits, this new situation may later develop in the direction of a restoration of parliamentary government such as the King personally prefers. Meanwhile much of the recent regime's illiberality, if also perhaps some of its efficiency, may be expected to go by the board, though early changes in government personnel and policy will doubtless be avoided.

In regard to Mr. Korizis, the King has stated privately that the appointment was his own idea, Mr. Metaxas having always refused to discuss the question of a successor and that it took considerable persuasion on his part to secure acceptance. In addition he assured my informant that the new Premier will not be swayed by any German

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<sup>15</sup> Alexander Korizis, newly appointed Greek Prime Minister.

influences which may attempt to exploit the present situation. In this connection the past reputation of Mr. Korizis as Germanophile is no more than on a par with that of Mr. Metaxas and the Royal Family itself. In regard to such matters as the youth movement, education in general and philanthropy, both foreign and domestic, I already know that his ideas are far closer to the King's than were those of his predecessor. Following recent precedent he has assumed the portfolios of War, Navy and Aviation as well as those of Foreign Affairs and Education but this may be only temporary as he has no pretensions to being a soldier. On the other hand, he is a prodigious worker and an able and respected administrator. He numbers friends among both the Venizelists and the Royalists. Businessmen trust him. His knowledge of social and economic conditions in Greece is unrivaled. Finally, it may be significant of his attitude toward the premiership that he has appointed no one to fill his previous post of Governor of the National Bank. Zavitsianos, ex-Minister of Finance, has been made governing director but the post of governor remains open for Mr. Korizis to return to in due time.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/8174: Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, February 7, 1941—noon.

[Received 12:45 p. m.]

53. The Greek Minister <sup>15a</sup> is worried about the attacks on Greece by the German press. Since it is the first time these have occurred in anything like their present intensity he fears it is a prelude to action.

The British Minister <sup>15b</sup> informs me that much work at high speed is being done in Bulgaria to widen and strengthen the road to and through the Struma gorge leading to Greece. The British Military Attaché says that he is packing preparatory to leaving this country, the chief of the British Intelligence Service here says facetiously he is 50% certain that the Germans will pass through Bulgaria and 50% more than certain.

The Foreign Minister <sup>15c</sup> alone maintains an attitude of tempered optimism.

I have seen personally some of the thoroughness of the German preparations for passage through Bulgaria. It is still possible that they are to be used only as a threat against Greece and Turkey. But it is also certain that should the threat fail German troops could

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<sup>15a</sup> Panayotis Pipinélis.

<sup>15b</sup> George William Rendel.

<sup>15c</sup> Ivan Vladimir Popoff, Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

reach the Bulgarian-Greek border through Bulgaria, according to the British Military Attaché, in 10 days or less.

Repeated to Ankara and Athens.

EARLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/8221 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, February 8, 1941—5 p. m.

Received February 9—4:33 p. m.

63. Telegrams Nos. 53 and 54 of February 7 from Sofia.<sup>16</sup> Both the Brazilian Minister <sup>16a</sup> and the Political Director of the Foreign Office told me this morning that they have no definite information to justify immediate alarm but they are nevertheless apprehensive. According to the Brazilian Minister an attack on Bulgaria by Turkey in the event of a German drive in this direction is still only a matter of probability, and he expressed the hope that Colonel Donovan may have been able to stiffen the latter's attitude. In this connection, however, the Turkish Military Attaché told Major [Baker?] today that Turkey now feels herself menaced by both Germany and Russia which again has a considerable force on the Caucasus front. It is his idea that Germany will start advancing into Bulgaria soon, and that the Bulgarian forces will then be used to block any Turkish move while the Germans take Salonika and probably all Greece. On the other hand, some other competent observers here, including the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs <sup>16b</sup> with whom I recently had a long conversation on this matter, believe it still possible that the Germans intend only to establish a military control in Bulgaria similar to that which they now enjoy in Rumania, to make the establishment of an eastern front by the British impracticable, and to preserve Balkan economy for themselves intact.

Repeat to Ankara and Sofia.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/8329½ : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, February 12, 1941—noon.

[Received February 13—8:30 a. m.]

71. In a long conversation in an air raid shelter last night the King told me he regards an early German attack against Greece as over-

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<sup>16</sup> Latter not printed.

<sup>16a</sup> Julio Augusto Barboza-Carneiro.

<sup>16b</sup> Nicholas Mavroudis, Greek Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

whelmingly probable and to oppose such a stab in the back she now has available only three divisions. In connection with the arrangement with Metaxas reported in my telegram 28, January 18, 6 p. m., he said the British have apparently made no definite plans and in reply to the repeated telegraphic appeals from the Greek Government during the past few days they have so far proposed only the sending of one artillery regiment to Salonika. Turkey's attitude remains undetermined and Yugoslavia shows "the lethargy of a rabbit faced by the snake which will devour it". Nevertheless he said Greece will resist whatever the odds because to do so is in keeping with honor, loyalty and the country's spirit. Should Germany before attacking propose that Greece make peace with Italy the answer will be that Greece must consult her ally; should Germany offer any other compromise the reply will be refusal since acceptance would only mean eventual enslavement as in Rumania's case.

The King said that the Greek plan now is to carry on against the Italians to a shorter and more defensible line which can be held with only a part of the forces now in Albania thus releasing the rest to oppose the Germans. The line in view is that of the Skoumbi River and the immense effort which must be made to reach it will be undertaken in the next few days and be "the most critical action of the war for Greece." I take it this plan represents a very recent decision as he requested the completest secrecy and added that outside the staff he had talked about it so far only with the Prime Minister.

No less than Finland<sup>17</sup> this country is fighting in civilization's front line and she faces even far greater odds today than those she met so stirringly last October. Furthermore she is doing so with no assurance of effective aid. I trust our authorities will not be insensible of such heroic resolution. Greece's failure to obtain any planes whatever from the United States of America after 3 months of effort has been heartbreaking.<sup>18</sup> The statement of the British Purchasing Commission on December 12 that the British had already 400 planes assisting Greece (see Department's instruction 778, December 19<sup>19</sup>) when in fact she had no more than 32 (see section 2, my 348, December 6<sup>20</sup>) is shocking. Greece's sands are running out while this kind of thing goes on. The King said to me last night with admirable restraint "I realize England's desperate need for supplies but the 30 or 60 planes that we need quite as desperately won't break the British Empire."

MACVEAGH

<sup>17</sup> For correspondence on the Soviet-Finnish war, see vol. I, pp. 1 ff.

<sup>18</sup> For correspondence on this subject, see pp. 669 ff.

<sup>19</sup> Not printed.

<sup>20</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. III, p. 569, last paragraph of telegram.



740.00119 European War 1939/662: Telegram

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

ANKARA, February 12, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 7:45 p. m.]

26. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. Information has come to me from what I believe to be sure source that on January 27, Von Papen<sup>21</sup> sent King of Sweden letter suggesting good offices in bringing about peace between Greece and Italy and that negative reply was received yesterday.

MACMURRAY

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740.0011 European War 1939/8392: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, February 14, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received February 15—6:45 a. m.]

74. The Bulgarian Minister<sup>21a</sup> told my Brazilian colleague yesterday that if Germany insists on the entry or passage of troops Bulgaria cannot refuse. He also said he is informed that the Turks have given categorical assurances to Von Papen that they will not fight unless attacked. The Bulgarian press is again agitating the question of an Aegean exit. During the past few days numerous planes identified as German have repeatedly reconnoitered Greek territory east of Salonika.

The Polish Minister tells me he has received information from what he regards as reliable sources in Central Europe in regard to Germany's plans for the spring campaign. According to this information Bulgaria is to be occupied militarily in the same manner as Rumania, and Yugoslavia reduced diplomatically to the present status of Hungary, the general aim being to close Germany's back entrance against the British completely and definitively. Operations which may eventually extend to the seizure of Salonika and the Straits will begin this month with the entrance of German troops into Bulgaria on a scale calculated to crush all possible opposition. The attack on Great Britain is scheduled for May. So far as Greece is concerned she may be offered a chance to survive if she will abandon the British Alliance, make peace with Italy and adopt a new government favorable to the Axis.

MACVEAGH

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<sup>21</sup> Franz von Papen, German Ambassador in Turkey.

<sup>21a</sup> Constantin Watchoff.

740.0011 European War 1939/8474: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, February 18, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 10:05 p. m.]

81. The Turkish Ambassador <sup>21b</sup> tells me that following the publication of the new Turco-Bulgarian Declaration <sup>22</sup> he had a long talk last night with the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs during which the latter repeatedly asserted the Greek Government's complete confidence that Turkey will enter the war if Bulgaria allows the passage of German troops. In talking with the Ambassador he qualified the declaration as "insignificant and ill-judged", and ascribed it to British policy, which he declared has always erred in handling Bulgaria. He said he believes it might have served a useful purpose 3 months ago, but can now only lead to misunderstanding and controversy and that he has informed his Government of his attitude as well as of the Greek reaction. The Director General of the Foreign Office has just expressed to me substantially similar views. He believes the Declaration to be an effort in the right direction at the wrong time and that the effect on Bulgaria may actually be to weaken, rather than stiffen whatever resistance she may offer to German pressure. He pointed out, however, that Turkey's obligations to Greece and Great Britain are expressly not affected by the Declaration and he, therefore, does not believe that the situation has been essentially altered in any way.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/8561: Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Fish) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, February 20, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received February 23—8:47 a. m.]

82. Foreign Minister Eden <sup>23</sup> and General Dill <sup>24</sup> arrived at Cairo last night by air. Donovan, who had delayed his departure at the request of the British in order to meet them, tells me that he talked with them and General Wavell last night and was informed that all three intend proceeding to Turkey and Greece in an attempt to work out a joint effort in the Balkans. Donovan states that he submitted his appraisal of the strategic situation in this area (see my telegram No. 81, February 20, 3 p. m. <sup>25</sup>) to them and that they and Wavell con-

<sup>21b</sup> Enis Akayayen.

<sup>22</sup> Signed at Ankara, February 17, 1941, reaffirming policies of friendship and nonaggression; for text, see Martens, *Nouveau recueil général de traités*, 3e sér., tome 39 (Leipzig, 1941), p. 357.

<sup>23</sup> Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>24</sup> Gen. Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

<sup>25</sup> Not printed.

curred in his conclusions and stressed particularly the necessity of airplanes and mechanized equipment to make any effort effective.

FISH

740.0011 European War 1939/8544 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, February 21, 1941—noon.  
[Received February 22—7:25 a. m.]

84. The Government-controlled Greek press has been noticeably silent on the question of the Turkish-Bulgarian Declaration and the public is inclined to regard this as confirmation of uncomfortable and growing suspicions of the Turkish attitude.

The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs said to me last night that while he has told the German Minister that the declaration is a praiseworthy step in the cause of Balkan peace he really regards it as a public notice that the Germans may enter Bulgaria without risk of complications and thus as a defeat for British diplomacy probably engineered at least in part by the Germans themselves (see my telegram number 74, February 14, 2 p. m.). On the other hand he thinks it does not essentially alter the actual situation since he believes Turkey never intended going beyond her existing obligations in any case despite the bellicose pronouncement of a portion of her press. He is still of the opinion that she can be counted on to fulfill these obligations but clings to the idea (see my telegram No. 63, February 8, 5 p. m.) that Germany will refrain from making this necessary and will rest content with the occupation of Bulgaria as a checkmate to British hopes of entering Europe by the back door. Once established in Bulgaria he said Germany may bring pressure on Greece to make peace with Italy but to attack Greece directly would bring Turkey in and give the British just the chance they are looking for to create an Eastern front. Rumors recently disseminated by radio that the Germans have already begun to press the Greeks to compose their difficulties with the Italians are without foundation.

MACVEAGH

740.0011 European War 1939/8564 : Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Fish) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, February 22, 1941—5 p. m.  
[Received February 23—9:05 a. m.]

86. Referring to the Legation's No. 82, February 20, 5 p. m., in a conference of Eden, Dill and Wavell yesterday certain tentative

decisions were reached which will be submitted to Greece and Turkey. Halifax <sup>26</sup> is as yet unaware of their proposals but will be advised when the final decision is taken.

In considering these problems the British chiefs have consulted Donovan who states that the British are seriously perturbed by the shortage of equipment and stress particularly the vital need for shipping. In this latter connection Donovan was specifically requested by Eden to have transmitted a message to the President of which the following is a paraphrase :

(1) It is evident that, regardless of how the situation in South-eastern Europe may develop, any British effort in this area is certain to place a heavy additional strain on British shipping resources which are already severely limited.

(2) The only way to meet requirements is by using ships arriving in convoys from England, inasmuch as no shipping is available locally to this extent east. As a consequence the arrival of subsequent urgently needed supplies is delayed.

(3) Any action which might be taken by the United States with a view to making neutral or other shipping available at an early date would constitute an important contribution to Britain's war effort.

I gather that the circumstances of Donovan's being here at this time may have played an important part in the decisions which the British have taken.

FISH

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740.0011 European War 1939/8561 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Greece (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, February 25, 1941—10 p. m.

69. Your No. 93, February 24, 7 p. m.<sup>27</sup> The Legation at Cairo reported on February 22 <sup>27a</sup> that Foreign Minister Eden and Generals Dill and Wavell intended to visit Turkey and Greece soon to submit tentative plans which have been worked out for joint effort in the Balkans. The Department will appreciate receiving any information you may be able to furnish regarding the conference between the British authorities named and the Greek Government.

The Legation at Sofia has been informed that the Greek Government will not yet allow British troops on the mainland of Greece, in the hope of avoiding a conflict with Germany. The Legation is also informed that considerable British forces in Crete are ready to move to the Bulgarian frontier. Any information you may obtain in this regard will be appreciated.

HULL

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<sup>26</sup> Viscount Halifax, British Ambassador in the United States.

<sup>27</sup> Not printed.

<sup>27a</sup> Telegram No. 86, *supra*.

740.0011 European War 1939/8660: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, February 26, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received February 27—7:40 a. m.]

102. The Prime Minister told me this morning that he is "more than sure" that German military occupation of Bulgaria will involve an attack on Greece. He said that the Axis is finding the Albanian situation a "cancer" which cannot be cured by the Italians alone and while no formal German demands have yet been made on this country there have been plenty of indications that such may be expected to which Greece will react exactly as she did to the Italian ultimatum. She will resist alone if necessary but he feels sure the British will send help and that Greek resistance will give them the time to do so. Furthermore, he believes that Turkey's obligations to Great Britain will bring her into the war under these circumstances and added that news from Yugoslavia during the last few days has been definitely encouraging.

MACVEAGH

740.0011 European War 1939/8664: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, February 27, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received February 28—12:50 a. m.]

106. Department's 69, February 25. The King has given me the following information begging me to keep it absolutely secret which I have promised to do.

Wavell, Dill and Eden did come to Greece last Saturday but Greece is not admitting it and very few in the Government know it. They are expected to come again after visiting Turkey and this time their arrival will be open but treated by the Greeks as if only recently decided on. The reason for this caution of course is the situation vis-à-vis Germany and the fact that the British trio did talk military plans here preparatory to similar discussions in Ankara. The British plans at present so far as Greece is concerned include the sending of not more than 3 divisions, and these from Egypt, not Crete, where the King estimates British strength as only about 2 infantry regiments plus accessories. A part of the forces promised are already en route to the Piraeus and will be called here auxiliary to the air force in case Germany inquires.

The King confirmed that Greek caution regarding the sending of British troops to Salonika continues but gave the added reason that in the present state of uncertainty regarding Yugoslavia any military concentration at that point would be folly. He said the Greek de-

fensive line on the northern border is designed to hold against Bulgaria but cannot be expected to withstand German attack. An alternative position just north and east of Salonika running approximately from Lake Doiran to Amphipolis might be considered if the Yugoslav Army could be counted on to protect the northern end where a lightning operation would be feasible for strong forces. But while the Yugoslavs have informed Greece that they consider Salonika in their zone of vital interest and it is possible that they might intervene for that reason such information is not definite enough to serve as a basis for military preparations. Unless and until active Yugoslav cooperation is certain therefore Salonika must be regarded as lost in case of German attack and the Greeks are now considering the defense of the ranges west of the Vardar plain where a mountain barrier extends continuously from the sea to the Yugoslav border.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/8730 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Egypt (Hare) to the Secretary of State*

[Extracts]

CAIRO, March 1, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received March 2—4:40 p. m.]

100. Following from the Military Attaché for the War Department.

"1824. British intelligence estimates 30 German divisions, 7 of which are mechanized, are now along the Rumanian-Bulgarian frontier.

. . . . .

During the Tobruk attack Churchill<sup>28</sup> ordered Wavell to end operations in Cyrenaica and to plan air expeditionary force to Greece. Wavell flew to Athens for conference with the King who refused further British aid unless they provided at least 3 corps. This Wavell could not then offer. He returned to Cairo and cabled Churchill he was not wanted in Greece and that he proposed to clear the Italians from Africa. Plans to capture Tripoli were then made.

Upon arrival in Cairo about February 20, Eden, Dill and Wavell sat in continuous conference. Colonel Donovan attended. It was decided to intervene in Greece using all available means. Wavell's choice to command the expedition was O'Connor but Churchill appointed Wilson.<sup>29</sup>

Following Cairo conference Wilson [*Wavell?*], Eden and Dill flew to Athens. Eden persuaded the King to authorize British intervention.

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<sup>28</sup> Winston S. Churchill, British Prime Minister.

<sup>29</sup> Lt. Gen. Sir Henry Maitland Wilson.

On January 14 there were in Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Palestine and Greece, but excluding South African forces, a total of 200,000 soldiers and 12,800 officers in the British forces. Unofficial estimates indicate British strength is increasing in the Middle East at the rate of 20,000 monthly. From this force the following will be sent to Greece: 2 Australian divisions; 1 Australian division less 2 regiments; 1 New Zealand division; the 2d and 7th armored divisions; 1 Indian division from the Sudan; the 6th British division now being formed. Movement to embarkation points is now under way at top speed. At Benghazi there remain 2 Australian regiments, 5 native battalions, an artillery detachment, and a mixed tank force manning captured material.

Air force squadrons remaining in the Cyrenaica area are 2 fighter, 1 bomber and 1 cooperation. The number of squadrons now in Greece will be approximately doubled by the use of all available squadrons rushing Egypt and the Sudan.

Wilson traveling incognito will fly to Athens immediately. He proposes to have an operating force in Greece in a short time. Wavell appears optimistic; claims he wants only a small fast-moving hard-striking force which can move by land to secure Salonica. Motor and mechanized units will have priority in transit.

The vulnerable water route renders this expedition highly hazardous. British hope for surprise lies in the rapidity of movement which they are determined to attain. Believe they have a switch plan to seize the Dodecanese should landing in Greece be denied.

The British feel the forces available are sufficient to justify the risk and that the favorable reaction of public opinion toward their desperate attempt to help Greece will justify any hazard."

HARE

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740.0011 European War 1939/8710: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 1, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received March 2—10:08 a. m.]

398. The German source known to the Department told me last night that the German Government had recently proposed through the German Minister at Athens <sup>29a</sup> to the Greek Government a discontinuance of the hostilities between Greece and Italy on the basis of the withdrawal by the Greek forces to the former Albanian frontier. In return Germany would undertake not to occupy Greece and to guarantee the frontiers of Greece as they existed prior to the outbreak of the Italo-Greek war.

STEINHARDT

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<sup>29a</sup> Victor Prinz zu Erbach-Schönberg.

740.0011 European War 1939/8719 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 2, 1941—10 p. m.  
[Received March 3—7:48 a. m.]

402. A German who has previously been a reliable source of information and who arrived yesterday from Berlin stated to a member of my staff that in his opinion the German invasion of Greece via Bulgaria was imminent and that the Grecian-Italian war would be brought to an end within a month. He added that he did not believe Turkey would take any action. He also expressed the opinion that a German invasion of Greece would be motivated not by a desire to help Italy but by the necessity of protecting the Rumanian oil fields from British aerial attacks based on airfields in continental Greece.

If the foregoing information is accurate it must be assumed that the reputed proposal, referred to in my 398, March 1, 6 p. m. was rejected.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/8761 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 3, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received March 4—10:10 a. m.]

113. Mr. Eden arrived here yesterday accompanied by Air Vice Marshal Elmhurst [*Elmhirst?*] and General Mallabry [*Mallaby?*] of the War Office and was immediately received by the King. I saw him this morning at his invitation and afterwards talked to the Under Minister for Foreign Affairs and my Yugoslav colleague.

Mr. Eden said he thinks the immediate German aim is to "subdue" Greece either by threats or by invasion with the idea of taking over her territory for the establishment of air bases but that even if she is successful in this it will not affect the war seriously since Great Britain is rapidly cleaning up in the Middle East and will be "sitting pretty in Africa."

He is satisfied that Greece will hold firm and indicated that Britain will give her all the support possible, adding that he believes it will take about a month for military action to develop on the Greek frontier on account of the state of Balkan roads. To my remark "you are sending reinforcements", he said "I am not saying anything about that to anybody, not even to the United States or to the British



Minister in Athens. We are treating the matter as reinforcements to the air force." (See my telegram 106 of February 27, 3 p. m.)

He expressed himself as delighted with his reception in Turkey and stated that the Turks are both loyal and fully aware of the German menace to themselves but said they have neither the force nor the equipment to undertake offensive action. If Greece is attacked he thinks that they may possibly declare war and give the British the use of their air fields and other facilities but stated that Germany's main effort in the Balkans will be directed against them and a drive to Salonika will be only a flank affair. He himself does not concur in this view but said it is a possible one and must be taken into account in judging the Turkish attitude. He said Sir Stafford Cripps reported Russia unlikely to make any move at present.

I communicated to Mr. Eden the substance of Mr. Lane's<sup>30</sup> number 134, March 1,<sup>31</sup> and he said he had run across the same situation in Ankara and that Saraçoğlu<sup>32</sup> had laughingly remarked "Every time I see the Yugoslav these days there seems to be a *malentendu*; the next time will be *malentendu* number 4." Mr. Eden said he believes the trouble is that the Yugoslavs have not made up their minds what to do in the case of an attack on Salonika. He called in the British Minister to Yugoslavia, now in Athens, and they agreed that an attempt should be made to get the Turks and the Yugoslavs together through the good offices of the British representatives in Ankara and Belgrade. In conclusion he remarked, "I believe that Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia will all eventually come into the fight but there will be a lot of slipping and slipping before that happens."

I found Mavroudis very depressed. Without knowing that I had just seen the British Foreign Minister he volunteered that he could tell me nothing about him except that despite his cheerful optimism his trip to Turkey had actually established only one new fact, and that a bad one for Greece, namely that the latter can expect no military aid from the Turks. Later the Yugoslav Minister<sup>33</sup> also told me that he believed Mr. Eden's trip had not been a success and showed himself even more defeatist than ever, saying that it is now too late to do anything against the Germans whose domination of Europe has been certain ever since the collapse of France.

MACVEAGH

<sup>30</sup> Arthur Bliss Lane, American Minister in Yugoslavia.

<sup>31</sup> Not printed.

<sup>32</sup> Sükrü Saraçoğlu, Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>33</sup> Alexandre Voukhtchevitch.

740.0011 European War 1939/8763: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 3, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received March 4—9:20 a. m.]

114. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs requested me this morning to ask you in strict confidence whether, in case Greece should find it necessary to sever diplomatic relations with Rumania and Bulgaria, the United States would be disposed to undertake representation of Greek interests in those countries.

Regarding Greco-German relations the Under Secretary said these still remain ostensibly normal and that he expects demands of some sort will be made through diplomatic channels before any break occurs. He said that a portion of public opinion here especially in business circles might tend to favor compliance with such demands, but that it is not organized and that the army will hold firm. He has now practically abandoned the idea that Germany's occupation of Bulgaria may be only defensively designed (see my telegram 84, February 21, 12 noon).

MACVEAGH

740.0011 European War 1939/8801: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 4, 1941—2 p. m.  
[Received March 5—8:40 p. m.]

117. The Military Attaché reports that after attending a conference of the King, Mr. Eden and the Prime Minister, the Economic Director of the Greek Foreign Office,<sup>33a</sup> now charged with questions of military supply, informed Major Craw<sup>34</sup> as follows:

1. The German southward movement<sup>35</sup> is proceeding rapidly. (This is confirmed by Greek G-2.) By the night of March 2 some 5 divisions had already entered Bulgaria together with 400 airplanes.

2. A German reconnaissance airplane on a photographic mission made a forced landing near the Nestos River south of Xanthe on March 2. The crew consisting of an officer, pilot, and an observer were interned. The plane was undamaged. Another German machine performing such work north of Salonika made a similar descent in Yugoslavia, but was not interned.

<sup>33a</sup> A. Argyropoulos.

<sup>34</sup> Maj. Demos T. Craw, Assistant Military Attaché for Air at the Legation in Greece.

<sup>35</sup> Through Bulgaria, which began March 1, upon adhesion of Bulgaria to the Tripartite Pact; for text of pact, signed between Japan, Germany, and Italy, September 27, 1940, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. ccrv, p. 386.

3. Including 1 division recently organized the Greeks have now 5 divisions in Macedonia plus miscellaneous fortress troops or a total numerical strength of about 6 divisions. This felt to be entirely inadequate to withstand a German attack, but so long as the weather continues to prevent an advance to a shorter line in Albania no reinforcements can be drawn from that front.

4. The difficulty of transporting British troops across the Mediterranean places the maximum British ground assistance possible to Greece at 3 divisions only and this cannot be provided in less than 2 months.

The Royal Air Force here expects that the Germans will attack Greece as soon as they are prepared and that the date will coincide with improved weather conditions, which should be in about a month.

Please inform War Department.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/8833 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 5, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received March 6—11: 37 p. m.]

120. My telegrams 106, February 27, and 113, March 3. The Military Attaché has ascertained from reliable Greek sources that about 4,000 British troops landed at Piraeus on March 2 and are now quartered outside of Athens. Only about 700 of these troops are Royal Air Force personnel. An unknown number is also said to have landed at various points further north but neither confirmation nor details are yet available.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/8801 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Greece (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, March 6, 1941—noon.

83. Your 113, March 3, 6 p. m. and 117, March 4, 2 p. m. For the Minister's personal information only. According to the American Military Attaché in Cairo, Eden, during his visit to Greece, was able to persuade the King of Greece to permit British intervention there. It is planned to send to Greece from Africa 7 or 8 divisions, including 2 armored divisions. The troops are already moving to embarkation points rapidly. All available air squadrons in Egypt and the Sudan will be rushed to Greece, and the British Air Force there at present will be about doubled.

General Wilson, who will be in command of British forces in Greece, intends to fly there immediately, traveling incognito. He

plans to have an operating force ready in Greece very soon. The attitude of General Wavell towards this expedition is optimistic. He claims to desire only a hard-striking, fast-moving corps able to move by land to secure Salonika. Rapidity of movement has been determined upon to assure surprise. It is admitted that the plan involves much risk, and justification is found in the favorable public reaction expected.

The seizure of the Dodecanese may be accepted as an alternative if the British forces are not able to land in Greece.

You will appreciate the extremely confidential nature of this information.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/8857 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 6, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received March 7—11:30 p. m.]

121. I was able to see Mr. Eden again last evening this time not alone, however, but in company with British Minister and British air officer commanding in Greece. Referring to our previous conversation reported in my 113, March 3d, Mr. Eden said he had sent Mr. Campbell<sup>36</sup> back to Belgrade with a letter to Prince Paul<sup>37</sup> "telling him very frankly what our intentions are". He expected no reply before his own departure from Athens which took place at 8 o'clock this morning by plane for Cairo and not last night as announced in the press.

Regarding British intentions it was clear from Eden's conversation with British Minister and Air Vice Marshal D'Albiac that a serious effort is being prepared here involving the possible participation of forces from all parts of Africa. Later I asked British Minister what he thought justified expectations of success in this connection and he replied, "the considered judgment of Generals Wavell and Wilson". Incidentally General Wilson was here yesterday as well as Diel<sup>37a</sup> and Mallabry [*Mallaby?*] but the fact has been kept dark.

Mr. Eden said he found the Greeks determined enough but naturally depressed over the Turkish attitude and far too fatalistically inclined. He hoped he had been able to raise their spirits but did not seem too confident in this regard, even going so far as to ask me whether I did not think his visit here "a good thing". He himself

<sup>36</sup> Ronald I. Campbell, British Ambassador in Yugoslavia.

<sup>37</sup> Regent of Yugoslavia.

<sup>37a</sup> Presumably Gen. Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

still believes there is a chance the Yugoslavs will fight if Germany attacks Salonika "but they are still trying to make themselves believe this won't happen". As to Turkey he said he had been told in Ankara of the probable coming of a message from Hitler<sup>38</sup> and that his Turkish hosts had indicated very clearly that they would not be taken in by any maneuvers. Regarding the actual message he said he had now received preliminary word that it was very long winded and whatever its other contents contained no open menaces.

Eden said he will meet General Smuts<sup>39</sup> in Egypt as well as the Foreign Minister of Iraq.<sup>40</sup>

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/8836 : Telegram

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

ROME, March 6, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received 9:46 p. m.]

317. My 300, March 3, 5 p. m.<sup>41</sup> From same reliable source comes following information. Mussolini was in Tirana last Sunday for conference with Cavallero<sup>42</sup> regarding Italian counter-offensive against Greece which Duce desires to launch on big scale shortly. Cavallero assured Duce he would carry out whatever orders were given him, but pointed out there were three things Mussolini must consider before reaching decision: (1) Italian artillery consisting chiefly of old guns is not equal to that of enemy. Even new guns are inferior to Greek Army's which, moreover, are now placed in highly advantageous positions; (2) Italian Air Force has not been able gain command of air; (3) Italian Army is staging "passive revolt" and simply does not wish to fight. Army would obey orders but there was not the will to fight—so necessary for successful offensive.

At end of conference Mussolini was still determined to proceed with counter-offensive.

Informant said Duce was opposed to German plan to withhold large-scale military action against Greece while endeavoring force Greeks through politico-diplomatic pressure to accept Axis domination. Duce insists upon military success and is determined settle war against Greece with victory in field.

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<sup>38</sup> See memorandum by the Secretary of State, March 15, vol. III, p. 831.

<sup>39</sup> Gen. Jan Christian Smuts, Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs and Defence of the Union of South Africa.

<sup>40</sup> Tawfik as-Suwaidi; concerning conversations with the Iraqi Foreign Minister, see telegram No. 107, March 8, 4 p. m., from the Chargé in Egypt, vol. III, p. 489.

<sup>41</sup> Not printed.

<sup>42</sup> Gen. Ugo Cavallero, Italian Commander in Albania.

Continuing, informant said neither army nor people have ever wanted war, not because of any particular affection for England, but because of realization that owing to policies of regime, four centuries of gradual progress towards real independence for Italy have been wiped out. It is realized Italy is back again in tragic position of having to call in the foreigner to save herself and no matter who wins European war, Italy has lost her war. Informant concluded by saying although country was not on verge of revolution there was increasing bitterness between army and party and between people and party. If England could hold out and if France should eventually resume struggle at side of Britain, Italian Army would one day rise up, this time with real will to fight in effort to throw off German domination of their country.

PHILLIPS

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740.0011 European War 1939/8871 : Telegram

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

ROME, March 7, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 8:21 p. m.]

327. My 317, March 6, 3 p. m. A member of the German Embassy told a friend of mine today that it was still hoped Mussolini could be dissuaded from proceeding with counter-offensive against the Greeks as Greek Government had already indicated to German Minister in Athens its willingness to meet German terms including the occupation of Greece by German troops provided the conflict with Italy could be settled with honor. He said Turkey had also expressed willingness to adhere to Tripartite Pact if Germany would guarantee Turkish territorial integrity against Russian aggression and added that Yugoslavia "was most desirous" of joining Axis bloc but did not wish to make the concessions to her neighbors which Germany considered necessary. He added that Prince Paul had seen Hitler on March 4 and that he thought Yugoslavia's position would be agreed upon at a further conference between the two next week.

PHILLIPS

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740.0011 European War 1939/8763 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Greece (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, March 7, 1941—7 p. m.

89. Your 114, March 3, 6 p. m. In contingency mentioned and providing other circumstances of the moment make it feasible Department

is in principle willing to undertake representation of Greek interests in Rumania and Bulgaria if Greek Government will make formal request through you or through its Legation here in order that appropriate authorization may be sent Department's representatives.

In the meanwhile, because of the possibility of an interruption in communications, Department has confidentially authorized missions at Bucharest and Sofia to assume provisionally protection Greek interests should Greek representatives approach them with request to that effect.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/8884: Telegram

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

BERLIN, March 8, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 6:30 p. m.]

888. The Embassy hears from a fairly reliable source that Gesandter Schwörbel, Chief of the Southwestern [*Southeastern*] European Section of the German Foreign Office,<sup>42a</sup> is either en route to or has arrived at Athens for the purpose of promoting a Greek compromise settlement with Italy.

Repeated to Athens.

MORRIS

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740.0011 E. W. 1939/8934: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 10, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received March 11—2:15 a. m.]

131. I have just communicated the contents of the Department's telegram 89, March 7, to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs who asked me to transmit the thanks of the Greek Government.

He said that there have been no German *démarches* as yet and has no knowledge of an impending visit from Gesandter Schworbel as reported in Berlin's telegram No. 888, March 8.

The King told me yesterday he thought German demands might be expected around March 15 and fears that they may be presented to him rather than to the Premier.

Johnson<sup>43</sup> indicated by telephone this morning that British troops have now begun to arrive at Salonika.

MACVEAGH

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<sup>42a</sup> Paul Schwörbel, head of the Division for Southeast Europe and the Near East in the News Service and Press Department of the German Foreign Office.

<sup>43</sup> John D. Johnson, Consul at Salonika.

740.0011 European War 1939/8926 : Telegram

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

ROME, March 10, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received March 10—3 : 55 p. m.]

344. My 327, March 7, 6 p. m., and 300, March 3, 5 p. m.<sup>44</sup> From same reliable source I am informed Mussolini is now in Albania and insists upon proceeding with counter-offensive against Greeks. He is determined at least to begin without assistance of Germans. I am also informed that offensive may be undertaken at end of this week.

PHILLIPS

740.0011 European War 1939/8960 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 11, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received March 12—9 : 19 a. m.]

134. According to Major Baker definite information regarding the number of British troops now in Greece is not available but it is estimated that advance and administrative personnel have already arrived sufficient for an expeditionary force of four divisions.

The British Military Attaché<sup>44a</sup> informed him this morning as follows.

1. British troops are arriving in Greece as quickly as they can be shipped here.

2. The elements which have arrived are in general: Additional air force ground personnel; motor transport units; anti-aircraft artillery units; advance infantry units (one battalion of New Zealanders); advance elements of armored units; hospital and medical units (Australians); technical and administrative units such as engineers, signal, et cetera (mostly motorized); headquarters reconnaissance parties for the larger units which are to follow.

3. British troops in Salonika.

4. The British and Greeks have no very definite information regarding German numbers and dispositions in Bulgaria nor as to their intentions. However, it is known that German units are near the Greek frontier in the Struma Valley area and that a greater number of German units are opposite and near the Turkish frontier. In addition Major Crow reports that the number of squadrons of the Royal Air Force in Greece has not yet been increased but that one of the two Gladiator squadrons has now been equipped for Hurricanes and the "mixed" Blenheim squadron has been converted to a complete fighter squadron. More squadrons will come when released from Africa. The Royal Air Force is making preparations to meet the expected German attack which is anticipated within a month at the latest.

Please inform War Department.

MACVEAGH

<sup>44</sup> Latter not printed.

<sup>44a</sup> Lt. Col. J. S. Blunt.



740.0011 European War 1939/8940 : Telegram

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

LONDON, March 11, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received March 11—2:30 p. m.]

934. For the Secretary of the Navy from Colonel Donovan. Britain has decided to go in and aid Greece. The number of units I think I had better not set down. The decision (which Wavell told me in Cairo) is a daring one approved by the full Cabinet on Friday after all the dangers were considered including risk of being driven out. Wavell's view was upheld by Eden and Dill although it was stressed, as you were advised from Cairo, that the great difficulty both in landing and supply was shipping. Turkey will defend but not take the offensive. [Donovan.]

WINANT

740.0011 European War 1939/8961 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 11, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received March 12—9:18 a. m.]

135. My telegrams 131 of March 10, 2 p. m., and 134, March 11, 4 p. m. Johnson informed Reed <sup>45</sup> this morning that he did not mean to imply yesterday the presence of British troops in Salonika but only of a certain number of civilians. The British Military Attaché refers to these as possible "transients".

Department's telegram No. 92 <sup>46</sup> received today.

MACVEAGH

740.0011 European War 1939/9052 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 14, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received March 15—9:50 a. m.]

141. The following is the situation at Salonika: Most of the native-born Americans have already left the district and those remaining, in addition to Consul Johnson and Vice Consul Gullion are Miss Meverette Smith of the Near East Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Gardner and two children of the American Farm School, Mr. and Mrs. Riggs of Anatolia College, Mr. Lanckton of the Socony Vacuum and Mr. Tilley of the Gary Tobacco Company. In addition to these persons there

<sup>45</sup> Leslie E. Reed, First Secretary of Legation in Greece.

<sup>46</sup> Dated March 10, not printed.

are approximately 150 naturalized Americans of Greek birth and their American-born children.

British subjects have apparently been instructed to leave Macedonia and Thrace and have already done so. This may explain the "transients" <sup>47</sup> mentioned in my telegram No. 135, March 11, 5 p. m. There is considerable movement of the Greek population, some leaving Salonika for the small villages or the islands, some going to Turkey and others traveling southward. The towns are all crowded and room rents are high. The American colleges which were being used as military hospitals have been completely evacuated and turned back to the American directors. Of the 8 hospitals in the Salonika area only 2 are still functioning, the rest having been completely evacuated. All the wounded have been sent south apparently in part on ships. The nurses have been evacuated, also.

The Governor of Thrace and some of his principal assistants are said to have left for Athens on various pretexts. Kotzias, Minister-Governor of Athens, has been named provisional governor of Thrace and is endeavoring to discourage a mass exodus of the population. Railroad tickets are not sold at railway stations but at an office opened in each town especially for the purpose where all prospective travelers must register and wait several days before obtaining tickets.

Johnson reports that the evacuation of buildings and transfer of oil stocks to the south together with other developments lead him to believe that the attempt to defend Macedonia against a German invasion would be slight and that the real resistance would occur south and west of Salonika (see my telegram No. 106, February 27, 3 p. m.).

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/9120: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 17, 1941—5 p. m.  
[Received March 18—6:20 a. m.]

145. The Greek Army authorities consider the recent series of Italian attacks as a serious offensive which they maintain virtually came to an end on the 15th of March. They say it covered a fairly wide front, used many new troops and was supported during the final 2 days by at least 300 planes over the Greek front lines all to no purpose. Greek morale remains high.

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<sup>47</sup> In telegram No. 144, March 15, 4 p. m., the Minister in Greece reported a telephone conversation with the Consul at Salonika to the effect that a few British troops, apparently signal corps men with motor vehicles, had been seen in Salonika and that all foreign correspondents had been ordered to leave the city (740.0011 European War 1939/9059).

The Political Director of the Foreign Office told me this morning that no demands of any kind have yet been made by Germany. The Greek Government is aware that German troops continue to move south through Bulgaria and regards an ultimatum and attack as possible now at any moment but "each day's delay is so much gained for Greece." This delay is variously interpreted here as owing to a new spell of severe weather and to Germany's failure so far to make satisfactory arrangements with Yugoslavia.

The President's Saturday night speech <sup>48</sup> has had an outstandingly enthusiastic reception here both privately and in the press.

MACVEAGH

740.0011 European War 1939/9171 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, March 19, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 10:30 p. m.]

1022. In official and diplomatic circles here there is general belief that German-Greek relations are rapidly approaching a crisis which may result in military action if German diplomatic pressure on Athens fails to achieve the desired end in the near future. This opinion has been strengthened by reports in the last few days of heavy troop movements to the southeast, the refusal of the spokesman at the Foreign Office to comment on German-Greek relations which he has heretofore consistently described as normal and the general feeling that opening of German spring offensive will not be much longer delayed. It is also stated in usually well-informed circles that Berlin desires to have the entire Balkan situation well in hand before the Japanese-Soviet talks <sup>49</sup> in connection with Matsuoka's <sup>50</sup> visit are opened.

MORRIS

740.0011 European War 1939/9173 : Telegram

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

ROME, March 19, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received March 19—3:34 p. m.]

384. My 344, March 10. Although exact information on the extent of operations last week by Italian forces in Albania is not available I hear from a reliable source that the counter-offensive was on a fairly

<sup>48</sup> Address by President Roosevelt at the annual dinner of the White House Correspondent's Association, Washington, March 15, 1941; for text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, March 15, 1941, p. 277. For message from King George II of Greece, March 17, regarding the President's address, and the President's reply, March 24, see *ibid.*, March 29, 1941, p. 374.

<sup>49</sup> See vol. iv, pp. 913-969, *passim*.

<sup>50</sup> Yosuke Matsuoka, Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs.

large scale and was completely unsuccessful. Losses in wounded and missing are admitted by an Italian source to have been 18,000 while Balkan sources say they were not less than 20,000. The morale and physical condition of Italian troops which were already poor are said to have worsened. Mussolini who was apparently so confident of victory that plans were made for his triumphal return to Rome on March 23, a Fascisti anniversary, and who spent the greater part of the week in Albania, has already returned to Italy.

My informant says that German troops in Bulgaria are now expected shortly to move into Greece. Germany will take the position, however, that it is not attacking Greece but merely driving the British from that country in continuation of its policy of freeing the Balkans from British domination. It is hoped by making a show of attacking only British positions, encampments, et cetera, to bring about the political disintegration of Greece and thus end Greek resistance to the Italians as well as the Germans.

Inform War and Navy.

PHILLIPS

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740.0011 European War 1939/9207: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 20, 1941—5 p. m.  
[Received March 21—4:40 a. m.]

152. My telegram No. 141, March 14, 5 p. m. Johnson reports on the testimony of eye witnesses the presence of "not very large" British units apparently signal corps, medium tanks, Bren gun carriers and anti-aircraft in the districts of Florina, Koziani, Verria, Ekaterini, Edessa and Iannitza with light caliber anti-aircraft batteries guarding bridges in the Vardar region. He says reliable sources indicate few Greek troops east of the Nestos, only light forces between that river and the Struma, and probably no British except a few technicians east of the Vardar. Considerable oil stocks from Salonika are said to have been transferred to Ekaterini.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/9249: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 22, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received March 23—3:15 a. m.]

157. The Turkish Ambassador, just returned from Ankara, said yesterday that after seeing his President <sup>50a</sup> he could assure me that

<sup>50a</sup> President Ismet İnönü of Turkey.

Turkey is "determined to resist" but while insisting that the Turkish and British staffs "are in complete agreement as to how best to fight the Germans" would not state definitely that his country will enter the war unless she is herself attacked even should Bulgaria join Germany in attacking Greece.

The Swedish Chargé d'Affaires<sup>50b</sup> who accompanied the Turkish Ambassador from Istanbul says that the Turks are "scared to death". He reports conversations with Von Papen in which the latter indicated two motives behind a drive on Greece: (1) to prevent the British from attacking Italy from Albania; and (2) to cut off Turkey from the west after which she would be expected to succumb peacefully to pressure. He says Germans in Ankara claim they have 700,000 troops in the Balkans which could be devoted to the Greek adventure including a whole division of parachutists but that the campaign will be over in 2 weeks. When asked whether Yugoslav permission to pass by Monastir would not be helpful Von Papen replied, "Yes, of course, my dear, but it will not be necessary."

Driving down by automobile from Alexandroupolos to Athens the Turkish Ambassador noted a few British officers in Salonika, British anti-aircraft units guarding the Vardar bridges and lengthy British motorized trains of signal corps engineers and artillery all the way from Verria to Athens. He also talked with men of a Greek mountain artillery regiment who said they were taking positions on the heights above Verria. A new battalion of New Zealand troopers arrived in Athens yesterday.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/9274: Telegram

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

ROME, March 24, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received March 24—11:58 a. m.]

399. My 384, March 19, and 396, March 22.<sup>51</sup> With regard to the Albanian campaign our information is to the effect that the Germans have given Mussolini "one more chance" to carry on his campaign against the Greeks and that another Italian offensive will be launched shortly. Mussolini who is now in Rome will return to Albania some time this week. With regard to Cirenaica, we hear that between 4 and 5 German divisions have already landed in Libya and that the

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<sup>50b</sup> Sven Allard.

<sup>51</sup> Latter not printed.

German offensive against Cirenaica will be launched within 10 days or 2 weeks.

PHILLIPS

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740.0011 European War 1939/9353 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 26, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received March 27—6:40 a. m.]

165. Yugoslavia's defection<sup>52</sup> and particularly the information that she will permit the passage of war material through her territory has frightened Greek public opinion and obviously depressed the military here both British and Greek. However, I found the Premier this morning in a very determined mood. He said: "Greece's policy does not change. We made our decision on October 28 and with British aid shall defend our country. Even if the British were not with us we should do the same". He said that Germany has still made no *démarche* here but he expects her to do so momentarily. He expressed complete disillusion regarding Turkey's attitude saying that she sends messages praising Greek firmness but nothing more.

Convoys continue to arrive at Piraeus and the Turkish Military Attaché estimates there are now 120,000 British in Greece. Major Baker estimates 80,000 and the discrepancy reveals the extent of the secrecy being observed by the British command. Estimates to date have had to be founded on eye witness observation within narrow limits of circulation. The competent authorities have promised to give this Mission more favorable treatment later but meanwhile Major Baker has at last received Greek permission to go north and left for Salonika by automobile this morning.

Travelers reaching here from Macedonia continue to report no British in any numbers east of the Vardar and add that ammunition dumps and motor parks are being established in the mountains north of Olympus. Since Yugoslavia has joined the Axis it now appears more than ever unlikely that serious defense will be attempted east of that region. Similarly the right flank of the Greek Army in Albania may have to be unhooked from the Yugoslav border and withdrawn southeast but the spokesman of the Greek staff would not discuss the matter yesterday.

MACVEAGH

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<sup>52</sup> Signature of the Tripartite Pact, at Vienna, March 25, 1941; for correspondence, see pp. 945-972 *passim*.

740.0011 European War 1939/9443 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 29, 1941—2 p. m.  
[Received March 30—12: 05 a. m.]

172. Eden arrived here yesterday afternoon. He told me this morning that he feels the immediate implications of the Yugoslav coup<sup>53</sup> may have been exaggerated in England and America and that he has come here to explore the possibility of their development. He said: "I don't care if the Yugoslavs don't actually repudiate their signature of the Tripartite Pact if only we can get together now and formulate some sort of common policy after which we can take it to the Turks." He said that his Minister in Belgrade is seeing the new Premier this morning and will fly down here immediately afterwards with all clarifications possible. His own stay here will depend on these. He will lunch with me tomorrow if he is still here and promised in any case to keep me informed of the situation.

I have also talked this morning with Sir John Dill, General Wilson and the air officer commanding. They think situation in Yugoslavia is holding up the German attack on Greece and the last named as well as Eden opined that the attack was scheduled for yesterday in conjunction with a sweep of Italian naval forces in the Eastern Mediterranean. The sweep actually took place and Eden was very much excited over British success in driving the Italians back. He said they turned and fled at 30 knots as soon as the British were sighted and that bombers from Greece scored at least one direct hit on a fleeing cruiser.

I communicated to Eden and Vice Marshal D'Albiac the contents of Earle's rush telegram 147, March 26,<sup>54</sup> in which Eden was much interested. The Marshall said he expects this form of attack combined with parachute landings at Salonika and other places in the immediate rear of the defending lines.

Eden was greatly annoyed by British radio statements regarding the presence of Prince Paul in Greece and on my presence dictated a telegram to the British Minister stating that it would be well if the B. B. C. "ceased speculating" on this subject as it is embarrassing for King of Greece. He would not say definitely whether the Prince is here but the Grand Chamberlain has just told me that he is, and that he and his wife are staying with her mother Princess Nicholas in the Suburis [*suburbs?*]

MACVEAGH

<sup>53</sup> Military coup, March 27, forcing the resignation of Prince Paul, the Regent, setting up a new Government with General Simovitch in control under King Peter II.

<sup>54</sup> Not printed; the Minister in Bulgaria gave information from a Bulgarian Army source that the plan of the initial German attack would be an "air blitzkrieg on Greek airfields and British and Greek airplanes there, probably during daylight. The time very soon." (740.0011 European War 1939/9359)

## II. Consideration by the United States of Ways and Means of Providing Material Aid to Greece<sup>55</sup>

868.248/110

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by Mr. George V. Allen of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] January 2, 1941.

I called Mr. Butler<sup>56</sup> to say that there had been referred to the Near Eastern Division his conversation with Mr. Welles<sup>57</sup> of December 27<sup>58</sup> regarding the British Government's suggestion that Greece be supplied with thirty Mohawk planes now in the possession of Great Britain, provided the United States would agree to ship "thirty Tomahawk planes on an American ship to Basra". I said that it was not entirely clear to us what the British Government had in mind by the phrase quoted, and that I would appreciate receiving his understanding of the matter.

Mr. Butler said that in his opinion the new arrangement suggested by the British Government would involve the American Government only in one respect, namely, the shipment of thirty Tomahawk planes to Basra. He pointed out that these planes, known under the American designation as P-40's, had already been manufactured by the Curtiss-Wright Corporation on the order of the British Government, had been paid for, and were either ready or practically ready for shipment abroad. He thought the advantage of the suggested arrangement to the United States was that we would be relieved of having to find thirty planes which he understood we had promised the Greeks.

I said that as regards shipment to Basra, two interpretations of his request of this Government were possible. I asked him whether his Government desired (1) merely an assurance that the American Government would *permit* a vessel of the American flag to transport British airplanes to Iraq or (2) whether his Government had in mind that the American Government would find the tonnage and undertake the shipment, at the expense of the American Government, of the planes to Iraq. Mr. Butler said that he was inclined to think that the second interpretation was the correct one, although his telegraphic instructions from his Government were not entirely specific on this point.

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<sup>55</sup> For previous correspondence on this subject, see *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. III, pp. 574 ff.

<sup>56</sup> Neville M. Butler, British Chargé d'Affaires.

<sup>57</sup> Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State.

<sup>58</sup> See memorandum of December 27, 1940, *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. III, p. 605.



868.248/114

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 4, 1941.

MR. WELLES: It is our understanding that you are to receive this morning the British Chargé d'Affaires, who proposes to discuss with you the situation regarding airplanes for Greece. The underlying memorandum<sup>59</sup> prepared by Mr. Green<sup>59a</sup> shows the developments which took place yesterday afternoon in the Secretary's office. As a result of the decision taken by the Secretary, the attached letter to the British Chargé d'Affaires<sup>60</sup> has been prepared. The salient points are that there are no appropriated funds with which this Government could pay for the cost of transport of airplanes to Basra. Furthermore, if, as is at present the case, American ships destined for Basra touch en route at belligerent ports they could not legally carry arms and munitions. It would appear, therefore, that in existing circumstances it will not be possible to adopt the solution of the Greek airplane problem as proposed by the British Government.

It seems to me that it becomes more and more clear that the only way out of the present impasse is for us to fulfill the commitment made to the Greek Minister<sup>61</sup> during the latter part of November, at which time he was promised thirty P-40 airplanes. In order to fulfill that commitment it is my understanding that it would be necessary to reconsider the decision reached on December 30, 1940, by which approximately three hundred P-40 planes, which will be available in the spring, were allotted to the Chinese and to the British. The fact is that a prior commitment had been made to the Greeks and in this connection I should also point out that a somewhat similar commitment involving twenty P-40 planes was also made to Turkey. I, therefore, suggest for your consideration the desirability of reconsidering the allotment recently made to China and Great Britain with a view to fulfilling the commitments previously made to Greece and Turkey.

WALLACE MURRAY

868.24/105

*The Secretary of State to the Greek Minister (Diamantopoulos)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 4, 1941.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your note of December 30, 1940,<sup>62</sup> in regard to the desire of your Government to

<sup>59</sup> Not found in Department files.

<sup>59a</sup> Joseph C. Green, Chief of the Division of Controls.

<sup>60</sup> Not printed; the letter was not sent.

<sup>61</sup> Cimon P. Diamantopoulos.

<sup>62</sup> *Foreign Relations, 1940*, vol. III, p. 608.

purchase certain specified types of artillery ammunition from this Government.

In reply I have to inform you that this Government possesses no caliber 75 mm. shells for the Schneider Mountain Gun Type 1919 and no caliber 105 mm. shells for the Schneider Gun Type 1925. This Government does, however, have on hand small stocks of caliber 57 mm. ammunition and caliber 155 mm. ammunition. None of this ammunition has been declared surplus and hence, it is not at the present available for sale to foreign governments. It is possible, however, that some of it, particularly the first-mentioned type, might be declared surplus and hence, available for sale to your Government.

It is suggested that you may wish to communicate informally to the Chief of the Division of Controls of the Department the name of the representative of your Government whom you wish to have deal with this matter in order that arrangements may be made for the representative of your Government to discuss the matter directly with the appropriate officers of the War Department.

Accept [etc.]

For the Secretary of State:  
SUMNER WELLES

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868.248/116

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State  
(Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 10, 1941.

The British Chargé came in to see me at his request. He had received instructions from his Government regarding Greek planes. In his interview with Mr. Welles, His Majesty's Government had made three conditions as part of the integral proposal:

- (1) They would deliver 30 planes to Greece;
- (2) These planes would be replaced by the same or better planes later;
- (3) Such planes were to be transported to Basrah in American ships.

Following my suggestion to him that there might be legal difficulties in transporting by American ships, he had cabled his Government. His Government continued to believe that transport by American ships was essential. They did not consider that transport by Greek ships would suffice. They considered that transport by American ships was the American implementation of the President's pledge to Greece. He thought, likewise, that transport by American ships, irrespective of our laws (which he thought could be interpreted to permit transport to Basrah) was indicated in the President's pledge of "all aid" to Britain.

I said that I noted his point. As to the legal point—transport by American ships—this was a case of laws, and we had to abide by them. I personally hoped that the interpretation he put on the laws would be adopted by our Department of Justice, but when the Department of Justice ruled on a point, we were, of course, bound by it. I added that I had had the opportunity of chatting at dinner the previous night with the Greek Minister, who had indicated that if they had sufficient notice, it probably would be possible to supply Greek shipping.

A. A. B[ERLE], JR.

NOTE: I understand from Wallace Murray that the British are now handing over the planes to the Greek Government. The transport question will not arise until the new planes shall have reached the assembly line next June. I believe the matter could profitably be left for a little time, since the situation is certain to change between now and when the transport is needed. The important point is that the Greeks are immediately getting the planes and we shall have additional planes to deliver.

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868.24/119

*The Chairman of the Clearance Committee, Army and Navy Munitions Board (Hines), to the Chief of the Division of Controls (Green)*

WASHINGTON, January 10, 1941.

DEAR MR. GREEN: The British Purchasing Commission on behalf of the Greek Government has requested from the Navy Department ten thousand (10,000) rounds of 6-pounder (57 mm) ammunition.

The Navy Department has declared the ammunition surplus and has notified the War Department that it is available for transfer to the War Department for exchange through an intermediary with a view to the ultimate sale to the authorized representative of the Greek Government.

The total exchange price will be based on the price of the material as invoiced to the War Department plus packing and loading charges. The Navy Department desires to obtain in exchange for the above ammunition the equivalent value of 3"/50 caliber gun sights, Mark XVI, Model 6.

It is requested that this office be advised if the sale of this ammunition is in conformity with the foreign policy of the United States.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> In a letter dated January 17, Mr. Green informed Colonel Hines that the proposed transaction would be in conformity with the foreign policy of this Government. A memorandum by the Secretary of War, dated February 4, declared this material surplus (868.24/150).

For the Clearance Committee, Army & Navy Munitions Board:

Very truly yours,

CHAS. HINES

Colonel, Coast Artillery Corps  
Chairman

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868.248/87

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Chief of the Division  
of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 13, 1941.

The Greek Minister telephoned me last Saturday morning to state that he had just received a long-distance telephone communication from his Government conveying the information that it was "accepting" the thirty Mohawk planes which figured in the most recent British proposal conveyed officially to Mr. Welles on December 27 by the Counselor of the British Embassy.

I thought it desirable to inquire of the Minister whether he was aware of the full scope of the British proposal, particularly the requirement that the thirty Tomahawks subsequently to be made available in this country to the British Government in lieu of the thirty Mohawk planes should be transported on an American vessel to Basra. The Greek Minister replied that he was of course aware of this phase of the question since it had been mentioned to him by Mr. Welles in my presence, but that he had gained the impression at the time that this was a matter for adjustment between ourselves and the British. He added that he had not gathered at the time that Mr. Welles felt that there would be any difficulty with regard to the transport angle of the British proposal.

I told the Minister that while it was of course true that when the British proposal was conveyed to Mr. Welles and when Mr. Welles informed the Minister of its substance no mention had been made of possible difficulties under the Neutrality Act<sup>64</sup> with regard to an American vessel carrying the planes to Basra, a subsequent examination of the question and discussion with the Legal Advisers of the State Department and with the Justice Department had revealed that it might be impossible to accept that phase of the British proposal.

The Minister then went on to say that he saw no necessary connection between the proposal of the British to make available immediately the Mohawk planes to Greece and the shipping angle, which would arise subsequently. He therefore was emphatically of the opinion that his Government would take the view that the Mohawks should be delivered now and that the British should work out the question of

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<sup>64</sup> Approved November 4, 1939, 54 Stat. 4.

transportation when the time arrived to send the Tomahawks. I gathered from my conversation with the Minister that he will strongly recommend such a procedure to his Government.

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868.248/86

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of  
Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 13, 1941.

The Greek Minister called on me by appointment this morning with further reference to the information that he had conveyed to me last Saturday afternoon that his Government was accepting the thirty Mohawk planes offered by the British.

The Minister has now received a telegram from his Government on this same subject, informing the Minister that in accepting this British proposal the Greek Government wished to be assured that (one) the Mohawk planes are new and that (two) the necessary spare parts will be made available at the same time. The Minister was instructed to ascertain how the Greek Government might be assured with regard to points one and two above.

I told the Minister that since the Mohawk planes were being furnished by the British, we must of course assume that discussions had taken place between the British and the Greek authorities, and that it appeared only reasonable to expect that the desired assurances should be furnished by the British themselves. The Minister asked whether he might state to his Government that this viewpoint had been expressed at the Department of State, and I said that I saw no objection.

Turning then to the question of transport, the Minister said he wished to inform me in the strictest confidence that he had already inquired of his Government by telegraph whether it would authorize him to offer Greek ships to transport the thirty Tomahawk planes later to Basra. The Minister feels that if the answer of his Government is in the affirmative this might offer a solution of the difficulty in which we now find ourselves owing to the provisions of the Neutrality Act. He emphasized that under no condition was this suggested solution of the problem to be mentioned outside the Department for the time being.

In this general connection the Minister also wishes to know whether planes shipped abroad are sent in cases or whether they are shipped entirely set up. This information apparently would be of help to him in connection with the inquiry which he has made of his Government.

With reference to the paragraph marked strictly confidential above,<sup>65</sup> the Greek Minister informed me subsequently that he had received a telegram from his Government authorizing him to offer Greek vessels to transport the thirty Tomahawk planes to Basra.

With regard to the Minister's inquiry whether planes shipped abroad are sent in cases or entirely set up, the Minister has been informed that according to the Department's understanding, it is impracticable to ship airplanes in any manner except boxed.

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868.248/118

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 14, 1941.

MR. BERLE: I have read with interest the memorandum of your conversation with the British Chargé d'Affaires on January 10 regarding planes for Greece.

With reference to the final Note, I may say that in a telephone conversation with Mr. Butler this morning he watered down considerably the picture he had previously given us as to the immediate availability of the Mohawk planes. He now says that he may have been too optimistic in that regard since some of the planes in question did not leave this country until about December 25 and that they are proceeding to Egypt by way of Capetown. It would thus appear that the planes which we had been given to believe were in Egypt or would arrive there imminently and could be flown without delay to Greece are not quite so near their goal.

WALLACE MURRAY

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868.248/91

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. George V. Allen of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] January 14, 1941.

Participants: Mr. N. M. Butler, Chargé d'Affaires, British Embassy  
Mr. Murray

Mr. Murray asked Mr. Butler for his impression of the British Government's proposal concerning the shipment of thirty P-40 (Tomahawk) planes to Basra on an American vessel. Mr. Murray asked whether these P-40 planes had already been completed and were ready for immediate shipment.

Mr. Butler said that the telegram which he had received from his Government on the subject was not entirely clear on the point. He

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<sup>65</sup> Paragraph beginning "Turning then to the question of transport".

said that P-40 planes were being completed for Great Britain at the present time and that probably as many as thirty of them were available for shipment abroad at the present moment, but that in view of the urgent need for these planes in the British Isles, it did not follow necessarily that the British Government would desire to send thirty P-40 planes to Basra immediately. He said that he would talk to Mr. Morris Wilson<sup>66</sup> on this subject to obtain more definite information.

Mr. Butler added that the Embassy had just received a long and urgent telegram from London regarding the seriousness of the military situation there, which would doubtless affect the British Government's position with regard to the allotment of airplanes to Greece, China or any other country. He said that according to the telegram, the next few weeks would be extremely critical and that every possible airplane would be needed in the British Isles to defend cities there under merciless attack. *Mr. Butler said that in consequence, his whole proposal to Mr. Welles regarding the delivery of Mohawk planes to Greece to be replaced by Tomahawk planes from the United States should be considered as in suspense.*

As regards the Mohawk planes, Mr. Butler said that he would like to dispel any false impression which he might have given regarding the immediate availability of these planes for delivery to Greece. He understood that a shipment of Mohawk planes had left New York about Christmas Day, but he was not certain where these planes were being shipped, or by what route. He said that at any rate he would not like for the Greeks to gain the impression that they were already in the Mediterranean area and could be turned over to the Greeks within a few days.

Mr. Butler indicated that his Government might desire, in view of the immediate situation in the British Isles, to defer the proposed allotment of one hundred planes to China and that certainly if Great Britain should supply Greece with thirty Mohawk planes in the near future, he thought the number of planes for China should be correspondingly reduced.

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868.248/93

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

[WASHINGTON,] January 15, 1941.

The British Chargé d'Affaires called to see me this evening and left with me two *aide-mémoires*<sup>67</sup> which were dealt with in separate memoranda.

<sup>66</sup> Deputy Chairman of the British Supply Council in North America.

<sup>67</sup> Not found in Department files.

Mr. Butler adverted again to the question of the proposed arrangement for the transfer of planes to Greece. He said that his Government had instructed him positively to insist that as a part of the proposed arrangement, the planes be sent to Basra on an American flagship so as not to tie up any more Allied shipping.

I said to Mr. Butler that I had just had a conversation with the Greek Minister who had informed me that the Greeks had several free ships at Honolulu, as well as vessels now loading munitions in American ports for Greece, and that he had been instructed by his Government to state that the Greek Government would be very glad to set aside a Greek vessel for the transport of the thirty planes to Greece. I said that, in view of this offer from the Greek Government, I should appreciate it if Mr. Butler would inform the British Government immediately and request that this offer be agreed to. I said I could not see why the British Government should feel that the Greek vessels were of more use lying in some Pacific port doing nothing than if they were transporting the planes so sadly needed by Greece to Basra. Mr. Butler both questioned and criticized the official ruling given by the Department of Justice to the provisions of the neutrality legislation which were held to make impossible the shipment of planes destined for Greece on an American vessel, but said nevertheless that he would communicate the request I had made of him to his Government by telegram.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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868.248/121

*Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Welles) to the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 16, 1941.

MR. MURRAY: The Greek Minister asked me last night whether the thirty training planes, which Mr. Morgenthau <sup>67a</sup> informed him personally on January 14 would be turned over to the Greek Government by our Navy Department, would have to be paid for in cash by the Greek Government or whether they would be turned over under the stipulations of the pending legislation. He asked if he could have an early reply. Please take the matter up with the Treasury Department, Mr. Philip Young <sup>68</sup> presumably, and ask what explanation should be given to the Minister. When you receive a reply, please inform the Minister directly.

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<sup>67a</sup> Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury.

<sup>68</sup> Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury and Chairman of President Roosevelt's Liaison Committee.



868.248/121

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Assistant Chief  
of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Alling)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 17, 1941.

I telephoned today to Mr. Philip Young, but in his absence I read to his assistant, Mr. Williams, the attached memorandum from the Under Secretary<sup>69</sup> concerning the recent offer of thirty training planes to the Greek Government. Mr. Williams said he was quite certain that no decision had been reached whether the Greek Government would be required to pay cash for these planes. He added that as a matter of fact it was his understanding that the Greek Government had not yet accepted the offer of the planes. I said that possibly that was the reason the Greek Minister was endeavoring to obtain information regarding the question of payment; that is, the decision of the Greek Government to accept the offer might hinge on whether it was to be expected to pay for the planes. Mr. Williams said he would be glad to look into the matter and let us know, although he again repeated that he was certain that no decision had been taken in regard to payment.

I asked Mr. Williams what his understanding was in regard to the present offer. Was this a new offer quite independent from the offer made to the Greek Minister in November concerning thirty planes? Mr. Williams said it was his understanding that the present offer was in line with the one made in November and that if it was accepted by the Greek Government the commitment made in November would be fulfilled. I asked Mr. Williams whether the Greek Minister had the same understanding, and he replied that he was not certain on this point. I told him that it seemed to me very desirable that this point should be cleared up beyond the question of a doubt by the official who was conducting discussions with the Greek Minister. Mr. Williams agreed and said he would pass this suggestion along. In this general connection Mr. Williams pointed out that it was his understanding that the offer made to the Greek Minister in November merely involved thirty planes and that, although at some later date the question of P-40 planes had been injected into the matter, the November offer had not specified P-40 planes. He added that from the exchange of telegrams between the Department and the American Legation at Athens it seemed clear that the Greek Government was not insisting upon P-40 planes but was quite willing to accept any modern aircraft.

Mr. Williams then inquired whether we had any information regarding an alleged offer of sixty planes to the Greek Government. I said that we had merely heard unconfirmed reports of such an offer but we had no written evidence of it.

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<sup>69</sup> *Supra.*

I asked Mr. Williams how soon the training planes which had now been offered to the Greek Government could be turned over, and he replied that he thought they were immediately available. He again said he would look into all of these questions with Mr. Young and let us know as soon as he received any definite information.

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868.248/123

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by Mr. George V. Allen of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] January 22, 1941.

I telephoned today to Mr. Condouriotis<sup>70</sup> and, referring to his conversation with Mr. Alling of January 17, 1941,<sup>71</sup> asked whether he had received any indication from his Government regarding the acceptability of the thirty United States naval training planes offered to the Greek Government. Mr. Condouriotis said that his Legation had telegraphed the offer to Athens two or three days ago, but that no reply had yet been received. He thought a reply should be received by tomorrow, January 23. Mr. Condouriotis said that in the telegram to Athens the Legation had pointed out that the question of payment for the planes had not yet arisen.

I asked Mr. Condouriotis whether a representative of the Legation had talked to Admiral Towers<sup>71a</sup> about the planes as suggested by Mr. Alling on January 17. Mr. Condouriotis said that this had not been done, since no one connected with the Legation, including the military attachés now here, was familiar with aviation matters. He said that an aviation expert to be attached to the Legation was at present en route to the United States, having sailed from Capetown on January 4 on the S. S. *President Grant*, due to arrive in New York about January 26. He said that discussions with Admiral Towers would be deferred until this expert arrives.

I asked Mr. Condouriotis if it was his Legation's understanding that these thirty planes would be in lieu of the thirty P-40 planes which the Greek Government had been promised. His reply was, "Absolutely not." He said that his Government felt that it must obtain fighter planes immediately and to the exclusion of any other consideration. He said that at the meeting in Mr. Morgenthau's office when the offer of thirty naval training planes was made, Mr. Morgenthau, Mr. Philip Young, an Admiral, and the Greek Minister were present. He said that the Greek Minister had asked specifically whether the offer of naval training planes was in lieu of the P-40 fighters and

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<sup>70</sup> Stephen D. Condouriotis, member of the staff of the Greek Legation.

<sup>71</sup> Memorandum of conversation not printed.

<sup>71a</sup> Rear Adm. John Henry Towers, Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department.

that the Greek Minister had been informed that there was no connection between the two offers.

I asked Mr. Condouriotis for his understanding of the present situation with regard to the Mohawk-Tomahawk offer. He said that his Legation had not kept up with the offer of the British Government to furnish the Greek Government with thirty Mohawk planes. He said that he hoped very much that this offer would be made by the British and accepted by his Government, but that he did not understand that even this offer was in lieu of the thirty P-40 planes promised by the American Government. He said that his Government had at all times wanted to obtain sixty fighter planes and that his Legation had been given to understand several times, and had so informed his Government, that the offer of the United States to allow Greece to obtain thirty fighter planes in this country still stood.

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868.248/124

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Alling)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 22, 1941.

Participants: The Greek Minister  
Mr. Murray  
Mr. Alling

The Greek Minister called today and confirmed the information which had been furnished by Mr. Condouriotis, as outlined in the attached memorandum of today's date.<sup>72</sup> The Minister stated specifically that it was positively not his understanding that the naval training planes recently offered to the Greek Government fulfilled the commitment made last November when the Minister was promised thirty modern planes. He said that this point had come up during his conversation at the Treasury and that he had made it perfectly clear that he could not regard the offer of training planes as fulfilling the commitment which had been made in regard to modern planes. He went on to say that at his request the Treasury Department had prepared a memorandum outlining its recent offer and in that memorandum it was quite clear that the training planes were not offered in lieu of the fighting planes. He said he would be very glad to furnish the Department with a copy of this memorandum if we had any difficulty in obtaining a copy from the Treasury Department.

The Minister asked as to the present status of the proposal made by the British Government for a solution of this question by furnishing Mohawk planes direct to the Greek Government from supplies in

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<sup>72</sup> *Supra.*

Egypt and having them replaced by thirty Tomahawk planes to be shipped to Basra by an American vessel. Mr. Murray explained that we had recently been informed by the British Chargé d'Affaires that this proposal should be considered as in abeyance. The Minister seemed greatly surprised at this and expressed the view that he would immediately convey the information to his Government. Mr. Murray suggested, however, that this might not be necessary, or at any rate the report might be delayed until we had explored the situation further. The Minister then reviewed the whole sequence of events and stressed the fact that what his Government wanted and needed first and foremost was fighting planes to prosecute the military operations against Italy, and that, although training planes might be useful, they could not in any case be considered as a satisfactory substitute for fighting aircraft.

I conveyed the foregoing information to Mr. Williams in the Treasury Department, who said that he was not aware of any memorandum prepared in the Treasury Department which answered the description given by the Greek Minister. He said, however, that he would make inquiries and would let us know what he found out. I told him that if such a memorandum existed we should be interested in having a copy for our files, but that if the Treasury was unable to furnish us a copy we could of course obtain one from the Greek Legation.

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868.248/94

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State  
(Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 28, 1941.

The Greek Minister came in to see me, at his request.

He raised again the question of the Greek planes. He said that he understood the British had raised as a condition the necessity that these planes be transported by American ships to Basrah; and that, following an unofficial query from me at dinner at his house, he had then wired his Government to ascertain whether they could not provide the shipping. As I knew, the Greek Government had answered that it could and would provide the shipping. He likewise intimated that in his conversations with Mr. Welles, the Under Secretary had rather clearly indicated that he did not consider that the transportation question was a serious obstacle, in view of the Greek willingness to provide ships. He asked what could be done to get the matter forward.

I said that I wished to clarify what I understood the promise had actually been. We had promised him thirty planes for early delivery,

which, as I had then told him, meant as the planes came off the lines—presumably in May, June and July. This pledge we expected to keep.

We had likewise agreed that we would see what could be done in an effort to accelerate delivery, presumably by getting release from the British, or otherwise now, and replacing that release with the planes as and when they came off the assembly line. In other words, our pledge to deliver planes as they were manufactured held good; the promise to try to accelerate delivery could in the nature of things only be a promise to do whatever was possible, in view of the fact that the existing planes were naturally already committed.

I then said that while we had had every reason to suppose that such a release could be effected, the root of the difficulty lay in the now very pressing British needs. The British had indicated that in view of their own necessities and the possibility of a forthcoming attack, they needed all the matériel they had available, and in consequence probably were not going to release any planes which could be immediately useful in repelling attack. I said that in view of the British danger, it was very difficult for any of us here to argue with the British, since they were merely doing what one would naturally expect, under the circumstances.

The Greek Minister asked whether he should cable in substance that the delivery of the Greek planes was out of the question. I suggested that he do not do that for another few days, agreeing that meanwhile I would endeavor to look around and see whether anything could be done in the matter.

The Greek Minister, with a few expressions of courtesy, then left.

A[DOLF] A. B[ERLE], JR.

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868.248/127

*The Greek Minister (Diamantopoulos) to the Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, January 28, 1941.

SIR: Your Excellency knows how, about three months ago, the question arose of the release to the Greek Government of sixty American planes and how toward the end of November last the American Government expressed their willingness to allocate to Greece thirty planes of the latest model.

Pursuant to this understanding, as I was informed, the proper American authorities contacted the British Commission in Washington, with a view to effectuating this decision, to turn over to Greece thirty planes, type P-40, which were then being built here for Great Britain. But these arrangements did not materialize as the British

Commission was reluctant to consent to the release of planes of this type and the Greek Government had serious reasons for not accepting the thirty planes of the Defiance type, which the British Commission wanted to substitute for the P-40's.

In the latter part of December the Greek Government had the opportunity to discuss this matter with the Minister of the United States at Athens, to whom it submitted their reasons why they could not accept the Defiance planes and indicated that under any view of this matter, the Greek Government felt itself entitled to get thirty planes of any modern American type, in accordance with the original declaration of the United States Government.

Thus the matter stood when on December 31 the Undersecretary of State was kind enough to state to me that the British Government was ready to release immediately thirty planes of the Mohawk type, which were then in Europe, and which the American Government would replace by delivering an equal number from those under construction in the United States. Accordingly, on January 11, I informed the State Department that the Greek Government was willing to accept the aforesaid thirty Mohawk planes, even though its original request was for sixty.

On the above facts, the Greek Government was under the impression that this last offer of Mohawk planes would materialize promptly, especially since these planes were already in Europe. Unfortunately delivery has not yet been made, although a whole month has elapsed and the need is both urgent and imperative for Greece in the difficult struggle it is waging in Albania under the trying and exceptional conditions which are well known to Your Excellency.

Having received yesterday a telegram from my Government urging me to furnish information on the above matter, I address myself to Your Excellency and would be deeply grateful and obliged to be advised of the present status of this question so that I may advise Athens accordingly.

Accept [etc.]

C. DIAMANTOPOULOS

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868.248/95

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of  
Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] January 31, 1941.

Secretary Morgenthau asked me to come urgently to his office this afternoon at 4:00. Upon my arrival I found the Greek Minister

waiting in the anteroom and in Mr. Morgenthau's inner office were Mr. Purvis,<sup>73</sup> Mr. Wilson and other members of the British Purchasing Commission. Mr. Philip Young was also present. Mr. Morgenthau informed me that he had requested me to come in order that I might report directly to the Secretary the course of events, which follows.

Mr. Morgenthau inquired of the Greek Minister whether he had understood him correctly this morning to say that his Government absolutely refused to accept the most recent offer of thirty planes from this Government. The Greek Minister replied that, while he had referred to his *Government's* refusal, the refusal was in fact on the part of the *Greek aviation experts* who have just arrived in New York City. Mr. Morgenthau seemed much upset and annoyed at this discrepancy between the Minister's statement to him of this morning and that of this afternoon and asked me whether I could explain to the Minister in French what Mr. Morgenthau was about to say. I replied that I was sure the Minister would understand the statement in English.

Mr. Morgenthau then informed the Greek Minister that on the authority of the President he was repeating our offer of the thirty naval planes to Greece and that the offer would stand for two or three days, during which the Greek Minister could obtain word from his Government as to whether the planes were acceptable. The Greek Minister interrupted at this point to inquire whether Mr. Morgenthau was referring to the "old" planes, and Mr. Morgenthau said he was. Mr. Morgenthau then stated that if at the end of that time the Greek Government definitely refused the planes they would be turned over to the British Government. The Greek Minister stated that he would convey to me the answer of his Government in this matter, and Mr. Morgenthau understood that I would then communicate with him.

After the Greek Minister's departure Mr. Morgenthau stated to those of us remaining that this matter had been taken up at the Cabinet meeting today and that the President had stated bluntly that this offer of thirty naval planes to the Greeks was a "take it or leave it" proposition and that if the Greeks did not want the planes they should be turned over to the British. I inquired of Mr. Morgenthau whether there was any question of P-40's at the Cabinet meeting today, and he replied, "Absolutely not". Mr. Morgenthau then requested me to be good enough to convey to Mr. Hull an exact account of the proceedings which took place in his office this afternoon.

WALLACE MURRAY

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<sup>73</sup> Arthur Purvis, Chairman of the British Supply Council in North America.

868.248/96

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of  
Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 1, 1941.

Participants: The Greek Minister  
Mr. Berle  
Mr. Murray

The Greek Minister called on Mr. Berle by appointment this morning to discuss further the question of airplanes for Greece.

The Minister stated that he wished to make it clear that when the recent offer of the thirty naval planes was made to him it never occurred to him that these latter planes were intended to be in lieu of and to replace the P-40 fighting planes which have already been promised to him by this Government. He emphasized that when this latter offer was made to him the British proposal to supply Mohawk planes at once, to be replaced at a later date by Tomahawk planes, was still active and that at no time in any conversation with any Government official in the Treasury or elsewhere had any indication ever been given that it was intended to substitute the old training naval planes for modern combat planes.

Mr. Berle explained to the Greek Minister the various developments in this matter in so far as the British offer was concerned, namely that the British were willing to release at once to the Greeks the thirty Mohawk planes and to wait for later delivery of the Tomahawk planes. In view, unfortunately, of the critical situation now confronting Great Britain and the possibility of an imminent and devastating attack, the British had recently informed us that their above-mentioned offer must now be considered in abeyance, if not actually withdrawn. Mr. Berle emphasized that we all, of course, including the Greeks, had every sympathy for the British in this alarming situation and could not properly criticize their withdrawal of the Mohawk offer.

During the course of the conversation Mr. Berle suggested to the Minister that in order to arrive at a solution of this problem, he might possibly wish to discuss the matter with the President, and the Minister indicated that he would do so.

The Minister then stated that he had been informed by Mr. Welles that the matter of finding planes for Greece had been entrusted to Mr. Berle and that Mr. Welles had intimated that one solution might be to induce the British to release fifteen of the thirty planes needed, the Army to supply the other fifteen. Mr. Berle informed the Minister that, while he could not give him any precise assurance as to the particular solution that it might be possible to find in this matter, he would nevertheless make every effort to solve the problem. He



made it clear to the Minister, however, that it might not be possible to obtain any fighting planes for early delivery and that the Greeks might have to wait until June or July before they could get any planes. By that time production would be rapidly expanding and undoubtedly planes would be more readily available.

The Greek Minister emphasized that his Government would be bitterly disappointed to learn that the United States was unable to furnish thirty planes at this time, and he asked that the Department give him a reply in writing to his latest note on this subject in order that he might be assisted in presenting the matter to his Government.<sup>74</sup>

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868.248/97

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 1, 1941.

MR. BERLE: I endeavored to get in touch with Mr. Philip Young after our meeting with the Greek Minister in your office this morning and found that both he and Mr. Morgenthau are to be out of town for the next ten days. I thereupon had a brief conversation with Mr. Buckley, Mr. Young's assistant, who referred me to Mr. Williams.

I asked Mr. Williams whether it had been the understanding of the Treasury Department when making the offer to the Greek Minister of the thirty naval training planes that the acceptance of these planes would be in lieu of the P-40 fighting planes which had already been offered the Greeks some months ago.

Mr. Williams said that he understood that the Treasury had at all times intended that the naval planes offered to the Greeks would release us of any future obligation with regard to P-40's. He said he understood that in the conference which took place in Secretary Morgenthau's office yesterday afternoon the substance of the communication made to the Greek Minister by Secretary Morgenthau was that the Minister should "take the planes and shut up", and that if the Greeks did not accept those planes there was no question of their getting any others.

I told Mr. Williams that since I was present at that meeting, I was in a position to state that no indication was given to the Greek Minister that there was any connection between the naval planes and the P-40 fighting planes which were promised to the Greeks months ago. Mr. Williams said he would have to check his records, but that he

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<sup>74</sup>There is no indication in Department files that any written reply was made to the Greek Minister's note of January 28, printed on p. 682.

was under the impression that the Treasury had made it clear to the Greek Minister when making the offer of the naval planes that no others were under consideration. I replied that if this was the case it was not understood by the Greek Minister and in my opinion should be made plain to him at once by the Treasury, which made the original offer.

Mr. Williams promised to look into his records and communicate with me at the latest on Monday morning.<sup>75</sup>

WALLACE MURRAY

868.248/98

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 3, 1941.

MR. WELLES: In the absence of Mr. Philip Young from Washington for the next ten days, I had a conversation this morning with Mr. Buckley, his assistant, regarding the question of planes for Greece.

The facts, in brief, as Mr. Buckley understands them from his records are:

1. There are no P-40's in any amount available for the Greeks at this time and none will be available at the earliest before next summer, and perhaps even next fall.

2. The decision taken during the conference in the Secretary's office in December to allot 100 planes to China was understood by Mr. Morgenthau and his assistants to eliminate altogether any earlier promises made to the Greeks. It would, in Mr. Buckley's opinion, be extremely difficult if not impossible to dislodge even fifteen P-40's from the Chinese allocation for delivery to the Greeks. As for the Army releasing another fifteen in order to make up the thirty P-40's promised to the Greeks, that is even more impossible.

3. As for the thirty Grumman planes of the type F3F-1, built in 1936, offered to the Greeks by our Navy, Mr. Buckley states that this offer was necessarily understood to be in lieu of the thirty P-40's since at the time the offer was made no P-40's whatsoever were available for the Greeks.

4. Since the Greek Minister has at no time understood that the offer of the Grumman planes was intended to wipe out the earlier promise of thirty fighting planes, I told Mr. Buckley that in my opinion this point should have been made clear to the Minister when the offer was made, and if the situation is unalterable it should be made clear to the Minister now.

5. The Greek Minister is to see Mr. Buckley this afternoon when, presumably, the Treasury's viewpoint in this matter will be made clear.

<sup>75</sup> Marginal note by Mr. Berle: "I chatted this over with the President. He thinks the Navy planes were in substitution of the *immediate* hope—but that the P-40's, when manufactured next summer, would come to the Greeks if they wished."

In this connection I think you will be interested in the attached memorandum of February 1 to Mr. Berle<sup>76</sup> and particularly his penciled notation at the end.

WALLACE MURRAY

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868.248/99

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 6, 1941.

The Greek Minister called me this morning by telephone in a state of great excitement and indignation over Secretary Knox's<sup>77</sup> statement featured in the morning papers that thirty Grumman fighter planes had been offered as a gift by the United States Navy to the Greek Government and that the latter had refused to accept them.

The Greek Minister is waiting to hear from me whether the Under Secretary or Mr. Berle can see him at once regarding this matter.

The Minister emphasized, what is of course obvious, that Secretary Knox's statement is void of any foundation whatsoever. The Grumman Navy planes were never offered to the Minister as a gift, and his Government has furthermore never yet turned them down on any basis, whether gift or cash on the barrel head. The Minister pointed out that, in reply to a specific inquiry which his Legation had made of Mr. Philip Young when the offer was made, he was informed that under present existing legislation this Government had no authority other than to expect "cash on the barrel head" for the planes. The Minister further pointed out that only yesterday his aviation expert, recently arrived in this country, had a conference with Rear Admiral Towers and Captain Mitchell at the Navy Department when the Greek officer asked in particular for information regarding specifications of the planes in question for the information of his Government in enabling it to reach a decision in this matter.

The Greek Minister states that in view of the publicity which has been given to Secretary Knox's erroneous statement in this matter he cannot let the matter rest, and he is sure his Government will not allow him to. Before acting to clarify the matter through a statement to the press on his part he wishes to have an opportunity to confer with high officials of the Department of State.

I have talked meanwhile with Mr. Buckley, Assistant to Mr. Philip Young in the Treasury Department, who informs me that he has been in conversation this morning with Admiral Towers regarding this

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<sup>76</sup> *Supra.*

<sup>77</sup> Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy.

matter, and that Admiral Towers freely admits that the Navy Department has no authority under the law to dispose of aviation material except to the highest bidder after such material has been declared surplus. Despite this recognition on the part of Admiral Towers, however, he informed Mr. Buckley that the Navy Department had intended to make these planes available to Greece "as a gift", but that the Greeks had never been so informed. Mr. Buckley added that how the Navy could proceed in that manner under the law was not in any way clear to him.

As for the amount which the Greeks would presumably have to pay for these planes if accepted now, I may say that the Greek Minister has understood that they would cost about a million dollars. Neither Mr. Buckley nor Admiral Towers recalls having discussed the question of price with the Minister.

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868.248/100

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 10, 1941.

The Greek Minister came in to see me last Saturday morning with further reference to the question of planes for Greece.

The Minister seemed pleased that both Secretary Knox and the White House had issued statements retracting Secretary Knox's statement to the press that he had offered the Greeks thirty Grumman planes as a gift and that the Greeks had refused to accept it. The Minister added that in view of this admission by Secretary Knox it had not appeared desirable to report the episode to the Greek Government. The Minister hoped that if the story reached Athens the denial from both Secretary Knox and the White House would also reach there at the same time.

The Minister then referred to the press stories which appeared at the same time (one such story is attached <sup>78</sup>) to the effect that the Chinese were to receive one hundred P-40 combat planes. This development, the Minister declared, was incomprehensible to him, and he knew it would be utterly distressing to his Government if the facts became known. He said he was at a loss to understand how, after he had received formal assurances from competent officials of this Government as long ago as the beginning of last November that his Government would receive thirty modern fighting planes, he was now left altogether empty-handed and the Chinese, who came on the scene much later than he did, were to receive one hundred such planes. I

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<sup>78</sup> Not reprinted.

assured the Minister that this development had occurred through no fault of the Department and that we had never understood that the promise to the Greeks was eliminated by the later promise to the Chinese. I also assured him that we would continue to make every effort to clear up this unfortunate situation in some manner that would be satisfactory to the Greeks.

868.24/121 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, February 12, 1941—2 p. m.  
[Received February 13—8:34 a. m.]

72. My telegram No. 71, February 12, noon.<sup>79</sup> The Prime Minister <sup>79a</sup> called me to his office last night and handed to me a further appeal, note 5029 dated February 11th, for supplies of American war material to Greece. After referring to the efforts of his predecessor, the late General Metaxas, see my telegrams 353, December 9, noon,<sup>80</sup> and 379, December 27, 6 p. m.,<sup>81</sup> as well as those of the Greek Minister at Washington, all of which have so far been fruitless, the body of the note continues as follows in translation:

"The need for material is more cruelly felt every day. In particular the necessity of strengthening Greek aviation is the most urgent of all. I do not desire to elaborate on this latter question which is known to Your Excellency in all its details. I limit myself to the observation that at the present time 3½ months after Greece's entry into war following the unjustified aggression of a great power the supply of this desperately needed aviation material has not been accomplished. As you are aware, since the extreme urgency of this question did not permit the Greek Government to await arrangements for the supply of American war material on credit, it had set aside from its slender resources in dollars the sum necessary for the purchase of the planes required, the transportation of which furthermore was to be effected by Greek means. Consequently there has been no obstacle to the acquisition of the material in question except that of diverting from American production the small number of planes promised to Greece since the 20th of last November by the Government of the United States. Meanwhile the Greek Air Force, called upon to confront an enemy possessing crushingly superior means, has been deprived of reinforcement sufficient even to replace the wear and tear of 3½ months of warfare.

As regards the supply of other material we have so far received only 2,000 57-millimeter shells from old stocks of the American Navy.

Meanwhile the situation appears to be taking a critical turn in the Balkans. No one can say what dangers we will have to face in the

<sup>79</sup> *Ante*, p. 644.

<sup>79a</sup> Alexander Korizis.

<sup>80</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. III, p. 596.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 602.

near future, even more serious than those we have been meeting thus far. If in these circumstances we are not effectively aided while there is still time the consequences may be grave and the ensuing developments unforeseeable."

MACVEAGH

868.248/101

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State  
(Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 13, 1941.

The Greek Minister came in to see me, at his request.

He said that he did not wish to be monotonous but the question of the proposed planes for Greece was on his mind and his Government had wired him requesting a further report, stressing the urgent need for these planes. He added that they had likewise made representations to our Minister in Athens (which I presume are the representations appearing in Athens' no. 71, February 12, noon <sup>82</sup>).

I said that I had hoped to be able to call him a little later in the week when I had hoped to be in a position to give him a definite statement. As yet, I was not prepared to do so.

Personally and unofficially, however, I said, I would like to give him a review of the situation. I asked him to be guarded in his reporting because I did not wish him to raise hopes in his Government which might not be fulfilled, despite the fact that I was optimistic.

I then said that, following the failure of our earlier attempt, we had instituted a review of all of the available resources which might be detached for Greece. I believed that we had found thirty modern fighting planes which would satisfy the situation, which were either manufactured or in process of manufacture and which might be expected to be available within perhaps the next four weeks. I said that the arrangements were not yet complete and it had not been my intention to make any statement about them until this had been done, and that the Minister would recognize that nothing could be considered as certain until it was finally finished. I was myself optimistic, and hoped that a definite answer could be had perhaps by the end of this week.

The Minister said he was very glad. He agreed entirely that in view of the unfinished state of the arrangements, it would be desirable to be appropriately guarded in his report to Athens.

He then said that since the Greeks were to furnish the ships, he thought it would be both useful and encouraging if, as soon as possible, we could make it possible for him to send a cable to Athens requesting

<sup>82</sup> *Ante*, p. 644.

that a ship be fitted out and made thus available. This would both avoid loss of time, and be tangible evidence that something was going to happen—and evidence which he thought the Greek Government would much appreciate.

I said that we would certainly endeavor to expedite the completion of the arrangements as soon as it was appropriate; and I thought that even now he might appropriately inquire to find out how long it would take to secure the necessary transport.

The Minister then, somewhat to my surprise, asked whether the African route had proved feasible. (It happened that the Secretary of the Treasury at lunch had told me of the African route, and the method of flying planes across Africa; but he had given me to understand that this was wholly unknown.) I therefore said that I understood that the British had been making very full studies on this point; and I was of the impression that they thought that this is a practicable route. I ventured to tell him in determining the route and method of transport of these planes, to consult his British colleague, who could advise him fully in the premises.

The Minister then raised the question of the Chinese planes. Insisting that he fully appreciated the importance of China to the United States, he felt that it would create a difficult situation were the Greek planes to be postponed; China has known that her planes were coming along regularly each month; he hoped that the Greek planes could be echeloned with the Chinese so that it should not appear that the importance of China was considered greater than the importance of Greece and the Middle East. I made a few remarks about the vital importance of the Chinese situation but added that the program on which I was working would chiefly meet any of his requests in this regard.

The Minister concluded by referring to a cabled report sent by Colonel Donovan<sup>83</sup> to the Secretary of the Navy. This report set out a list of materials, chiefly trucks and tractors, needed by Greece for agricultural purposes to replace pack animals and manpower detached for use at the front. He said that he would obtain for me a copy of this cablegram. His inquiry was whether the material requested in this report could be considered as coming within the terms of the Lend-Lease Bill.<sup>84</sup>

I said that obviously I was not prepared to answer that question. In a general way, I understood that the Lend-Lease Bill permitted a rather broad construction; but that after receiving the document

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<sup>83</sup> William J. Donovan, unofficial observer for the Secretary of the Navy in Southeast Europe and the Near East, December 1940–March 1941.

<sup>84</sup> Approved March 11, 1941; 55 Stat. 31.

in question I would have the matter studied and attempt to give him an answer.

The Minister then discussed briefly the Bulgarian situation. He added little to our information, save in respect of his comments on the position of the King. He was convinced, he said, that the King did not wish to let the Germans in; but that he was helpless in the face of a pro-Nazi General Staff and intelligentsia. The peasants have no public opinion, save a vague pro-Russian sentiment. The King was thus "disarmed" and could do nothing save accept a solution analogous to that of Denmark. He added that it remained to be seen whether the Germans would not attempt to order the Bulgarian Army to fight. If so, he thought the Army would fight, though without great enthusiasm.

I confined myself to comments that it would seem to me that Bulgaria had had a great opportunity to learn what was really meant by watching the fate of their brethren in Rumania. That, it would seem to me, would convince any thinking man that they have little to gain by playing the German game. The Minister said, sadly, that all Bulgarian politics really extend from the Second Bulgarian War (1913) and that they had virtually never recovered from the illusions and attachments and orientation which that had imposed upon them.

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868.248/130

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Chief of the  
Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 15, 1941.

The Greek Minister telephoned me this morning to say that he had just come from Secretary Knox's office where he was informed that his Government would receive during the course of next month thirty *new* Grumman planes and that fifteen of the old Grumman planes previously under discussion would be available to his Government if it desired them. Admiral Towers was present with Secretary Knox when this information was conveyed to the Greek Minister.

The Minister was in a state of great excitement and exhilaration over this development and repeatedly expressed his appreciation to officials of the Department for assisting him in arriving at this final and highly satisfactory solution of the problem of furnishing planes to Greece.

The Minister said he desired to call at the Department on Monday to express his further appreciation.



868.248/130

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Chief of the  
Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 15, 1941.

Following my conversation with the Greek Minister this morning, as set forth in the attached memorandum,<sup>85</sup> when he informed me that Secretary Knox had, during a conference in the Secretary's office this morning, offered him 30 *new* Grumman planes and 15 of the old Grumman planes previously under discussion if his Government desired any of the latter category, I thought it wise to confirm this information through the Navy Department and therefore I telephoned Admiral Towers who, so the Greek Minister had informed me, had been present at the conference in Secretary Knox' office.

Admiral Towers gave me the following information, which is anything but reassuring. He states that prior to the conference with the Greek Minister he (Admiral Towers) had consulted with Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, with regard to the offer of naval planes which Secretary Knox was to make to the Greek Minister. It appears that Admiral Stark informed Admiral Towers that he had "grave doubt" that he could give the certificate required by law stating that the equipment in question is *not* essential to the national defense. Admiral Towers went on to explain that, under Section 4 of Public Document No. 671 of the 76th Congress, which became law on June 28, 1940,<sup>86</sup> the Chief of Naval Operations is required to sign a certificate in the above sense before any naval material may be disposed of to a foreign government. A further provision of the above-mentioned legislation is that, if and when such a decision has been taken and such a certificate has been signed, information to that effect must be conveyed within twenty-four hours to the Chairmen of the Naval Committees of both the House and the Senate.

The above facts were all brought to Secretary Knox' attention before he made his new offer to the Greek Minister.

Admiral Towers stated that all of the above information was "in the family" but he went on to say that Secretary Knox had already gotten himself into one mess over the matter of Greek planes (his recent public statement that he had offered the Greeks 30 planes as a gift and that they had been turned down) and that now he had apparently gotten himself into a second mess.

I asked Admiral Towers whether I was correct in assuming that, in view of the above developments, he contemplated conferring further

<sup>85</sup> *Supra.*

<sup>86</sup> 54 Stat. 676.

with Admiral Stark to ascertain whether the latter, despite his "grave doubts" might see his way clear to signing the indispensable certificate in order to make these naval planes available to the Greeks. He said that was the case but that he was by no means sanguine regarding the outcome of the efforts which he would make to clear up this unfortunate episode.

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868.248/130

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 17, 1941.

MR. BERLE: With regard to your inquiry this morning as to whether we might appropriately inform our Legation in Athens of Secretary Knox's "latest" offer of naval planes to the Greeks, I have just spoken again with Admiral Towers and he informed me as follows:

Admiral Towers said he has just been in conference with Under Secretary Forrestal <sup>86a</sup> and Admiral Stark regarding this matter and that all three of them are very much afraid that the offer of these new F-3 Grumman naval planes to Greece will, if it becomes known, have a very adverse effect on the outcome of the Lease-Lend Bill and will play directly into the hands of the opponents. Furthermore, he states that Admiral Stark, with whom he had conferred only five minutes ago, still felt that he "could not do it".

Such being the case Admiral Towers, Admiral Stark and Under Secretary Forrestal feel that the only way out of this present impasse is to try to get Secretary Knox to convince the President to hold off on this latest offer to the Greeks until the Lease-Lend Bill has been passed. They are to take the matter up with the Secretary this morning, but they are not sure that they can "sell" the idea to him.

Admiral Towers said he very much hoped that we would withhold for the time being any telegram to our Legation in Athens stating that the Greeks were to receive these thirty new naval planes in as much as it was "not a statement of fact" as yet.

WALLACE MURRAY

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868.61/25

*The Secretary of the Navy (Knox) to the Under Secretary of State  
(Welles)*

WASHINGTON, February 17, 1941.

MY DEAR MR. WELLES: There has been brought to my attention your inquiry concerning the suggestion which came through Colonel Dono-

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<sup>86a</sup> James Forrestal, Under Secretary of State

van that we lend some assistance to the Greeks by providing them with some tractors and trucks in order to get their crops in this spring.

I am glad to advise you that I have taken this matter up with the President and he has approved a project to provide the Greeks with some 40 70-horsepower tractors, 2500 one and one half ton trucks and 1500 three ton trucks. I suggest that we get in touch with Jesse Jones<sup>87</sup> and see if it can be financed in that way.

The President suggests a man by the name of Campbell to handle the project for the Greeks and follow up to see that the purpose of the underlying project is carried out successfully. Campbell is a man who formerly operated on a big scale in the wheat belt in the west. I think he is now in the employ of some large ranch people in Texas.

If you will let me know just how to proceed, I shall be glad to take care of the details in the matter.

Yours sincerely,

FRANK KNOX

868.24/121 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Greece (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, February 18, 1941—8 p. m.

59. Your No. 72, February 12, 2 p. m. The Prime Minister's appeal is, of course, receiving our earnest and sympathetic consideration. You may inform him that the so-called Lend-Lease Bill now before the Congress and which has been passed by the House of Representatives and by the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, permits in its present form the President to supply the materials of war to those nations which are now the victims of aggression or which are threatened with aggression.

Steps are being taken to create an organization to consider requests for such materials, and the needs of Greece, which have been brought to our attention by the Greek Government, will be referred to that organization.

HULL

868.248/103

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 20, 1941.

MR. WELLES: I have just spoken again with Admiral Towers regarding the question of planes for Greece.

<sup>87</sup> Secretary of Commerce and Federal Loan Administrator.

It appears that Admiral Stark who, under present existing law, would be required to sign a certificate stating that the 30 naval planes now offered to the Greeks are not necessary for our national defense has definitely and finally refused to sign any such certificate. This refusal took place last Friday on the same day Admiral Towers again saw the Greek Minister and informed him that the implementation of this latest promise of planes to Greece would necessarily have to await the passage of the Lend-Lease Bill now before Congress. The Admiral assured the Greek Minister, however, that no time would in fact be lost in as much as the equipment for planes being manufactured for the Navy is customarily put on just before the planes join the fleet and the Navy has to ship this equipment to the factory for that purpose. All of this, of course, takes time.

Admiral Towers went on to state that he and Admiral Stark were convinced that any effort to make these planes available to the Greeks prior to the passage of the Lend-Lease Bill might jeopardize the bill in Congress and that, in any case, they cannot get them now for the simple reason that Admiral Stark refuses to sign the necessary certificate.

I asked Admiral Towers whether I was correct in assuming that after the passage of the Lend-Lease Bill the present existing responsibility of the Chief of Naval Operations to sign the certificate in question would be removed. He said that was his understanding, in as much as one of the amendments to the new bill provides only for "consultation" with the Chief of Naval Operations, which will apparently make it possible to dispose of such planes even though Admiral Stark believes they cannot be spared.

Admiral Towers further stated that he had laid this whole situation before Secretary Knox last Monday and gotten him to agree to discuss the matter with Secretary Morgenthau. Unfortunately, Secretary Knox had in the meantime left for Chicago and the matter had not been cleared through Treasury. Meanwhile, the Navy is proceeding on the assumption that the Lend-Lease Bill will soon become law and that it will therefore become possible to implement Secretary Knox' commitment to the Greek Minister.

WALLACE MURRAY

868.24/143a

*The Under Secretary of State (Welles) to the Secretary of the Navy  
(Knox)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 24, 1941.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I have received your letter of February 17, 1941, proposing a method of supplying Greece with certain tractors and trucks.

I see no objection to proceeding in the manner proposed if this transaction with Greece is to be treated as a separate matter. If it is to be so treated, I should think it would be necessary, as you mentioned, to endeavor to carry out the financing through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. If you believe this is the best way of handling the matter, I should be glad to join with you in discussing it with Mr. Jesse Jones with a view to seeing whether we cannot immediately arrange the necessary financing.

However, the question arises whether the transaction might not be handled under the terms of the Lease-Lend Bill when that is enacted into legislation. In that case the matter of making preliminary arrangements for obtaining the trucks and tractors desired by Greece might appropriately be referred to the organization which is being set up to administer the Lease-Lend Bill.

Sincerely yours,

SUMNER WELLES

868.24/125

*The Greek Minister (Diamantopoulos) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 27, 1941.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY: In connection with the matter we discussed in our last conversation, I beg to enclose herewith a short notice outlining the point for which I should appreciate your kind assistance.

I venture to draw your attention to the matter and leave it to Your Excellency to develop it as you think advisable.

I am, my dear Mr. Secretary,

Sincerely yours,

C. DIAMANTOPOULOS

[Enclosure]

*Memorandum by the Greek Legation*

1. The Greek Government is informed that the Argentine Government keep in storage a considerable amount of 75, 0.105 and 155 caliber shells which are greatly needed for the Greek forces.

2. For reasons of general policy, the Argentine Government are not inclined to release to the Greek Government part of the aforesaid shells.

3. It would be advisable to inquire if there is any possibility of acquiring, without delay, these shells through the United States services acting as buyers or in any other capacity. In case such a deal could materialize, the Greek Government would be willing to place simultaneously an order with the United States factories for similar shells to replace those to be eventually released by the Argentine Government.

868.24/126

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. George V. Allen of the Division  
of Near Eastern Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] March 4, 1941.

I referred to the Greek Minister's letter to Mr. Welles of February 27, 1941 and asked Mr. Condouriotis whether his Government had approached the Argentine authorities in this matter. Mr. Condouriotis said that no official approach had been made but that the Greek Minister had satisfied himself, through informal conversations, that an official request by the Greek Government to purchase the ammunition would be refused. Mr. Condouriotis said that the ammunition is manufactured in the Argentine by a Schneider factory located there and that, according to his understanding, the shells desired are already in stock in the Argentine. He said that the reason for the Argentine Government's disinclination to sell the ammunition to Greece was due to the presence of a large number of German and Italian residents in the Argentine, who would make difficulties for the Government in the event Argentina should sell ammunition to Italy's opponent in the Greek-Italian war. He expressed the opinion that the Argentine Government might be willing to sell the ammunition to Greece if the Government of the United States would express an interest in the matter, pointing out the interest and support of the United States in the successful resistance by Greece to Italian aggression, and making reference to the desirability of a united stand by American Republics on this point.

I pointed out that his present request was not for the American Government to ask the Argentine Government to sell the shells direct to Greece, but for the United States Army to buy the shells and sell them to Greece. Mr. Condouriotis said that whichever action we considered most likely to result in the Greek Government's obtaining the ammunition would be entirely satisfactory to the Legation.

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March 5, 1941.

I related the above to Mr. Wilson,<sup>88</sup> U-L, who had meanwhile received the War Department's letter of March 4,<sup>89</sup> suggesting that a private American firm might purchase the ammunition from the Argentine and resell it to Greece. At Mr. Wilson's suggestion, I telephoned Mr. Condouriotis again, pointed out the difficulties and

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<sup>88</sup> Orme Wilson, Liaison Officer with War and Navy Departments.

<sup>89</sup> Not printed.

delay which might be entailed in any effort by our War Department to buy this ammunition, and suggested that the possibility of purchase and resale by a private American firm be explored. Mr. Condouriotis said that this means of obtaining the ammunition would also be satisfactory if found possible of execution. He said the Legation would explore the possibilities and inform us of the results.

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868.24/127

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Liaison Officer (Wilson)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 11, 1941.

The Greek Minister called this morning to discuss the proposed purchase of ammunition from the Argentine Government. I read to him portions of the memorandum from Colonel Walker<sup>90</sup> pointing out that although it would appear that the War Department has legal authority to purchase these munitions from Argentina, it is unable to sell them to the Greek Government. In answer to my inquiry the Minister expressed great doubt as to whether a private concern could be found which could buy these shells from the Argentine Government and resell them. He did know, however, of a concern which would be able to purchase them from the War Department for resale. He inquired, therefore, whether the War Department would be legally authorized to make such a sale. I said that I would endeavor to ascertain this information.

I then inquired whether he perceived any objection to my discussing the matter informally with the Argentine Ambassador. He replied to this that the Argentine Government had expressed great unwillingness to make the sale in the fear of offending the German and Italian population in Argentina. He did not object, however, to my suggestion and later in the day telephoned me expressing his definite approval. He added for my information that his Government would like to obtain about 200,000 shells for the 75 mm guns, 100,000 for the 0.105 mm guns, and 30,000 for the 155 mm guns. He also stated that these were of the 1919 model, although he was not quite clear on this point.

As the plan involves the possibility of the Greek Government repaying the United States War Department with an amount of shells equal to that purchased from Argentina, I asked Colonel Harris whether the United States Army possessed cannon of the above mentioned calibers. He replied in the affirmative.

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<sup>90</sup> Dated March 3, not printed.

868.24/128

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Liaison Officer (Wilson)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 12, 1941.

The Argentine Ambassador <sup>91</sup> called this afternoon. I said that the Department had been informed that the Argentine Government possessed a large stock of shells of 75, 105, and 155-mm. caliber which had been manufactured in that country. It was also understood that the Greek Government needed shells of these calibers and would like to obtain, if possible, some of the Argentine stock.

Señor Espil said that he knew nothing about these shells or about the desire of the Greek Government to obtain them. He expressed the opinion, however, that the matter was an extremely delicate one as his Government did not wish to do anything which might compromise or throw suspicion on its neutrality. Consequently, the Argentine authorities might be unwilling to sell the Greek Government any of these projectiles. He then suggested that the United States Government might be able to purchase these munitions in the interests of "hemisphere defense".

In this connection, he told me that some time ago the Argentine Government had purchased in Germany machinery to construct a powder plant. Eighty-five percent of these materials have already been delivered, but the other fifteen percent are still in Europe as the British Government does not wish to let these supplies pass through the blockade. Negotiations, thus far fruitless, have taken place between the British and the Argentines. Señor Espil suggested, therefore, that if the United States Government could induce the British to release the remaining material needed for the construction of the powder factory, the Argentine authorities might be willing to approve the sale of the shells. What would happen to these munitions after the United States obtained title to them would not, of course, enter into the picture.

I told him that I would refer his suggestion to the appropriate officials of this Department and explained to him the Department's interest in the transaction in view of this Government's policy of rendering assistance to Great Britain and Greece.

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868.24/123a : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Argentina  
(Armour)*

WASHINGTON, March 19, 1941—8 p. m.

107. The Greek Legation has informed the Department that there are now in Argentina stocks of shells of 75, 105 and 155 millimeter

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<sup>91</sup> Felipe A. Espil.



calibers manufactured locally at a factory alleged to belong to the Schneider Company. The Greek Government is anxious to purchase 300,000 shells of the 75 millimeter and 150,000 shells of the 105 millimeter calibers but has learned that the Argentine Government may oppose this transaction for reasons of neutrality. The Legation has therefore inquired whether the United States War Department could buy this ammunition for subsequent sale to the Greek Government.

In order to enable the Department to give appropriate consideration to this matter, please endeavor to ascertain discreetly and informally whether these munitions actually exist and if so, whether they might be purchased by the War Department.

WELLES

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868.24/124 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, March 20, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 6:22 p. m.]

216. Department's telegram 107, March 19, 8 p. m. This matter was discussed with me by the former Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Roca (see Embassy's strictly confidential despatch No. 1865 [1869?], January 24, 1941, pages 2 and 3<sup>92</sup>).

I am informed by the Military Attaché that while ammunition of the type referred to exists, it is not in anything like the quantity mentioned; furthermore that this ammunition was manufactured by the Government factory here and not by the Schneider Company which has no factory in Argentina. The Military Attaché informs me that exact data on ammunition available is contained in reports submitted by him to the War Department.

In view of conversation referred to in paragraph 1 above I shall take no action on the Department's telegram pending further instructions.

ARMOUR

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868.24/132a : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Greece (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, March 22, 1941—8 p. m.

108. On March 17 the Department issued licenses for the export to Greece of the following arms and ammunition released under the provisions of the Act of March 11, 1941: <sup>93</sup> Fifty 75-millimeter guns, 150,-

<sup>92</sup> Not printed.

<sup>93</sup> Lend-Lease Act; 55 Stat. 31.

000 shells for these guns, and 30,000 shells for 155-millimeter howitzers.<sup>94</sup> The appropriate authorities of this Government are now considering carefully what further arms and other materials can be released for export to Greece under the authority of this law. You may so inform the Greek Government.

WELLES

868.248/134

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 22, 1941.

MR. WELLES: The Greek Minister told me yesterday afternoon that he had just been informed by Captain Ramsey of the Bureau of Aeronautics that the formal offer of thirty Grumman fighting planes made to him by Secretary Knox had been withdrawn "by order of the President" and are to be given to the British.

The background of this latest development as conveyed to me by the Greek Minister is as follows: Captain Ramsey telephoned the Greek Minister on Tuesday to inquire whether he had been approached either by Mr. Harry Hopkins<sup>95</sup> or by Air Vice Marshal Slessor of the British Embassy regarding the Grumman planes, and upon being informed that no conversations had taken place Captain Ramsey stated that Air Vice Marshal Slessor would be calling upon the Minister shortly.

When Air Vice Marshal Slessor called at the Greek Legation he informed the Minister that the British were trying to build up a homogeneous air force and that the Grumman planes offered to the Greeks were much better adapted to the British air force than to the Greeks. He therefore suggested that the Greek Government should let the British have the Grumman planes in return for thirty Hurricane planes which would be turned over to the Greeks from the Near Eastern Command.

The Greek Minister replied that this was "an old story" and recalled the unfortunate experience he had had over the British offer of thirty Mohawks, which was later withdrawn. The Minister promised, however, to communicate with his Government in this matter and stated that upon receipt of a reply he would communicate with Mr. Slessor.

Early yesterday morning, and before he had received any reply from his Government regarding the latest British proposal, the Minis-

<sup>94</sup> The foregoing material was from ordnance stock transferred by the War Department to the Greek Government by direction of the President.

<sup>95</sup> Special Assistant to President Roosevelt with primary responsibility at this time for lend-lease affairs.

ter received the oral communication from Captain Ramsey that Secretary Knox's offer of the thirty Grumman planes had been withdrawn. Later in the day a telegram was received by the Minister from his Government stating that in view of the unfortunate experience the Greeks had had in the matter of the withdrawal of the Mohawk offer the Greek Government must insist upon the delivery of the Grumman planes "even if we have to wait three months for them because of transport delays".

The Greek Minister is in despair over this latest development and has asked for our assistance. He says he does not dare to inform his Government that the Navy offer was withdrawn even before a reply had been received from Athens. The Minister fears that if the truth were known in Athens it would cause dismay in the Government and might have most unfortunate results at this particular critical juncture when an attack by German forces in Bulgaria is expected momentarily.

I later telephoned to Captain Ramsey regarding this matter and learned that after the passage of the Lease-Lend Bill Mr. Hopkins had called at the Bureau of Aeronautics and stated that he had made an evaluation of the British aviation needs after a talk with British officials here and that it had been decided to transfer the Grumman planes to the British. Mr. Hopkins had, however, informed the Bureau that before acting he would consult with and obtain the approval of the State and Treasury Departments. On March 19 a letter was received in the Navy Department, signed by the President, stating that "this will cancel my authorization to you relative to the transfer of forty-five planes to Greece". Captain Ramsey said his Department of course assumed that this action had received the full approval of the State Department, and he assumed that this Department had already informed the Greek Minister of the President's decision.

Captain Ramsey went on to say that he considered the situation as regrettable in the extreme since the Navy had gone to work immediately after the passage of the Lease-Lend Bill in preparing the forty-five planes (thirty Grumman and fifteen old planes) for shipment to Greece. They had even gone so far as to request the Minister to scrape together thirty thousand dollars, representing the cost of crating.

The Greek Minister requested in particular that, if we find it impossible to go through with our latest promise of Grumman planes, we at least use our good offices with the British to bring about the immediate delivery of thirty planes from the Near Eastern Command. The Minister also requests that we inform his Government through our Legation at Athens of the reasons for our withdrawal of the offer of the thirty naval planes.

I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss this matter further with you at your convenience.

WALLACE MURRAY

P.S. Do you think it would serve any useful purpose to refer to this matter in the Department's daily report to the President?

868.248/141

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 24, 1941.

MR. WELLES: Referring to the latest development in the matter of the thirty Grumman planes for Greece, set forth in my memorandum of March 22, last, the Greek Minister informed me this morning that according to information received from Vice Air Marshal Slessor the thirty Hurricane planes promised to Greece in lieu of the thirty Grumman planes have already been delivered in Greece. The Greek Minister has, however, taken the precaution to telegraph his Government requesting confirmation of this information. As soon as a reply is received he will communicate with me, and I shall thereupon, in accordance with your suggestion, immediately seek an opportunity to discuss the matter with you.

The steps which you have already taken with the Secretary of the Navy in this matter to withhold action until you have given him "the green light" are exceedingly helpful, and it now seems possible that the matter can be smoothed out without too great difficulty.

WALLACE MURRAY

868.248/128 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, March 24, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 11:45 p. m.]

163. I have just received an almost despairing appeal from the Greek Premier requesting my urgent intervention to help straighten out a further complication in the question of the supply of American pursuit planes to Greece.

The Premier states pertinently as follows:

After months of repeated efforts a definite promise was finally obtained in February for the delivery to Greece about March 25 of 30 late model and 15 reconditioned Grumman planes and the Greek Government completed arrangements for their transportation to this country.

At the last moment, however, the British authorities requested through the Greek Minister at Washington that Greece cede these airplanes to England against Hurricanes to be delivered from Egypt, a proposal which the Greek Government naturally refused knowing that the British Air Command in the Middle East not only has no such planes available for this purpose but has already failed to supply to Greece Hurricanes previously promised.

Despite the Greek refusal to accept this empty alternative he states the question is nevertheless now being reexamined in Washington and thus the delivery of the promised planes is being further delayed and the Greek Government plunged on the eve of German aggression into the same uncertainty on this question which existed 4½ months ago.

I sincerely hope that the Department may be able to give me for the Premier some new and more cheering information in connection with this affair.

MACVEAGH

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868.248/128 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Greece (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, March 26, 1941—9 p. m.

112. Your 163, March 24, 6 p. m. The Department has the matter of airplanes for Greece under urgent consideration and it is hoped that a solution satisfactory to Greece will be reached in the near future.

WELLES

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868.248/136

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 27, 1941.

MR. WELLES: At the conference which was held this morning in Secretary Knox's office with the Greek Minister, Air Vice Marshal Slessor and myself, the following developments occurred:

Secretary Knox, stating that he has full authority from the President to do so, has made a firm offer to the British through General Slessor to deliver at once the thirty Grumman planes intended for the Greeks in return for the immediate release by the British of thirty Tomahawk (P-40) Curtiss-Wright fighting planes, fifteen of which will be shipped at once on British vessels to Suez. General Slessor accepted this proposal subject to confirmation which he is to seek by telephone within the next half hour from London. He feels certain that the proposal will be approved in view of the statement contained

in his letter of March 24, 1941, addressed by him to Secretary Knox, and later forwarded to you,<sup>96</sup> stating that "the Air Ministry therefore recommends that *either Grummans or Tomahawks* off British orders should be dispatched by sea in American ships direct to Suez". The Greek Minister is awaiting receipt of this confirmation expected by General Slessor before communicating with his Government. General Slessor is to communicate with me immediately after he has received word from London.

As for the shipping aspect of this proposal, General Slessor stated that while it was thought that no British shipping at all would be available for transporting the airplanes in question, he is now informed that sufficient shipping for the transport of fifteen of the planes is immediately available. The Greek Minister reminded him that the Greek Legation in London has already received a firm assurance from the appropriate British authorities that British vessels would be made available for the transport of the entire number of planes for Greece. Secretary Knox very properly observed that the question of the transport of these planes was not our worry and should be worked out between the Greeks and the British.

Secretary Knox's decision to make the proposal set forth above, namely Tomahawks for the Greeks and Grummans for the British, was taken when he was informed by General Slessor at the conference that the original proposal of the British to furnish the Greeks with Hurricanes in place of the Grummans had not been approved in London.

If this latest proposal goes through, as General Slessor is confident it will, it would in fact represent a return to our original promise to the Greeks made last November involving the delivery of Curtiss-Wright P-40 fighter planes. I may add that I took the occasion during the conference to mention that the fulfillment, although belated, of this promise to the Greeks would undoubtedly have a most stimulating effect on Greek morale at this particularly critical juncture, and might also serve to strengthen the present determination of the Turks to resist aggression.

WALLACE MURRAY

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868.248/135

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 27, 1941.

MR. WELLES: I have just had a telephone call from General Slessor with further regard to the latest development in the matter of planes for Greece.

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<sup>96</sup> Not printed.

General Slessor tells me that he has just spoken by long-distance telephone with the Chief of the Air Force in London and has received authority to negotiate an agreement with the Greeks along the lines of that suggested this morning in Secretary Knox's office.<sup>97</sup> He was informed that on "operational grounds" the British preferred to have Tomahawks in the Near East and are willing to make thirty of them available out of British orders in the United States in return for the thirty Grumman planes.

General Slessor was, however, further instructed to ascertain whether there are immediately available here the necessary number of Tomahawk planes for shipment to Greece. If after inquiry of the British Air Commission in Washington General Slessor finds that at this particular moment thirty Tomahawks are not immediately available, he has been instructed to state that his Government would prefer to see the thirty Grumman planes go forward at once to Greece. In other words, the Greeks are apparently "in luck" no matter how this latest development turns out.

I mentioned to General Slessor that I had understood from Secretary Knox that there were "plenty" of Tomahawk planes for immediate delivery to Greece. He replied that what might actually have happened (he will know exactly as soon as he has consulted with the British Air Commission) is that the Tomahawks are *so* available that all of them may already have been shipped to Britain in considerable number, although he hopes it may be possible to catch thirty out of the total. If not, the Greeks might have to wait for further deliveries until some time the last part of April. He explained this by stating that there is a sort of "pause" in orders at this time and that the deliveries for the Army were to follow immediately after the present deliveries to the British.

General Slessor said he did not want to press too much on the question of shipping and did not wish to imply that the British could not *ultimately* provide the necessary shipping to take these planes to Greece but that nevertheless at the present time the British had sufficient shipping for only fifteen planes as far as he knew. It would therefore be very helpful if we could supply the necessary shipping for the rest of the Greek quota.

General Slessor is to let me know later in the afternoon what he finds out from the British Air Commission as to the immediate availability of thirty Tomahawk planes for Greece.

WALLACE MURRAY

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<sup>97</sup> See memorandum *supra*.

868.248/136

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 28, 1941.

MR. WELLES: Air Vice Marshal Slessor telephoned me yesterday evening to say that, after investigation, he had found that almost all of the Curtiss-Wright Tomahawk (P-40) planes had already been loaded for shipment "to another destination" and that therefore he thought it would be necessary to let the Greeks have the thirty Grumman planes already promised them.

The Air Vice Marshal has already informed the Greek Minister in the above sense and is writing a letter to Secretary Knox confirming the British Government's willingness to forego their request for the Grumman planes.

Information has meanwhile been received from London indicating that spare parts for Grumman planes are being sent to the Near East Command, thus indicating that, contrary to the Air Vice Marshal's earlier understanding, Grumman planes *are* to be used in the Near East; hence, there should be no difficulty about the operation of the planes to be given to the Greek Government.

The Air Vice Marshal added that he assumed the necessary steps should be taken to revoke the President's present order allocating the Grumman planes to the British Government and to authorize the return to the *status ante quo* under which the planes were to be given to the Greeks.

WALLACE MURRAY

Mr. Welles conveyed this morning, by telephone, to the Under Secretary of the Navy the information contained in the present memorandum and requested Mr. Forrestal to take the necessary steps to communicate by radio with the President at sea in order that the President's present order allocating the Grumman planes to the British Government may be revoked and authorization granted to deliver the planes to the Greeks.

W. S. M.

868.248/142

*Memorandum by the Secretary of the Navy (Knox) to the Secretary  
of State*

WASHINGTON, March 29, 1941.

For your information, I quote the following message which I received from the President today:

"Authorized cancellation previous allocation 30 Grumman planes to British and transfer these planes to Greece."

FRANK KNOX



868.248/137

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 31, 1941.

MR. WELLES: Captain Ramsey, of the Bureau of Aeronautics, has just informed me that the President has replied to the communication sent him yesterday by Under Secretary Forrestal, at your request, and has authorized the delivery of the Grumman planes to the Greeks.

I think you would wish to know, however, that Air Vice Marshal Slessor has injected into this matter the old condition originally put forth by Mr. Butler at an earlier date, namely that in return for the British willingness to let the Grumman planes go to the Greeks we should transport the Tomahawk planes, when available, on American ships to Basra for delivery to the British. I pointed out to Captain Ramsay that no such condition had been laid down by Air Vice Marshal Slessor when an agreement in this matter was reached in Secretary Knox's office and that it seemed to me improper to try to inject it now, particularly in view of the fact that we were assured at the time that sufficient British tonnage was immediately available to transport fifteen of the planes and in view, furthermore, of the emphatic statement made by the Greek Minister that an agreement had been reached in London between the competent British authorities and the Greek Legation that British vessels for the transport of the entire thirty planes would be made available. Captain Ramsay said he had discussed this phase of the matter with Admiral Towers and that they were emphatically in accord with my view that we should not allow this matter to become complicated again by the injection of any new condition on shipping and that the Navy would certainly persist in that viewpoint.

Meanwhile the Greek Minister has again come to see me and pointed out that when Secretary Knox was instructed by the President to offer the thirty Grumman planes to Greece, in the first instance, he at the same time offered fifteen of the old training planes apparently for "good measure". Now that the thirty new planes—God willing—were about to be turned over, he said he felt it necessary to inquire regarding the fifteen old planes since he had already referred this matter to his Government, and they had eagerly accepted the entire number, namely 45.

I told the Greek Minister I greatly feared that in the interim after the decision was taken to turn the Grumman planes over to the British, the fifteen old planes had been uncrated and turned back to the Navy, which was desperately in need of them for training purposes. The Minister replied—very helpfully, I thought—that he felt sure his

Government would not insist on receiving the old planes, however much they were wanted, if he could be informed in writing by the Navy Department that the planes were now urgently needed for our defense purposes.

I am now discussing this phase of the question with Captain Ramsey and I shall inform you as soon as we have worked out a satisfactory solution.

WALLACE MURRAY

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868.248/143

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs  
(Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 31, 1941.

MR. WELLES: Supplementing my memorandum of this morning setting forth the latest developments in the matter of Grumman planes for Greece, I am pleased to be able to convey to you the following additional information:

Captain Ramsey, of the Bureau of Aeronautics, informs me that according to information he has received from the British Purchasing Commission the British have now receded from their position taken on Saturday that in return for their willingness to see the Grumman planes go to Greece we should undertake to ship a corresponding number of Tomahawk planes to Basra. The British now acknowledge that they have sufficient vessels ready to ship at least half of the Greek order at once, and that the remainder will go along on subsequent vessels shortly. This development would appear to remove the last hitch in this interminable problem of making available thirty new planes to the Greeks.

With regard to the question of the fifteen old planes also promised the Greeks, Captain Ramsey informs me that he had discussed the matter with the Greek Minister, who expressed to him the same views that he had conveyed to me—that if he could receive a letter from the Secretary of the Navy explaining that these old planes are now vitally needed for our own defense he was certain his Government would let the matter drop. Such a letter has already been drafted by Captain Ramsey and approved by Admiral Towers, and has gone to the Secretary of the Navy for signature.

While I was dictating this memorandum Captain Ramsey called to say that eight of the Grumman planes are being loaded today on a British vessel and are to sail tomorrow for Suez. Thus we appear to be well out of the woods in this matter.

WALLACE MURRAY

868.248/128 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Greece (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, March 31, 1941—7 p. m.

120. Your 163, March 24, 6 p. m. and Department's 112, March 26, 9 p. m. I am happy to inform you that the President has now released to Greece 30 new Grumman fighter planes under the provisions of the Lend-Lease Act. Some of the planes have already been crated for shipping and the crating of the remainder is proceeding rapidly. Shipping tonnage is understood to have been made available by the British authorities for the immediate transportation of approximately half of these planes to Suez, and arrangements for shipping the remainder have been promised for the relatively near future.

HULL

868.24/135 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 7, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received April 7—5: 32 a. m.]

187. The Greek Government has again sought my aid in emphasizing to you as strongly as possible the urgent and growing need here for war material, particularly ammunition, specially mentioning 81 millimeters trench mortar shells, 70,000 rounds of which have recently been lost on the steamship *Gregorios* off East Africa, and 105-19 mountain artillery shells. I am also requested to ask that shipment of 60 155-millimeter guns with ammunition, which I am informed has already been arranged for, be expedited.

MACVEAGH

868.24/135 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Greece (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, April 9, 1941—8 p. m.

135. Your 187, April 7, 1 p. m. Please inform the Greek Government that its appeal has been communicated to the appropriate authorities in the United States and express the confidence of the Department that it will receive prompt and sympathetic consideration.

It may be added that some of the material on the list transmitted recently to the Greek Legation in Washington is already being assembled.

HULL

868.24/145

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

[WASHINGTON,] April 10, 1941.

The British Ambassador <sup>97a</sup> called to see me this afternoon at my request.

The Ambassador stated that Mr. Purvis had received an urgent request from London to obtain the support of this Government in trying to procure through certain of the Latin American Governments 75 millimeter mountain guns which are urgently needed by the Greeks, with the understanding that the British would replace such guns as were made available. I told the Ambassador that my suggestion was that Mr. Purvis see General Marshall <sup>98</sup> personally, because General Marshall is fully familiar with the Latin American aspect of our military problem and would know whether it was worth while to make this attempt. I said that I personally would be glad to be of assistance but that I did not have the technical knowledge which was at the disposition of the War Department.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

868.24/135 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Greece (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, April 16, 1941—9 p. m.

152. Your 187, April 7, 1 p. m. The American authorities charged with the execution of the Lend-Lease Act have suggested the following reply to your telegram under reference :

“Sixty (60) 155 mm. howitzers and 49,000 rounds for them have been released. Thirty thousand (30,000) rounds are enroute for guns already in Greece. Howitzers and 19,000 rounds remain to be shipped and are awaiting transportation. Local Greek authorities are more anxious to get the ammunition than the guns and seem to be willing to wait until they can be hi-speeded.

Five thousand (5,000) rounds of 105 mm. howitzer ammunition are released for Yugoslavia, which in view of the present military situation may never reach that country and could be diverted to Greece. As furnished, these shells must be modified and the charges reestablished for the Schneider Model 1919 guns in Greece. We have no guns of this type.

As to the 81 mm. mortar shell (complete rounds), we can furnish none at the present time. It is understood that 20,000 are en route (sailed February 8), and the information is correct that 70,000 were lost in a ship that never reached Capetown. Study is being made to

<sup>97a</sup> Viscount Halifax.<sup>98</sup> Gen. George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, U. S. Army.

determine whether some machined bodies and fin assemblies can be obtained in the near future. The Greeks say that they can complete the round if they can get these components."

HULL

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[The German invasion and occupation of Greece (see *infra*) ended consideration of military assistance.]

### III. German Invasion of Greece

740.0011 European War 1939/9661 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 6, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received 8 : 15 p. m.]

185. The German Minister<sup>98a</sup> telephoned the Premier<sup>98b</sup> shortly after 5 o'clock this morning and was received about a quarter to 6 when he read a brief statement to the following effect: Germany considers that Greece has taken an unneutral course ever since the outbreak of the war and especially since allowing the debarkation on her soil of British troops in considerable numbers. For this reason Germany is not [*now*] obliged to brush aside the Greek forces on the frontier and enter the country. This entry does not mean that Germany is hostile to Greece or the Greek people but only that she intends attacking the British.

The German Minister has been instructed to demand his passports and to hand over German interests to the Swedish Chargé<sup>98c</sup> from whom I have received the above information. The Chargé d'Affaires thinks hostilities began about 5 o'clock.

Popular demonstrations like those which marked the commencement of the war with Italy are already beginning here.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/9662 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 6, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received April 7—6 : 20 a. m.]

1302. The various documents issued by the Foreign Office today avoid any statement in the nature of declaration of war against Greece

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<sup>98a</sup> Victor Prinz zu Erbach-Schönberg.

<sup>98b</sup> Alexander Korizis.

<sup>98c</sup> Sven Allard.

with the exception of the concluding sentence of a memorandum which was attached to the note handed the Greek Minister<sup>99</sup> today. The memorandum concludes with this statement. "The Reich Government can no longer close their eyes to the fact that Greece is making common cause with Britain and must therefore be regarded as Germany's enemy in the present war with all the consequences that this entails."

The text of the note to the Greek Minister has not yet been made public. I have an appointment with the Greek Minister this afternoon.

MORRIS

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740.0011 European War 1939/9702 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 6, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received April 7—9 : 31 a. m.]

1305. I have just had an hour's conversation with Mr. Rangabé, the Greek Minister. At 5:20 a. m. he was awakened by an official of the Protocol Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs who said that he had been sent to accompany the Minister to see Von Ribbentrop<sup>1</sup> at the Ministry. Rangabé was received at 6:15 by Ribbentrop who handed him a note to read addressed to the Greek Legation. This was more properly a memorandum than a note as it was unsigned. It recited for seven pages the errors of Greece in associating herself with Great Britain and France before the war and of not heeding the friendly overtures of Germany and Italy thereafter. It accused the Greek Cabinet of having come to power by English aid and concluded by stating that Germany had no quarrel with Greek people and would "free" them quickly by driving the English "intruder" into the sea.

Ribbentrop recalled that on last August 26 he had told the Minister documents were in German hands proving the complicity of the Greek Government in aiding England's war efforts. Rangabé reminded Ribbentrop that he had asked at that conversation to see those documents which were never produced to him. The interview ended without further discussion. The Argentine Embassy has taken over Greek interests. The Greek consular staffs have been told to join the Legation staff at the Swiss frontier to which the Legation staff has been ordered to proceed in a special train leaving at noon tomorrow. The Minister and his family will leave for Switzerland the next day by ordinary train.<sup>12</sup> A telegram from the Greek Prime Minister was re-

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<sup>99</sup> Alexandre Rizo-Rangabé.

<sup>1</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>12</sup> The Greek Minister was interned in Germany until the end of the war.

ceived by the Minister in my presence which I read. It was *en clair* in French. It said that at 5:30 a. m. Athens time the German Minister had handed Mr. Korizis a copy of the note or memorandum which Ribbentrop gave to Rangabé.

At the same time the German troops attacked the Greek forces. It instructed the Minister to ask for his passports as the Reich had thus committed an act of war by striking Greece in the back at the moment she was defending herself against Italian aggression and that history would judge this act. It added that Greece had maintained neutrality and denied all assertions to the contrary in the German note. It said that British troops had not landed in Greece until after the Germans had invaded Bulgaria and massed troops on the Greek frontier. The Minister was directed to deliver this communication to the Reich Government.

MORRIS

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740.0011 European War 1939/9719: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 7, 1941—4 p. m.  
[Received April 8—5:50 a. m.]

188. Major Baker<sup>2</sup> reports:

1. Yesterday the German attack began at 5:15 a. m. at three points along the Greco-Bulgarian frontier, the principal attack being on a front of about 80 kilometers astride the Struma River.

2. The Germans have occupied Komotini but are still about 15 kilometers to the north of Xanthi.

3. The German attack at the Struma has been very heavy using intense artillery action, planes and tanks. The Greek covering detachments have been forced back to the main defensive line which so far has not been penetrated. One fort west of the Struma has been lost principally due to dive bombing bombardment. Of about 200 parachutists dropped behind the Greek lines 70 were captured and the rest killed or wounded. The main German attack is evidently intended to effect a penetration west of the Struma and to turn the Greek fortified lines. The Greeks claim 10 German medium tanks destroyed and also 5 or 6 German planes. The British claim 5 German planes also plus the 2 reconnaissance planes yesterday afternoon.

There is no indication as yet of Greco-Yugoslav combined attack on the Italians.

MACVEAGH

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<sup>2</sup> Maj. Joseph K. Baker, Military Attaché in Greece.

740.0011 European War 1939/9736 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 8, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 9 : 45 p. m.]

191. Johnson<sup>a</sup> reported by telephone early this afternoon that the Greek military authorities are leaving Salonika. He also said that all Americans in Macedonia and Thrace with exception of Mr. Tilley of the Gary Tobacco Company, who has decided to stay permanently in Xanthi, and Mr. and Mrs. House of the Farm School, who will remain a while longer, are departing for Athens at once. These are:

Mr. and Mrs. Riggs of Anatolia College,  
Mr. and Mrs. Gardner and two children of the Farm School,  
Mr. Lanckton of the Socony-Vacuum, and  
Miss Smith of the Near East Foundation.

Johnson asked that his family be informed that so far there has been no German bombing of Salonika and indications are that there may not be any. Socony's installations as well as Shell's are ready to be blown up if the Germans enter; the British are in charge.

MACVEAGH

740.0011 European War 1939/9907 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 12, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 6 : 50 p. m.]

1415. The Berlin afternoon press publishes a brief military communiqué stating that German troops have established contact with Italian forces north of Lake Ochrida and a congratulatory telegram from Hitler to Mussolini has been sent.

MORRIS

740.0011 European War 1939/9964 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 14, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received April 15—5 : 45 a. m.]

229. The following are the main points of a long conversation I have just had with the King.

1. King Peter of Yugoslavia is expected here at 5 : 00 by plane from Paramythia where he arrived this morning. It is not known who may be coming with him.

<sup>a</sup> John D. Johnson, Consul at Salonika.



2. General Simovitch<sup>3a</sup> is reported to have ordered all Yugoslav commanders henceforth to act on their own initiative.

3. Greek reconnaissance planes have failed to detect Yugoslav troops in the vicinity of Durazzo.

4. The Greek right has been withdrawn from the Pogradetz region and has been seeking to consolidate a line with the British south of Florina. The Italians have not seriously interfered with this movement.

5. This morning General Wilson<sup>3b</sup> withdrew his armored brigade from the regions south of Florina for reasons which the King has yet to learn and German mechanized forces penetrated between the Greeks and the British, the former losing a full regiment. The Germans have reached Ptolemais and may now be near Kozani.

6. The Germans are using heavy tanks. The British have anti-tank guns capable of dealing with them but the Greeks have not.

7. General Wavell<sup>3c</sup> told the King that he thought the Germans could be held up here at best "for 2 or 4 weeks" by purely defensive operations. Further success would depend on whether the Greeks and British could capture the initiative.

8. The King is having difficulty with panicky and defeatist officials. He has forbidden the Cabinet to haunt general headquarters and has summarily dismissed them to their offices with the order to spread optimism.

9. He himself is ready to leave but only if and when it becomes impossible to function efficiently in Athens. He believes Crete too exposed to air attack from many directions and has asked the British Government to cede a portion of Cyprus for the present, the object being to remain technically on Greek soil.

10. As to whether I should accompany him I said I thought my Government would desire to know his wishes and he replied that he thinks it "vital" that I should do so.

Baker requests War be informed.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/9958 : Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, April 14, 1941—11 p. m.  
[Received April 15—2:40 a. m.]

188. Heavy movement of Bulgarian troops by night through Sofia may mean occupation of Thrace and Macedonia.

EARLE

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<sup>3a</sup> Gen. Dushan Simovitch, Prime Minister of Yugoslavia.

<sup>3b</sup> Lt. Gen. Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, General Officer Commanding British Forces in Greece.

<sup>3c</sup> Gen. Sir Archibald P. Wavell, Commanding General of the British Forces in the Middle East.

740.0011 European War 1939/10016 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 16, 1941—2 p. m.  
[Received 5:04 p. m.]

1448. According to an authoritative source the pertinent German Ministries have been informed that the army expects shortly to occupy all of Yugoslavia and Greece and Egypt as well and have been instructed to immediately select and send full staffs for the administrative supervision of those countries. Because of the demands made on the German bureaucracy in connection with the countries already occupied it is proving a rather difficult matter for the Ministries to form new administrative staffs for the areas expected to fall to German arms. My informant stated that the feeling in the Ministries is one of nearly absolute certainty of early complete occupation of Yugoslavia, Greece and Egypt, that the German general staff had anticipated the quick successes of war gained in the Balkans and that they had occurred only slightly in advance of expectations. He said that it was rumored in the Ministries that Simovitch had already made some armistice overture.

He further stated that the economic authorities of the Reich were entirely cognizant of the fact that the occupation of Greece and Yugoslavia and even of Egypt would not only not strengthen Germany's general economic position but would eventually render it more difficult. They and the army had hoped that war could be avoided in Yugoslavia and Greece.

In conclusion he said that while the informed opinion of the Ministries was that Egypt would shortly fall he personally was somewhat inclined to doubt this prediction. He knew that the gasoline supply was for the moment a serious problem and that the German forces so far landed in Libya were not considered adequate to conquer Egypt. He personally did not feel certain that the Axis would be able to surmount these difficulties of supply and reinforcement.

MORRIS

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740.0011 European War 1939/10075 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 17, 1941—2 p. m.  
[Received April 18—10:18 a. m.]

245. While the Government decided last evening that it would leave tonight, plans are still only in the formative stage, shipping facilities

being apparently inadequate for official, private and possibly military needs. Yugoslav Government is still here and more members are expected today. Meanwhile the armies continue to fall back and rumors of disorganization are rife. The Germans appear to have established complete air superiority and reliable news from front is scanty and always delayed.

Under these circumstances chances of a reasonably safe evacuation of Diplomatic Corps appear slim and the Dean who is the Turkish Ambassador has already decided for this reason to stay here whatever happens. I and my small staff are ready to leave at a moment's notice but am dependent on the Government for arrangements and will not take undue risks.

MACVEAGH

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124.88/55: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 18, 1941—noon.

[Received April 19—5:44 p. m.]

252. Under Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>3d</sup> told me this morning that Government is preparing to leave soon probably for Crete. He said it sincerely desires to have me remain attached to it but that in view of immediate situation in which it can neither provide nor be responsible for transportation I had better stay here and rejoin it later wherever it may be, adding that it would give it some feeling of confidence to have the American Minister remain in Athens for the present. He suggested that when it becomes no longer possible to stay here the best way to depart might be via Turkey.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/10100: Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, April 19, 1941—noon.

[Received 4:05 p. m.]

201. Excellent semi-official Bulgarian source informs me official communiqué will be issued in 6 hours stating for policing and administrative purposes Bulgarian troops will move today into Grecian Thrace and Grecian and Yugoslav Macedonia<sup>4</sup> excepting such military zones as Salonica, Ochrid and Struga.

EARLE

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<sup>3d</sup> Nicholas Mavroudis.

<sup>4</sup> In connection with the war between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and Greece, see President Roosevelt's Proclamation and Regulations, April 24, 1941, Department of State *Bulletin*, April 26, 1941, p. 495.

740.0011 European War 1939/10114: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 19, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received April 20—1: 25 p. m.]

262. The Military Attaché reports that according to Greek headquarters and the British Military Attaché <sup>4a</sup> the Allied lines remain intact. Heavy pressure and continued intense activity against them by German aviation.

It is now clear that something like a panic took place in the Greek Army, Navy and Air Force in the rear areas the day before yesterday, heading up in the War Office and culminating in a crisis which led to the Premier's suicide. Troops at the front seemed to have been unaffected and the situation is now apparently being rectified, disbanded units reassembled and abandoned facilities reoccupied.

Please inform War Department.

MACVEAGH

740.0011 European War 1939/10122: Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 20, 1941—noon.

[Received 4: 35 p. m.]

263. General Alexander Mazarakis, ex-Minister of War, has formed a new government, composition of which is to be announced today. King retains Presidency of Council, the General being Vice President.

British Army is now actively preparing withdrawal to Thermopylae line but British Minister <sup>4b</sup> tells me that at a military conference yesterday afternoon General Papagos expressed doubt as to whether Greek Army in Albania can continue its retreats successfully and protect British flank. Mazarakis was inclined to dissent from this opinion and General Wavell said the British forces will not evacuate if Greeks undertake to continue the retirement in liaison with them. He asked King to inform him of Greek decision "within a couple of days". Should the decision be in the affirmative General Papagos will probably be replaced as Commander-in-Chief. If in the negative British will evacuate their troops as best they can.

Inform War.

MACVEAGH

<sup>4a</sup> Lt. Col. J. S. Blunt.

<sup>4b</sup> Sir Charles Michael Palairret.

740.0011 European War 1939/10209 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 22, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received April 23—8:23 a. m.]

273. On the formal request of the British Minister this Legation has today assumed charge of British diplomatic and consular interests on the mainland of Greece.

The King confirmed to me this morning that the Greek Army in Albania has ceased fighting. The exact terms of the armistice are not yet known here but they are believed to be exclusively of a military nature and to include the placing of a screen of German troops between the Greeks and Italians, the non-entry of Italian troops into Greece and the disbanding of the Greek Army. The King said that German troops are now moving south on the Jannina-A [apparent omission]. The ladies of the Royal Family have left by plane for Crete and King will depart early tomorrow in a similar manner taking Tsouderos<sup>4c</sup> with him. Ministers of Marine, War and Public Safety<sup>5</sup> will remain here to collaborate with General Wilson during next few days. Some members of Government will leave on a war vessel tonight and British plan to take others together with Allied diplomats on freighters or yachts as best they can.

Major Baker asks War be informed that British forces on Theropylae line report no contact with Germans at present and are continuing preparations for evacuation. German air attacks on roads, airdromes and ports continue.

MACVEAGH

740.0011:European War 1939/10241 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 23, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received 11:53 p. m.]

277. My 271, April 22.<sup>5a</sup> I am keeping this code for last-minute communication as it lends itself to quick destruction.

The King and Crown Prince left before dawn today in a British flying boat, taking the Premier and British Minister and family with them. When I saw the King yesterday he said he would be grateful

<sup>4c</sup> E. J. Tsouderos, who became Greek Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and of Finance on April 21, following the death of Premier Korizis.

<sup>5</sup> Rear Adm. Alexander Sakellariou, Brig. Gen. Panayotis Panagakos, and Constantine Maniadakis, respectively.

<sup>5a</sup> Not printed; the Minister reported that he had destroyed certain codes and confidential records of the Legation (124.686/105).

if I should stay here and rejoin him later. I am ordering no officer to follow because of excessive risks involved.

Heavy raids with large formations of bombers and fighters were frequently along this coast yesterday and are continuing this morning. The Athens airfields are being abandoned as useless. Greek and British air forces are now practically nonexistent. Major Craw was given an old Anson plane for his evacuation and intended to fly it to Crete tonight but it has just been destroyed by a bomb and with Major Baker's approval I have ordered him to remain with me in his quality of Attaché. Inform War.

The British Minister told me last night that the Germans are not even reconnoitering the Thermopylae line. It appears they realize the impending evacuation and intend to crush it from the air.

MACVEAGH

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740.0011 European War 1939/10250 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 23, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 5:10 p. m.]

1561. The capitulation of the Greek Army of the Epirus which is given great prominence in the Berlin press this afternoon is described by the *Dienst aus Deutschland* as the beginning of the formal liquidation of all resistance in Greece. The capitulation stated over the radio to have been arranged at Salonika is estimated to cover from 16 to 18 divisions and thus to leave "no opponent of combat power worth mentioning facing the United German and Italian units". The German advance is pictured as proceeding unhaltingly despite the demolition of roads by the British and the comparatively strong resistance of rear guard units which are attempting to cover the flight of the bulk of the British Army to the ports and on to the ships. Much stress is placed on allegations that Anzac soldiers are being sacrificed in order to save troops from the mother country and of reported criticism in Australia of the British command. The asserted refusal of Mackenzie King<sup>5b</sup> to attend the Empire conference is cited as evidence that other parts of the Empire are seriously dissatisfied with the ineptness of London's leadership. It is again hinted that Greek prisoners in German hands may be released as were the Dutch and Norwegian last year. The general impression is that the entire Greek campaign is expected to be concluded in a few days. Only slight mention is made of the removal of the Greek King and Government to Crete but it is admitted in the local press that the proclamation of King George says Greece will continue to fight.

MORRIS

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<sup>5b</sup> Canadian Prime Minister.

740.0011 European War 1939/10263 : Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, April 23, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 11 : 13 p. m.]

216. The Greek Minister <sup>6</sup> in delivering the note to the Foreign Minister <sup>6a</sup> breaking off relations with Bulgaria informed him as follows:

“You have often complained to me of the treacherous way Rumania stabbed Bulgaria in the back in 1913 when you were at death grips with Serbia and Greece and that Bulgaria would never forget this act of Rumania. Let me tell you that Bulgaria’s treacherous act in assisting the German troops in their attack on us, your neighbor, and your occupation of a part of my country after 20 years of peaceful and friendly relations will never be forgotten by Greece.”

He said the Foreign Minister made no reply.

[EARLE]

740.0011 European War 1939/10277 : Telegram

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

ATHENS, April 23, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received April 24—12 : 51 p. m.]

280. Many disbanded Greek soldiers are now arriving here threatening to create serious problems of subsistence and even public order but some of them may be incorporated in the Athens garrison. The capital proper has not yet been bombed but German planes are frequently over the city and repeated alerts, backfire and audible pounding of the environs, together with what many unthinking persons consider desertion of King and Government, have brought public morale to a low ebb. It was intention of Government to take personnel of German Legation to Crete yesterday, exchange with Greeks in Berlin having not yet been arranged but on the energetic protest of Swedish Chargé proposal was dropped.

MACVEAGH

740.0011 European War 1939/10498

*The Greek Legation to the Department of State*

The Greek Minister <sup>7</sup> is instructed to suggest to the United States Government that it would be of high importance to issue a declaration

<sup>6</sup> Panayotis Pipinélis.<sup>6a</sup> Ivan Vladimir Popoff.<sup>7</sup> Cimon P. Diamantopoulos.

stating that no forcible territorial modifications at the expense of the integrity of Greece shall be recognized. The Greek Government think that it would be, moreover, advisable to warn the Bulgarian Government on the sanctions to be taken in case where any methods (transfer of populations) would be applied in order to alter the ethnological complexion of Thrace and Macedonia.

WASHINGTON, April 24, 1941.

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740.0011 European War 1939/10499

*Statement by President Roosevelt, April 25, 1941*<sup>7a</sup>

The heroic struggle of the Hellenic people to defend their liberties and their homes against the aggression of Germany after they had so signally defeated the Italian attempt at invasion has stirred the hearts and aroused the sympathy of the whole American people.

During the Hellenic War of Independence more than a century ago, our young nation, prizing its own lately won independence, expressed its ardent sympathy for the Greeks and hoped for Hellenic victory. That victory was achieved.

Today, at a far more perilous period in the history of Hellas, we intend to give full effect to our settled policy of extending all available material aid to free peoples defending themselves against aggression. Such aid has been and will continue to be extended to Greece.

Whatever may be the temporary outcome of the present phase of the war in Greece, I believe that the Greek people will once more ultimately achieve their victory and regain their political independence and the territorial integrity of their country. In that high objective, the people of Greece and their Government can count on the help and support of the Government and the people of the United States.

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740.0011 European War 1939/10353

*The Greek Minister (Diamantopoulos) to the Secretary of State*

No. 1167

WASHINGTON, April 25, 1941.

EXCELLENCY: According to my instructions, I have the honor to inform you that the Royal Greek Government has been established at Canea, Crete.

Accept [etc.]

C. DIAMANTOPOULOS

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<sup>7a</sup> Statement made by the President when he received a delegation of the Greek patriotic society, Ahepa.



740.0011 European War 1939/10379 : Telegram

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

ANKARA, April 26, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 8:14 p. m.]

111. [For the] Secretary and Under Secretary. In strictest secrecy my British colleagues advise me that German capture of certain demilitarized Greek islands off Dardanelles, and possibility of similar occupation and conversion into air bases of Mytilene and other islands commanding Turkish coast and vastly increasing potentialities of German air power against eventual defense of whole western area of Turkey, have prompted British Government to suggest to Greek Government that it invite Turkey take over and administer them. Anticipating Greek response to this suggestion British Ambassador has approached Turkish authorities to urge that such request, when received, be acted upon with utmost despatch. Although not finding any indication of positive opposition to this suggestion, he is fearful lest Turks will not until too late make up their minds to assume risks involved.

(2) Having discussed with me Turkish attitude as reported in my 110 yesterday,<sup>8</sup> Hugessen<sup>9</sup> requests that I ask you to repeat it to American Embassy, London, for possible discussion with Foreign Office.

MACMURRAY

124.68/55 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Greece (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, April 26, 1941—8 p. m.

182. Your 252, April 18, noon. The Department appreciates the rapidly changing circumstances affecting the question of the departure of the Diplomatic Corps from Athens, and leaves to your discretion the decision with regard to your own action in this respect. You should bear in mind the desirability of maintaining close contact with the Greek Government, either by you or a member of your staff, whenever this may become practicable. The Department, of course, would not wish you or any member of your staff to incur undue risk in attempting to rejoin the Greek Government.

HULL

<sup>8</sup> Not printed.

<sup>9</sup> Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, British Ambassador in Turkey.

740.0011 European War 1939/10449 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 29, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 6:45 p. m.]

1640. German reports on the occupation of Athens assert that except for desultory fighting in the vicinity the Greek capital was occupied without a struggle and that it had not been either bombed or machine gunned from the air. The surrender was arranged on the Greek side by the Civil Governor and the Mayor. Much is made of the statement that the Greek flag is flying alongside of the Nazi flag on the Acropolis. On the other hand much damage is reported as having been inflicted by air bombardment on the Piraeus and it is claimed that the wrecks of 5 transport ships of about 3000 tons each and 1 of 7000 tons lie in the harbor. The only mention of the number of British prisoners is a report that 900 British soldiers were captured by parachute troops near Corinth.

MORRIS

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740.0011 European War 1939/10501 : Telegram

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

ANKARA, April 30, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 11:50 p. m.]

117. [For the] Secretary and Under Secretary. Giving its own turn to British suggestion reported in my No. 111, April 26, Turkish Foreign Office has now invited attention of German Embassy to fact that certain of Greek islands in question were demilitarized by Lausanne Convention<sup>10</sup> (article 13) at instance and for protection of this country; and (while making clear that it has not consulted Greek Government in matter) has proposed that Turkey provisionally assume possession and administration of them and undertake to maintain their neutral and non-military status.

2. While there is reason to believe this proposal may be satisfactory to British it seems less likely to prove acceptable to Germans and might well become occasion for precipitating showdown in their relations with Turkey.

MACMURRAY

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<sup>10</sup> Treaty of peace signed at Lausanne, July 24, 1923, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. xxviii, p. 11.

740.0011 European War 1939/10379: Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 3, 1941—3 p. m.

53. Your No. 111, April 26, 4 p. m., last sentence. The Department does not consider it desirable to comply with Hugessen's suggestion since he is in communication with his Government and it would be inappropriate for the Department to initiate discussions involving primarily Anglo-Turkish relations.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/10828

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Alling)*

[WASHINGTON,] May 3, 1941.

Colonel Cox <sup>11</sup> telephoned today to say he thought we might be interested in knowing that MID had just been informed by General von Boetticher, the German Military Attaché, that German forces had occupied the following islands in the Aegean Sea: Skyros, Myconas, Nikaria and Suda. Colonel Cox said that MID had been able to identify the first three islands, but they could not identify Suda. Upon investigation it appears likely that the island in question is probably Syros, but this is not certain.

740.0011 European War 1939/10790: Telegram

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

ANKARA, May 9, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 5:15 p. m.]

136. For Secretary and Under Secretary. It would appear that although suggestion reported my 111, April 26, was made as a result of intimation from King Greek Government ultimately rejected it. It is also understood that that Government took great offence on learning of Turkish approach to Germans (my 117, April 30) of which it had not been informed in advance.

MACMURRAY

<sup>11</sup> Lt. Col. Walter Cox, Military Intelligence Division, War Department.

740.0011 European War 1939/10892: Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, May 13, 1941—11 p. m.  
[Received May 14—1:22 a. m.]

477. Captain James Roosevelt<sup>12</sup> returned to Alexandria this morning from a visit of 4 hours to Crete where he delivered to the King of Greece the letter from the President<sup>13</sup> and asks that the following message from the King be delivered to the President immediately.

“The King is deeply appreciative of the President’s message and hopes that the expression of continued aid to Greece will be carried out. He, like our Government, has the firm intention to carry on.”

The King is sending a communication direct to the President<sup>13</sup> but fears that it may be delayed in transmission.

Captain Roosevelt confirms the report contained in my 474, May 12, 11 p. m.,<sup>14</sup> regarding the proposed departure of the King from Crete and adds that the decision is being reached at the urgent requests of the British Minister to Greece and not on His Majesty’s own initiative.

Captain Roosevelt returns to Cairo this evening.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/11141: Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, May 20, 1941—4 p. m.  
[Received May 21—6:18 a. m.]

541. A report has been received here that intensive military operations were started by the Germans against Crete this morning using parachute troops and gliders.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/11260: Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, May 24, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received May 25, 2:35 p. m.]

580. My 564, May 22 [23], 7 p. m.<sup>14</sup> King George of Greece arrived in Alexandria yesterday accompanied by the British Minister to Greece who had been in Crete.

<sup>12</sup> Son of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

<sup>13</sup> Not found in Department files.

<sup>14</sup> Not printed.

Detailed information regarding the continued intensive military action in Crete is not available here and although there is no inclination to minimize the gravity of the situation there the fact that the position is still being held is regarded at the moment as grounds for some confidence in British circles here. Serious British naval losses are admitted but German reinforcements by sea are said to have been so far impeded.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/11363 : Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, May 27, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received May 28—8:45 a. m.]

594. For the President, the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 593, May 27, 2 p. m.<sup>16</sup> According to the latest advices the situation in Crete is extremely serious if not desperate. This circumstance brings one further step nearer the Nazi threat to Egypt and to the entire position of the Empire in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. With the known status of British organization here and the lack of material, particularly air, and trained personnel, the prospect is dark and I personally see no hope of correcting the deficiencies or relieving the general situation unless and until the United States enters the war.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/11497 : Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, May 30, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received June 1—7:12 a. m.]

622. My 621, May 30, 6 p. m.<sup>16</sup> From the Military Attaché to M. I. D. The fact that the evacuation of Crete is actually in progress although known in limited circles in Cairo has not yet attained any degree of publicity here.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/11503 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 31, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 6:15 p. m.]

2155. Following the High Command claim yesterday that the battle for Crete is nearing its conclusion, the press this morning for the first

<sup>16</sup> Not printed.

time discusses the strategic importance of that island for the further prosecution of the war in the Near East. Crete is described as a spring-board for air and sea attacks on Alexandria, Cyprus and Haifa and British newspapers are quoted to prove that London regards it as the key position in the whole struggle for Suez. The German public is thus being prepared for further developments in the Eastern Mediterranean region and is being given the impression that the Axis is well on its way to breaking the lifeline of the British Empire. British and American comments are also cited as emphasizing the significance of the Cretan campaign as a rehearsal for a possible later attempt to land in England. An effort is obviously being made to concentrate attention on Suez and apparently also to create the impression that the next major offensive operations will be in that theater.

MORRIS

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740.0011 European War 1939/11554: Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, May 31, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received June 2—8: 54 p. m.]

631. My 594, May 27, 4 p. m. and my 622, May 30, 7 p. m. In view of the recent developments in Crete and their consequent effect upon the British naval position in the Mediterranean and the military situation in North Africa and the Middle East, I submit the following personal observations with special reference to a British stand against German arms in Egypt: I have not noticed that isolated victories arouse enthusiasm in Germany but I do believe that the extension of battle areas even resulting in conquests affects adversely the German people for they realize that the winning of battles does not bring what they have been told they are fighting for, namely, peace. On the other hand the projection of German power over foreign countries without resorting to force of arms serves to reenforce the faith in the Nazi machine. Hence it is of prime importance to oppose Nazi arms at every point for any resort to force, however unsuccessful, is better than none as armed opposition assails the Nazi machine not only in the foreign field where it strikes but also within Germany where its power is generated.

It is true that in spite of the extreme gravity of the consequences of a Nazi victory in the Middle East the war will not be lost in this area but gains could have been and still could be registered here which would far outweigh the advantages of a so-called strategic withdrawal. To this end are essential an immediate stiffening of purpose to resist here and the utmost ingenuity and effort in strengthening the armed forces. As the Department is already aware all agree that the

essential requirement here is and always has been for airplanes, tanks and motor transport but the immediate and emphatic stress is upon the need for planes and more planes. It is clear that in the case of tanks and motor vehicles delays in shipment can only be reduced but not overcome. As regards airplanes, however, it is impossible to rest under the assertion that with initiative, ingenuity and efficient organization a quantity of planes could not be flown here immediately with adequate equipment available to turn the balance at a crucial moment in the course of eventual operations. It may be that such a measure is practically impossible of accomplishment but so far as I can gather here the failure to make such an effort is not due to its practical aspects but rather to lack of initiative and a supine acquiescence the dilatory methods of bureaucratic procedure. It may also be that a long range view which is invisible here has inspired a farsighted plan which would render such drastic efforts at present unnecessary. Judging, however, solely from the immediate set up here and without intending to exaggerate the local situation beyond its proportion it would seem that unless something along the foregoing line is done or unless a miracle happens another failure is in sight and those who have held the profound conviction that Hitler might win battles but never win the war will be compelled to readjust their thought to the possibility that at the present rate he may be allowed to win so many battles that finally no one can win the war.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/11610 : Telegram

*The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State*

CAIRO, June 2, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received June 4—1:45 a. m.]

643. My 642, June 2, 4 p. m.<sup>17</sup> Aside from the strictly military aspects of the defeat in Crete and its inevitable effect on British prestige particular emphasis should be placed on the immediately serious consequences of further but as yet undisclosed heavy British naval losses and of the precarious position in which the remainder of the fleet is left as a result of the limitation on its movements imposed by the establishment of German control over the narrows between Libya and Crete. In fact the question is now raised in certain quarters as to whether the eastern Mediterranean may be considered tenable for surface craft and it is also problematical whether it will be possible to hold Malta.

Another serious aspect of the Crete campaign is the further demonstration which it furnishes of the lack of coordination among the

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<sup>17</sup> Not printed.

various branches of the British Armed Forces owing to the absence of a unified command and to interference in military matters on the part of the executive branch of the Government and as a result of the foregoing there appears to be a development of a tendency to outspoken mutual recrimination among the members of the army, naval and air units.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/11553 : Telegram

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

LONDON, June 2, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received June 2—1 : 10 p. m.]

2244. Personal for the President from Harriman.<sup>18</sup> The Prime Minister<sup>19</sup> considers Crete as a defeat. Navy could not have continued to prevent landings by sea. In addition to sinkings damage to so many of the units of the fleet by dive bombers crippled further naval operations. Detail of damage has been supplied to United States Navy.

He believes tactics in dealing with air-borne invasion were unsuccessful not only because of lack of support by air but because of lack of tanks. Lack of and interference with transportation within island which has only one road also handicapped reinforcement where needed. He believes destruction to enemy aircraft and specially trained personnel, parachutists, et cetera, has been very great.

He considers that engagement is not at all parallel to possible attempted invasion of Britain because of air fighter strength here and ready land communication and that on the whole experience is reassuring. I believe, however, that the neglected subject of tanks will now receive even greater attention.

There is no diminution in determination to defend Egypt.

JOHNSON

**IV. German-Italian-Bulgarian Occupation; Protection of American Interests; Withdrawal of American Representatives From Occupied Greece**

740.0011 European War 1939/10467 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 30, 1941.

[Received April 30—11 : 48 a. m.]

1660. Following is translation of German text of telegram to Department from MacVeagh<sup>19a</sup> transmitted orally by Foreign Office:

<sup>18</sup> W. Averell Harriman, special representative of President Roosevelt, with rank of Minister, in the United Kingdom to facilitate and expedite material aid (lend-lease) to the British Empire.

<sup>19</sup> Winston S. Churchill, British Prime Minister.

<sup>19a</sup> Lincoln MacVeagh, American Minister in Greece.



"298, April 29. All Americans in Athens are safe. Occupation of city carried out in orderly and peaceful manner. German Legation very helpful in assuring respect for property."

MORRIS

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368.1115/222 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 14, 1941.

[Received May 14—7:32 p. m.]

1903. Following is translation of message received today from Athens via the Foreign Office:

301, May 6th. Approximately 60 American citizens desire to leave Greece as well as presumably a further number of American citizens of Greek racial affinity and a few South American diplomats and citizens. This does not include members of those missions who may receive instructions to go elsewhere. The German authorities have informed me that permission to leave can be issued shortly. On the other hand it is possible that railway traffic will not be restored in Greece for some time and departure by automobile to Salonika and thence by rail would involve serious difficulties with respect to financial, visa and baggage questions. Most of the Americans are in a position to pay the transportation costs immediately after their arrival in the United States but many of them are temporarily not solvent due to the freezing of credits. I should therefore be very grateful if the State Department in cooperation with the Red Cross whose representatives I have now consulted would examine the possibility of sending an American or other neutral ship to transport the passengers in question to Lisbon or direct to the United States. I should like to add that several members of the American colony, including Roy Gausmann of the Water Company, Rodney Young (group garbled) *New York Post* are at present seriously ill.

Is the State Department's telegram number 124 of November 30th, 1939,<sup>20</sup> still valid in view of the blocking of accounts or would it authorize this Legation to draw a check and advance funds for repatriation of American citizens against an undertaking to repay. As for myself I should be grateful if the Department would call me home for consultation or authorize me to take home leave before I go elsewhere. MacVeagh.

MORRIS

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<sup>20</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, p. 634.

740.0011 European War 1939/13019

*The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

No. 4915

ATHENS, May 15, 1941.

[Received July 10.]

SIR: Following my despatch No. 4887 of May 6th,<sup>21</sup> regarding the occupation of Athens by German forces and the efforts of this Legation to protect British interests, I have the honor to report herewith the principal activities of the Legation in the protection of American interests during the same emergency. The following account is chronological in arrangement, and is summarized at the conclusion of the despatch.

Three days before the arrival of German forces in Athens, a meeting of the American Safety Committee of Key Men was called by the First Secretary and Consul General,<sup>22</sup> who informed the Committee of various arrangements which had been made to deal with the conditions considered likely to arise under the occupation of Athens by the German forces. These arrangements included the preparing of Loring Hall, part of the property of the American School of Classical Studies, which had been taken over as an annex of the American Legation with the consent of the Greek Government some time before, to provide shelter for the American colony should disorders or other conditions render concentration under official protection desirable. Should evacuation from the city be indicated, four trucks were reported as available, in addition to the private cars of the colony, and a considerable supply of gasoline was declared to be in the possession of the Committee, individual Americans, and the Legation. The Committee was also informed that a number of special certificates had been prepared by the Legation for use in the protection of American property. These covered, in various forms, the property of the American Red Cross, of the Administrative Committee of American Relief (Vanderbilt Committee), and of the Near East Foundation, as well as dwellings of American citizens, their business premises, and their cars. A number of such certificates were distributed to the members of the Committee.

On April 24th, three days before the arrival of the German troops, the Executive Committee of the Administrative Committee of American Relief (Vanderbilt Committee), placed the sum of 20,000,000 drachmas in the hands of the Consul General for disbursement in accordance with its instructions contained in a covering letter, a copy of which is enclosed herewith.<sup>21</sup> According to these instructions, 15,000,000 drachmas were to be expended primarily for the relief of

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<sup>21</sup> Not printed.

<sup>22</sup> Leslie E. Reed.

Greek-Americans cut off from their usual sources of income, and 5,000,000 drachmas for other unspecified payments to be made in consultation with the Executive Committee. These funds were in cash and were deposited in the Legation's safe.

As information had been conveyed to the Americans in Athens that the Legation was prepared to accept valuables for safekeeping, a considerable number of American citizens brought packages to the Legation. These were sealed by an officer and by the owner and placed in one of the office safes. No inquiry was made as to the contents, which, it is understood, consisted sometimes of jewelry, gold, silver, and precious stones, sometimes of cash, and sometimes of important documents, as well as other types of valuables. A list was kept of the persons depositing such articles. Some persons suggested their desire to leave furniture, or trunks containing clothing, but the limitations of space in the office made it impossible to comply with these requests.

On April 27th, German troops occupied the city of Athens. Their entry was peaceful and orderly, and no incidents occurred involving Americans, who mostly remained in their homes.

On the afternoon of that day, First Secretary Reed had an interview with a German officer, who had established himself in the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and who was said to be a representative of the German Foreign Office. In this interview it was established that matters affecting American citizens should be taken up by the Legation with the German Legation, which was empowered to take all necessary steps for their protection. It was also learned that the German Legation would be able to despatch a telegram to the Department of State within a very short time. On the following day (April 28th), Mr. Reed had a further interview with a Secretary of the German Legation, who called at the Legation accompanied by another German officer representing the German Foreign Office. The Legation was busy during the day issuing additional certificates for the protection of American property.

On April 29th, a telegram addressed to the Department was handed to the German Legation, written in the German language at the request of the latter, reporting the German occupation of Athens, the fact that all Americans were safe, and that the German Legation was being very helpful in assuring respect for property.

The newly-organized relief section under the direction of Consul and Second Secretary Berry began receiving applicants for assistance.

As no disorders and very little disturbance to the American community had occurred, Loring Hall was not utilized as a refuge by the Americans.

On April 30th, I sent my telegram No. 299 to the Department,<sup>23</sup> reporting the formation of a new Greek Government in Athens and the appointment of Ministers for all the portfolios, except that of Foreign Affairs, which was being handled by the German Legation.

Many inquiries having been received from American citizens regarding the possibility of returning to the United States, the Legation, on May 1st, made a formal written inquiry of the German Legation as to the documents which would be required in order to permit the departure from Greece of American citizens.

Dr. Vogel, Secretary of the German Legation, informed Mr. Reed, on May 1st, that he was anxious to prevent any seizure of American property, and would be glad to receive information of any incidents which might occur in this connection, as promptly as possible. He referred to my telegram of April 30th, reporting the formation of a new Greek Government, and said that his Legation had been glad to forward that telegram, but stated that any future references of a political character should be considered in the light of whether or not they directly affected our Legation, explaining that this limitation was imposed only because of the great pressure on communications. He added that any telegram whatever affecting the administration of the Legation's business would, of course, be sent. He also referred to the *aide-mémoire* of his conversation with Mr. Reed, regarding certain relief and other payments for British interests, and confirmed that there was no objection to the Legation's proceeding in accordance therewith for the time being, pending a final decision from Berlin regarding the whole question of American representation of British interests in Greece.

On May 3rd, Mr. Homer Davis, President of Athens College, informed Mr. Reed that he had been notified by a German soldier to turn over his house at the seaside, near the village of Loutsas, to German troops, on Saturday morning, May 4th, and that if he did not do it personally, or deliver the keys to the messenger, the house would be broken into. Mr. Reed immediately went to the office of Mr. Davis, interviewed the German soldier, and learned the designation of the military unit which proposed to occupy the house. He then communicated with the German Legation, and Dr. Vogel promised to do what was necessary for the protection of Mr. Davis' property. In fact, he sent a messenger from the Legation to Loutsas to deliver the protection order. Loutsas is situated about 20 miles from Athens. Dr. Vogel reported to me personally the same evening that this effective step had been taken.

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<sup>23</sup> Not printed.

On May 4th, the Legation was informed by the Director of the American Girls' College (Orlinda Childs Pierce College) at Helleniko, a suburb of Athens, that a detachment of German troops had arrived and that, while the officer in command declined to see the Director, he had notified her that some of the buildings of the College would be occupied the following morning. Mr. Reed communicated with Dr. Vogel, who took prompt steps to prevent this occupation from occurring, sending to Miss Mills, the Director, that same afternoon, an order forbidding the German troops to enter the premises of the College. He also sent to the Legation a similar certificate for use if at any time in the future other German troops should attempt to enter the school grounds.

On May 5th, Mr. Reed had a further discussion with Dr. Vogel on pending questions, including the attitude of the German Government toward Consular officers of enemy countries, (this matter arising from the case of the British Vice Consul at Skoplje, Yugoslavia, already reported in my despatch No. 4887). Dr. Vogel pointed out that the British Consular officers in Germany had been sent to Holland at the outbreak of the British-German war, but said that those who remained in enemy countries during the war and were subsequently captured in an enemy country, were taken into custody and kept in Germany during the war.

Dr. Vogel was informed, with reference to the possible evacuation of Americans, that many of the members of the American colony were in possession of automobiles and gasoline, and were in a position to travel to Salonika at any time, in order to take trains from there in pursuit of their journeys to the United States. He had previously explained that the railroad from Athens to Salonika had been very severely damaged, and that a considerable period of time must elapse before it could again be in service.

The matter of obtaining funds for the expenses of the American Legation was also discussed. Mr. Reed reported that it had thus far been impossible to sell the usual draft on the Secretary of State, which had been presented to a Greek bank on April 30th. Dr. Vogel promised to investigate the situation. At a later date he explained that, because of the action taken by the American Government in freezing certain foreign funds and credits in the United States, there was some doubt that our draft, if accepted by a local bank, could be cashed in the United States. In spite of Mr. Reed's explanations on the subject, Dr. Vogel said that he would prefer that an inquiry be addressed to the American Embassy in Berlin in order to ascertain how such matters had been handled in the other occupied countries, and this was done, through the German Legation.

A number of American-owned automobiles was seized by German troops at different times. In some cases receipts were given by German

officers showing requisition of the automobiles, but in other cases no documents were given and no information was available as to the particular unit which had requisitioned the car. All American owners had been provided on application with certificates issued by this Legation, containing a statement in the German language to the effect that the car described was American property and requesting respect therefor. These certificates were, in general, of little use in preventing seizure, but the fact that they had been provided and that the requisitioning officers were consequently aware of the American ownership of the cars was duly brought to the attention of the German Legation. In this connection it may be reported specifically that a number of gasoline and oil tank trucks, belonging to the American-owned Socony Vacuum Oil Company, were requisitioned, some after the giving of receipts and some without. As soon as information was received at this Legation regarding each case, it was reported to the German Legation, which invariably stated that such action was without the knowledge or consent of the German Government and that every effort would be made to return the automobile to its owner. Within a few days, the occupying forces instituted a system of control of automobiles, stopping all cars in the streets and demanding the exhibition of the written authority for the operation of the car stopped. By this means it has been possible to obtain the return of most of the automobiles requisitioned.

In connection with the desire of the American citizens in Athens to return to the United States, a committee was appointed for the purpose of interviewing the prospective travelers in order to ascertain their total number, financial resources, and whether they possessed automobiles and gasoline for a possible trip to Salonika. This committee, consisting of volunteers, included Mr. Ralph Kent, Assistant Director of Athens College; Mr. Arthur Parsons, Assistant Director of the American School of Classical Studies; and Mr. Shirley Weber, Librarian of the Gennadion Library. A list of the Americans in the Athens consular district was prepared from the records of the Consulate General and a circular letter was forwarded to the adults found to be entitled to the protection of the American Government, informing them of the fact that arrangements were being made with a view to returning to the United States and suggesting that interested persons should communicate with the committee which had established an office in the American Express Company. This committee has been very active in interviewing the Americans and compiling data which would be useful in case of evacuation.

On May 6th, I sent, through the German Legation, my telegram No. 301 to the Department as follows:

[Here follows text of telegram No. 301, transmitted in telegram No. 1903, May 14, from the Chargé in Germany, printed *supra*.]

In view of the possibility that the Legation might be withdrawn from Athens, or that political developments might necessitate the closing of the entire Government establishment here, it seemed desirable to obtain authority for the termination of the lease of the present office quarters and the transfer of the office to less expensive quarters. In this connection, Loring Hall, a building of the American School of Classical Studies, now, by arrangement with the Trustees of the School as well as with the Greek Government, an annex of the Legation, seemed an ideal location, as being American property, conveniently situated and sufficiently large to permit of the storage of archives and furniture. In addition, the rent, if any, over and above the enhanced governmental protection thus guaranteed to the premises, could be arranged with the Trustees in America and paid there without involving difficulties of exchange. Consequently, I sent the following telegram, through the German Legation, on May 7th, No. 302:

[Here follows text of telegram, not printed.]

Food supplies in Greece were exhausted almost immediately after the arrival of the German forces, and the situation became extremely difficult. The German Legation made arrangements for the obtaining of staple articles of food on a rationing basis by the officers and employees of the foreign Legations in Athens, and authorization thereunder was given to this Legation for the purchase of food on May 9th. However, these arrangements did not modify the fact that food was almost unobtainable, and only procured with great difficulty.

On May 7th, a letter was received from the Administrative Committee of American Relief (Vanderbilt Committee), stating that it was desired to place certain unexpended funds of that Committee in the custody of the American Legation for safe-keeping. The sum of 25,000,000 drachmas, in cash, had actually been deposited here, and a further amount of 50,000,000 drachmas credited to the account of the Legation at the National Bank of Greece on April 25th. Within a week after the receipt of the explanatory letter, however, all but 8,500,000 drachmas of this money was withdrawn by the Committee, satisfactory arrangements having been made for its expenditure by the Greek Red Cross. The balance is being held at the disposal of the Greek Red Cross in accordance with instructions from the Committee.

On May 7th, another meeting of the American Safety Committee of Key Men was held at the office of the Consul General. It was decided that the stocks of food which had been concentrated in the American School of Classical Studies might be made available to the members of the American community, if required, in view of the food shortage. Possible arrangements for the evacuation of the community were discussed, as well as a number of other pending questions, such as the registration by the German authorities of all automobiles.

This Legation sent to the Department, through the German Legation, for forwarding to the Socony Vacuum Oil Company of New York, two telegrams from its Athens Branch, reporting the desire of the German military authorities to purchase the entire property of the Company, and requesting powers of attorney for various Greek employees of the Company. Telegrams were also sent, through the German Legation, for the Near East Foundation and for the American School of Classical Studies.

The German troops, in their efforts to find quarters for their officers, occupied, or attempted to occupy, a number of houses or apartments owned or leased by American citizens. In each case the matter was reported to the German Legation by Mr. Reed, and the Secretary of that Legation, Dr. Vogel, was successful in preserving respect for the American property.

The work of the Relief Section of the Consulate General increased with tremendous rapidity and, within a few days, a double line of waiting people extended outside the building, around the corner, to the next block. This section was gradually enlarged by the assistance of clerks from most of the sections of the combined office, who have been working from early morning until late in the evening.

#### SUMMARY

The American community in Athens has been kept currently informed of matters affecting its members through the American Safety Committee of Key Men.

The Administrative Committee of American Relief (Vanderbilt Committee), in order to protect its funds from a probable bank moratorium and possible later interference with its benevolent activities, transferred a total of 95,000,000 drachmas, equivalent to some \$632,000.00, to the Legation, 20,000,000 drachmas for expenditure by the Legation and 75,000,000 drachmas for safekeeping and withdrawal at the decision of the Committee.

Valuables and documents were deposited in the Legation for safekeeping by many members of the American community.

The occupation of Athens by German troops occurred on April 27th, without any molestation of the American residents.

The German Legation took over the functions of the former Greek Foreign Office in connection with the protection of American interests, and negotiations on these subjects were henceforth carried on with the German Legation, which adopted the title "Office of the Plenipotentiary of the German Reich in Greece".

The Relief Section of the Consulate General began the expenditure of the sum of 20,000,000 drachmas received from the Vanderbilt Committee for the relief of Americans and Greek-Americans.



The members of the American community still in Athens informed this Legation of their desire to return to the United States as soon as possible, and this desire was reported to the Department and to the German authorities by the Legation.

A committee of Americans appointed by the Consul General and working in collaboration with the Consulate General, assembled information regarding the Americans planning to leave (including Greek-Americans whose right to protection had been verified at the Consulate General).

The German Legation stated that it was the intention of the German authorities fully to respect American property rights and that any violation thereof reported to the Legation would be promptly rectified. A number of seizures and attempted seizures of American real, movable, and personal property was reported to the German Legation, which took action, in most cases effective, to preserve American property rights. Certificates of American ownership issued by the Legation for American real, movable, and personal property, were generally helpful in preserving respect for such property.

From the date of the German occupation of Athens, local banks refused to deal in foreign exchange or to cash American checks, including the official drafts of the Legation. The situation was reported, through the German Legation, to the American Embassy in Berlin, with a view to making arrangements for the cashing of official drafts.

Telegraphic authorization was requested from the Department for the termination of the lease of the present office quarters and the removal of the offices to the American School of Classical Studies, an American-owned property.

Food supplies were obtained with great difficulty, but a rationing system for the foreign Legation was arranged by the German authorities.

The Legation sent telegrams, during the period under review, through the German Legation and the Department, for three American organizations in Athens, the American School of Classical Studies, the Near East Foundation, and the Socony Vacuum Oil Company.

Respectfully yours,

LINCOLN MACVEAGH

124.68/58

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] May 15, 1941.

The Greek Minister<sup>24</sup> called on me on May 13 to inquire whether the Department had in mind sending a diplomatic representative, as soon as possible, to Crete to be near the King and the Greek Govern-

<sup>24</sup> Cimon P. Diamantopoulos.

ment, which has fled there since the occupation of Greece. I told the Minister that we were now giving the matter careful consideration and were endeavoring, as a first step, to get in touch with Mr. MacVeagh, who is still in Athens. I explained that it had been our intention, and also that of Mr. MacVeagh, to follow the King if and when it became necessary for the Sovereign and the Greek Government to leave Athens but that, owing to physical difficulties of transportation and travel, Mr. MacVeagh had not been able, as yet, to reach the present seat of the Greek Government. As soon as we are able to establish contact with the Minister and ascertain his plans and intentions, I said, we contemplated instructing him to send a member of his staff to Crete in case he found it impracticable to proceed there himself. I added that from present indications it would be necessary for an officer to proceed from Athens through Sofia and Istanbul to Cairo and to fly from there.

The Minister inquired whether he might inform his Government in the above sense, and I said I saw no objection.

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368.1115/222 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1941.

1396. Your 1903, May 14. Following for MacVeagh in reply to his 301, May 6.

184. Department is unable provide funds or shipping for repatriation for the large number of Americans in the Mediterranean area. Upon receipt from you of information as to names, addresses and amounts desired, it will gladly communicate with relatives, friends or employers here of Americans in Greece needing funds for subsistence or repatriation expenses and to endeavor to transmit those funds if received.

You should proceed to Washington for consultation at your early convenience.<sup>25</sup> Formal travel order follows.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/13541

*The Consul at Salonika (Johnson) to the Secretary of State*

No. 38

SALONIKA, May 26, 1941.

[Received July 30.]

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith an account of the occupation by German troops of the city of Salonika on April 9, 1941,

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<sup>25</sup> The Minister in Greece left Athens, June 5, 1941, for Vienna, en route to the United States.

(Memorandum No. 1, April 10, 1941 <sup>26</sup>), and the events leading up to it, together with various memoranda relating to the activities of this Consulate in protecting American interests, its efforts to represent foreign interests, and its relations with the German authorities since the occupation.

There is included also correspondence relating to the theft by German soldiers of the automobile of Vice Consul Gullion.

The Consulate, as will be seen by these memoranda, has found it particularly difficult to act effectively to represent foreign interests. The German authorities here have taken the view that Yugoslavia and Belgium, being occupied countries, no longer have consular interests and that the United States Consulate in Salonika, therefore, cannot assume provisional representation of these interests as was requested by the Belgian and Yugoslav consulates here.

Salonika was directly in the path of German military operations and developments occurred with great swiftness. The first military units to arrive on the spot took immediate possession of the British Consulate where the American flag was displayed and a notice had been affixed to the doors. Since then the Consul was allowed to enter the Consulate only once and then with military escort. (Memorandum Enclosure No. 2, April 9, 1941).

In response to this Consulate's memorandum (Enclosure No. 2a of April 17, 1941), reviewing the refusal of the German authorities to permit representation of British interests or taking charge of the consular property and archives, and requesting a clarification of the attitude of the German authorities, the German Consul General, Dr. Schönberg, replied verbally five days later that the German High Command here categorically refused to permit such representation. At the same time the question as to whether the refusal of facilities to represent British interests included a prohibition to pay relief to destitute holders of British passports was not made clear. The German Consul General said that he "would advise against" such relief. As soon as communications with Athens are restored the Consulate will ask the Consulate General to seek a clarification from the German higher authorities in Athens. The officials in Salonika have been changed frequently and it had been found difficult to get a decision from any competent person.

Efforts to protect American interests were directed, in the period immediately before the occupation, to aiding the evacuation of the native American colony remaining here, and since then chiefly in insisting to little avail that the taking over of American properties

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<sup>26</sup> Enclosures mentioned in this despatch not printed.

for billeting purposes be done in accordance with regular requisition procedure against receipt and with hope of compensation.

The Consulate succeeded in assisting the Americans who wished to leave Salonika to leave (See Memorandum No. 1, April 10, 1941, page 3). In the matter of requisitioning of American property informal efforts to avoid requisition have been futile even in the case of the American Farm School, where in spite of repeated promises of the Consul General of Germany that the premises would not be occupied, three different detachments of German troops have succeeded each other there (Memorandum No. 3, April 17, 1941). The American Consul occupies living quarters in the home of the Director of the School and this building was not occupied.

The German authorities requested that the Consulate abandon the temporary office, which, under Department's Instruction of November 23, 1940,<sup>27</sup> it had maintained at the Farm School for reasons of safety during the Italian bombardments, and concentrate its functions at the Consulate in the city. Consul Johnson was reluctant (Memorandum No. 5 of April 16, 1941) to do this but in the existing circumstances and in the absence of communications with the mission or Washington felt obliged to comply. A possible clue to the German intention in forcing the closing of this office (Memorandum No. 4, April 17, 1941) on one occasion suggested itself when German soldiers shortly afterwards conducted a search of the Farm School for the purpose, they said, of finding a radio sending apparatus which, they thought, might have been concealed there. On this occasion soldiers insisted on entering the Consul's own rooms although they did not search them. This incident was brought to the attention of the German authorities who sent a detail of soldiers to the Consulate to inquire about the matter and the German Consul General informally expressed his regrets. This incident confirmed the impression of the Consulate, gained from repeated contacts with the occupying authorities, that the different military units occupying Salonika act independently of each other and that the supposed central headquarters did not control the activities of such independent roving detachments of soldiers as visited the Farm School on this occasion.

No formal receipt or requisition of the American Farm School has been made in spite of frequent requests. The aviation units which have occupied the Farm School have been courteous and appear to have respected school property. The Director of the school, Mr. House, who is also Executive Officer of the American Red Cross in Greece, and Mrs. House have remained in residence at the Farm School and they have tried to maintain good relations with the occupying troops.

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<sup>27</sup> Not printed.

The Anatolia College for boys and the Anatolia Girls' School have also been occupied by the German military authorities. The German Consul General, Dr. Schönberg, at first requested that the German military be permitted to "occupy" this property for a period of about two weeks (Memorandum No. 6 of April 22, 1941). Consul Johnson explained that he was unable to authorize this. Immediately after this conversation it was learned that German officers were examining the College property and it was taken over the same day (April 13, 1941). An informal memorandum requisition was handed over to Consul Johnson which was stated by him to be unsatisfactory, especially since it indicated that the German and American Consuls had come to an agreement concerning handing over the premises. A formal requisition which was repeatedly promised and requested, was not issued until May 26, 1941 (Translation enclosed).

The Greek staff of Anatolia, at first permitted to remain, were one day later ordered to leave the premises. There now appears to be a possibility that some of the property of the school has been damaged or taken away and correspondence has been initiated in an endeavor to improve the situation. The Anatolia Girls' School in the city has been occupied by two different units and billeting orders were issued covering it. This order, similar to one issued for the Socony-Vacuum Oil installation, simply states that the High Command of Salonika directs that space be made for a given number of men. No compensation has ever been definitely ordered. Some of the requisitioning officers have offered the opinion that compensation would be forthcoming when arrangements had been completed between the Germans and some Greek Government after the conquest of Greece was completed. Nothing more definite has ever been promised. The Consulate will miss no opportunity to urge that the requisitions be made in the formal manner and against hope of compensation as required by standing instructions.

The case of the Socony-Vacuum Oil installation in Salonika was complicated by the fact that the occupying authorities claim the destruction of these installations prior to the German entry as sabotage. The Shell and Steaua Romana installations were also destroyed. Following the publication of a decree to the effect that the port and storages of liquid fuel were considered war booty and were confiscated, this office intervened informally and was able to establish that this installation, which is in the port region, was not included in the order.

On April 16, 1941, the plant superintendent of the Socony, Mr. Mevon Megikian, evidently considered by the Germans as the highest ranking company executive remaining in Salonika was arrested by them. The Consulate felt concern that he might be held on charges involving the company and presented the memorandum enclosed

(Memorandum No. 7 of April 16, 1941). On April 27, 1941, Mr. Megikian was released after having been detained one week without apparently ever having been questioned. Two remaining Socony clerical employees, left in custody of files and office, were in constant contact with the Germans who apparently were attempting to hasten them into decisions which would have involved repairing and restoring the installation, at the expense of the company for the purpose of doing business with the Germans (Memorandum No. 8 of April 10, 1941). The Consulate advised them to delay any such action and to disclaim any ability to take such decisions prior to communication with executives in Athens. This the employees did successfully. Upon threat by the German officers that the Germans would consider a failure to cooperate as sabotage the employees had previously been compelled to go ahead with repairs to one gasoline storage tank and the pipeline connection with the pier. These works had been damaged by previous Italian air raids and not by the demolitions accompanying the evacuation of Salonika. Some of the buildings at the installation were taken over for German troops upon presentation of a written order.

The Consulate has tried to exercise such stewardship as it could over American property which has been requisitioned. This, of course, is complicated by the frequent changes in German personnel, occupation of buildings for confidential military purposes, and the unevenness in the attitude of the different German units. In general, the Consulate has tried to inspect American property and to keep track of movable property as far as possible, although the absence of inventories for the property has made this difficult.

In reviewing the relations of the Consulate with the German military authorities, it should be borne in mind that the occupation took place at a time of strain in German-American relations. American action with reference to foreign ships had just taken place and other events and declarations at this period did not tend to encourage the Germans to maintain a friendly attitude toward American officials within the area of actual military operations, particularly in a seaport. Furthermore, Salonika is remote from capitals and diplomatic missions, communications were and are in-existent, and the city has been under complete military administration by officials of brief authority. Decisions obtained upon conferring with German officers were often ignored or found invalid by those who succeeded them the following day, apparently without having been informed of the dispositions of their predecessors. The request of the Consulate to be allowed to represent foreign interests in this important sea-and-air base especially was a delicate matter to which there existed as background certain incidents involving the suppression of the Central Powers Consulates in Salonika during the last war. In addition, the presence at the

British Consulate of military and naval representatives, which was known to the Germans presumably influenced their attitude toward granting custody of the building and archives to the American Consulate.

In spite of all these considerations the attitude of the German officers with whom the Consulate dealt rarely showed any lapse from courtesy. The fact remains, however, that it was difficult to obtain definite action on requests, or to accomplish definite results.

Symptomatic of the attitude of the soldiery toward America and Americans was the theft of the Vice Consul's automobile (See Memorandum No. 9 of April 19, 1941 and correspondence) under circumstances which leave little doubt that it was taken precisely because it was a consular car.

At another time when the Vice Consul visited a yachting club where a small boat belonging to him was being taken away by German naval personnel, he was told that since America "had taken so many boats, surely she could spare this one." In this case, the German Consulate assisted in the return of the boat without incident, but two weeks later it was again taken by German naval forces and has not been recovered, although a letter dated May 15, 1941 (copy enclosed) has been addressed to the German Consulate General requesting an inquiry.

It is possible that the Consulate may obtain more results in its relations with the occupying authorities when the situation has become more stable and the German authorities are no longer changed so frequently.

The Consulate is submitting its report on the situation in the form of the accompanying memoranda rather than in a series of separate and complete despatches, first, because there has been no opportunity to report on incidents as they arose because of the lack of communications, and secondly because the matters which have arisen evolve new phases from day to day and are, in most cases, still unsettled questions.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN D. JOHNSON

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124.68/70

*The Chargé in Greece (Reed) to the Secretary of State*

No. 4934

ATHENS, July 1, 1941.

[Received August 21.]

SIR: I have the honor to report that on June 27th Doctor Georg Vogel, Secretary of the German Legation, now known as the Office of the German Plenipotentiary in Greece, called on me about noon and notified me that he had been directed by the German Government to inform me that, in view of the fact that the American Government

does not maintain official relations with the "present Greek Government", the German Government could not see any *raison d'être* for the continued presence of an American diplomatic mission in Athens, and as the consular functions of the Mission would in any case terminate after July 15th,<sup>28</sup> the German Government requested, after consultation with the Italian Plenipotentiary, that this Legation be closed and that its American personnel leave Greek territory by July 15th.

Dr. Vogel stated that the foregoing was the official communication which he had come to make, but he added that the closing of this Legation simultaneously with the closing of the American consular offices in Axis-controlled territory had been decided upon because of what he described as "the regrettable tension in the present relations between the American and German Governments". He also said that this would probably be his last official contact with this Legation, as the German Plenipotentiary in Greece had turned over his administrative activities, as far as they concerned the foreign Missions, to the Italian Plenipotentiary as of June 25th. He said that all arrangements for the closing of the Legation and the departure of the American personnel should be made with the Office of the Italian Plenipotentiary.

Dr. Vogel also referred to the position of the American Consulate in Salonika (which, according to my information, had not yet been officially notified that it must close). He said that he had just received instructions to "repeat" to the American Consul at Salonika the instructions which he had received that that office must be closed and its American personnel leave Greek territory not later than July 15th. He said that he himself was not aware if or how the Consulate had received an official notice up to the present, as, if given, it had not come through the Office of the German Plenipotentiary in Athens. He was sending that same day to the German Consul General in Salonika a copy of the instructions which he had received, with instructions to notify Mr. Johnson to close his Consulate. With respect to the evacuation of the American officers in Salonika, he said that, as Salonika would remain under German control, the German authorities would arrange for their departure via Sofia, which in any case he thought would be more convenient than for them to join the Legation in Athens or to try to reach Albania and cross the Adriatic to Italy.

In leaving, Dr. Vogel expressed his personal regret for this situation and assured me that he was always at the disposal of this Legation for any assistance or information which he might be in a position to give. I thanked him for the courtesy and consideration which he had constantly shown to this Legation during the difficult period of the preceding two months.

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<sup>28</sup> See pp. 623 ff.



That same day I called on Signor Venturini, the ranking officer at the Office of the Italian Plenipotentiary during the absence of the Plenipotentiary, who was in Rome. He confirmed that the decision of the German Government to close this Legation had been taken after consultation with the Office of the Italian Plenipotentiary. He suggested that this Mission proceed to Rome and make arrangements for its further transportation after consultation with the American Embassy there. Upon learning the number of persons (20) who would be leaving with this Mission, he said that the best procedure would presumably be for them to travel from Athens to Rome by Italian plane, and that the Italian Government would arrange for a ship to carry their trunks and the bags which could not go by plane from Piraeus to Brindisi, from where they would be forwarded by rail to Rome.

Neither the German nor Italian representatives were in a position to inform me whether or not the American Government had been notified of the action taken by the German Government and I received the impression that such notification had *not* been made. After discussion with Dr. Vogel, I therefore sent a telegram dated June 27th to the Department<sup>29</sup> through the German Plenipotentiary's Office and our Embassy in Berlin. He stated that he would simultaneously telegraph his Government recommending that it inform the American Government. As no indication had been received on June 30th, either by radio or through the press, that the Department was aware of the steps taken by the German Plenipotentiary's Office, I sent another telegram<sup>30</sup> in the same terms, through the Office of the Italian Plenipotentiary, to the American Embassy at Rome for forwarding to the Department.

In view of the short time before this Legation must leave Greece, the American Government property is being moved, without specific authorization, from the present office quarters and from the residence of Minister MacVeagh to the buildings of the American School of Classical Studies, in accordance with the plan previously approved by the Minister and reported to the Department in this Legation's telegram No. 302 of May 7, 1941.<sup>31</sup>

Following the receipt of the notification from the German authorities, I immediately informed the landlord of the building in which the office quarters are situated that I proposed to terminate the contract for the office quarters three months from the first of July, in accordance with paragraph 4 of the lease contract. I also informed him that if he desired to rent the premises to other occupants before October 1st, I

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<sup>29</sup> Telegram No. 330 transmitted in telegram No. 975, July 10, from the Ambassador in Italy; not printed.

<sup>30</sup> Not found in Department files.

<sup>31</sup> Not printed.

should be glad to discuss an arrangement for the termination of the contract at an earlier date by mutual agreement. The Office of the German Plenipotentiary has since informed me that it desires to take over all of the quarters now occupied by the American Legation, and it is believed that an arrangement can be reached with the landlord for the termination of the Legation's contract well before October 1st.

Respectfully yours,

LESLIE E. REED

124.68/69

*The Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the American Embassy in Italy*<sup>32</sup>

[Translation]

NOTE VERBALE

The Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honor to bring to the knowledge of the Embassy of the United States of America that it has been informed that the Government of the Reich has requested the members of the Legation of the United States of America at Athens to leave that city by July 15.

In view of the fact that the city of Athens has passed into Italian hands, the Royal Legation in that city has taken charge of the steps for the departure of the American diplomats.

In connection with the foregoing, the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honor to inform the Embassy of the United States of America that a civilian plane of the *Ala Littoria* will be placed at the disposal of the aforesaid diplomats, at their expense, on July 7 or 9, for the journey to Rome.

ROME, July 6, 1941.

[The American Legation in Athens was closed on July 14, 1941; the Consulate at Salonika was closed on July 11, 1941.]

124.68/71

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

[WASHINGTON,] October 10, 1941.

The Greek Minister called to see me. The Minister stated that now that the King of the Hellenes and the Greek Government were estab-

<sup>32</sup> Transmitted to the Department by the Ambassador in Italy in his despatch No. 2351, July 8; received July 23.

lished in London, he hoped that a new American Minister would be appointed near that Government to replace Mr. MacVeagh.

I said I would be very happy to take this matter up with the President and that I felt sure that the President would desire Mr. Biddle to be accredited to the Greek Government. I said that as soon as I received the President's approval I would request the *agrément* for Mr. Biddle through the Minister.<sup>33</sup>

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.00116 European War 1939/465

*The Greek Minister (Diamantopoulos) to the Secretary of State*

No. 3571

WASHINGTON, December 8, 1941.

MR. SECRETARY: Following my communication dated November 28th 1941,<sup>34</sup> I have the honor to bring to your knowledge that information which has recently reached the Royal Hellenic Government confirms that from the Bulgarian point of view certain Greek and Yugoslav territories are now considered as forming an integral part of Bulgarian State having been virtually annexed to it. Thus King Boris in his speech at the opening session of Sobranje on October 28, 1941, expressing his satisfaction that the foreign policy followed by Bulgaria has yielded the best results for her added: "Thanks to our cooperation with Axis the two Provinces of Macedonia and Thrace have now returned within the frontiers of the Bulgarian Motherland. In this area of the European cooperation under the direction of the Axis powers and their two great leaders truth has been crowned with victory." These statements by the Bulgarian King which in themselves leave no doubt as to the Bulgarian intentions are supplemented by reports telegraphed from Sofia and widely published by the Turkish press without being denied or refuted by the Bulgarian Legation at Ankara. These reports stated that the Bulgarian Government have decided to proceed to the repopulation of the territories recently restored to Bulgaria and that they intend to see to the establishment of Bulgarian populations in these areas. A decision was recently taken by the Bulgarian Cabinet on the matter and a relative decree stipulates that all real property whether urban or rural as well as all movable property belonging either to Bulgarians who emigrated as the result of the last war or to Greeks who left Thrace during the recent military operations there shall be placed at the disposal of Bulgarian nationals who will settle in Thrace. The decree also adds that Bulgarian

<sup>33</sup> President Roosevelt gave his approval, October 14, 1941, and Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., was appointed Minister to Greece, November 13, 1941.

<sup>34</sup> Not printed.

peasants to be established there shall enjoy several privileges and that their dwelling places and agricultural implements will be granted to them free. The Bulgarian Premier himself, Mr. Filoff, in an interview with the correspondent of the *Borser Zeitung* stated: "A big plan of colonization of the Aegean Sea provinces is under consideration and that 1,000 Bulgarian families are shortly to be settled there. To these settlers will be granted all useful facilities, immunity from taxes and loans for acquiring agricultural machines. By a successful solution of this problem of colonization the first step towards the assimilation of these Provinces by the Mother Country will be effected." The above constituting real confessions of the mainly responsible quarters in Bulgaria give a glimpse of the cynical character of the measures taken by the Bulgarian Government. These aim at a forcible Bulgarianization of these recently annexed Greek Provinces hitherto inhabited by an unmixed Greek population who are now suffering the most inhuman and exterminating outrages at the hands of the rapacious Bulgarian hordes.

Accept [etc.]

C. DIAMANTOPOULOS

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740.00116 European War 1939/465

*The Secretary of State to the Greek Minister (Diamantopoulos)*

[WASHINGTON,] December 20, 1941.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your note no. 3571 of December 8, 1941, regarding the activities of the Bulgarian Government and the declarations of the authorities of that country, indicating an intention to incorporate Macedonia and Thrace as integral parts of Bulgaria.

In my communications to you of November 26, 1941 and December 5, 1941,<sup>35</sup> I was pleased to be able to assure you that the American Government's attitude towards the entirely unwarranted actions of Bulgaria in attacking Greece, and in ejecting Greek residents from Macedonia, would be made known to the Bulgarian authorities. The Bulgarian Minister in Washington was consequently requested to inform his Government that the American Government considered Bulgarian actions against Greece to be without any justification whatsoever; that the Royal decrees opening for settlement by Bulgarians certain territories forming a part of the Kingdom of Greece must be interpreted in this country as evidence of a mentality in complete harmony with the doctrines and practices of the Nazi regime; and

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<sup>35</sup> Neither printed.

that the American people must regard in the same light other measures adopted by the Bulgarian authorities with respect to the territories occupied by the Bulgarian armed forces.

I may assure you that the efforts of Bulgaria, which you now report, to accomplish the annexation of Greek territory, are similarly regarded by this Government as being without any justification.

Accept [etc.]

For the Secretary of State:

SUMNER WELLES

## ICELAND

### NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES, THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND ICELAND REGARDING ICELANDIC TRADE; LEND-LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ICELAND

611.59A31/8

*The Icelandic Consul General at New York City (Thors) to the Secretary of State*

NEW YORK CITY, July 14, 1941.  
[Received July 15.]

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that I have received a message from my Government that they consider it necessary that a delegation be sent from the United States Government to Iceland to discuss trade and commercial relations between Iceland and the United States with the Icelandic Government.

I should appreciate learning at the earliest possible opportunity what would be the opinion of the United States Government concerning this matter.

Accept [etc.]

THOR THORS

611.59A31/22

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*

Since Iceland was occupied by British forces in May, 1940, the British Government have regarded themselves as responsible for Iceland's welfare and have done their best (a) to buy Iceland's products and (b) to supply her needs, including the purchase in the United States and Canada of goods which could not be supplied by the United Kingdom.

At the time of the landing of their forces in Iceland, the United States Government undertook to further the interests of Iceland and by every means in their power to supply the country with sufficient necessities to provide shipping and to make favourable commercial agreements.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom now proposes to the United States Government that the two Governments shall cooperate closely in fulfilling under present conditions the parallel ob-

ligations which both Governments have undertaken at different times. With this object in view, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom suggests immediate discussion so that a plan satisfactory to all parties can be drawn up.

The present position appears to be that the British Government must continue to carry fish and fish oils to the United Kingdom from Iceland and there will, therefore, be a certain amount of tonnage available for carriage to Iceland of those goods which we can still supply, but, owing to the limitation of available supplies in the United Kingdom, most of Iceland's requirements must to an increasing extent be drawn from the United States and Canada.

The British Government, therefore, hope that the United States will assume the responsibility for providing the tonnage necessary to supply from North America Iceland's civil requirements and would also welcome United States' assistance in shipping those military requirements which could be drawn from America. The British Government has in the past had to supply Iceland with some American dollars in order to meet the cost of her purchases in the United States. It is likely that as a result of the United States occupation, Iceland will have increased dollar resources and the British authorities hope that the United States Government will be prepared to assist Iceland to obtain such additional United States and/or Canadian dollars as may be needed to meet her purchases. The British Government wish still to pay in sterling for vital supplies of mutton, fish and fish oil which are imperative for the British food programme.

The following figures give some general indication of the tonnage required both for Iceland's civil cargoes and for British military supplies:

The volume of goods at present moving annually from the United Kingdom to Iceland is 170,000 tons of coal, and 65,000 tons of coke, salt, fertilizer, cement and general cargo. In addition, moving from the United States and Canada there are about 40,000 tons of timber and general cargoes. A good deal of this programme has to be lifted in the summer months when weather conditions are favourable.

Finally, London hopes that the Maritime Commission will be able to find tonnage for British military requirements to be purchased and shipped under Lease-Lend arrangements.<sup>1</sup> These requirements are approximately 70,000 tons of coal and coke per annum, and stores averaging about 6,000 tons a month.

[WASHINGTON,] 29 July, 1941.

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<sup>1</sup>For correspondence pertaining to lend-lease arrangements between the United States and the United Kingdom, see vol. III, pp. 1 ff.

611.59A31/13

*The Icelandic Consul General at New York City (Thors) to the  
Secretary of State*

Ref. 40.E.1

NEW YORK CITY, August 7, 1941.

[Received August 11.]

SIR: With reference to previous correspondence regarding trade between the United States and Iceland, terminating with my letter of July 26th,<sup>2</sup> I have the honor to inform you that the Icelandic Government has appointed a trade delegation which is expected to leave Iceland in the near future to come to the United States to discuss, in cooperation with me, various matters of mutual interest with the Government of the United States.

My Government informs me that they are desirous, among other matters, principally to negotiate the following matters:

1. Sale of Icelandic products in the United States, including reduction of duty where same should be required.
2. Purchase of commodities in the United States.
3. United States assistance in chartering freighters to Iceland.
4. Currency matters.
5. Permits for Icelandic fishing vessels to land their own catches free of duty in American ports and to purchase there coal, fishing gear and other requirements.
6. Direct mail and telegraphic service between Iceland and the United States.
7. War risk insurance for vessels, property and goods.

The delegation from Iceland consists of the following three members:

Asgeir Asgeirsson, Managing Director of Utvegsbanki Islands  
(Fisheries Bank of Iceland) and Member of Parliament.

Bjorn Olafsson, Importer and Exporter

Vilhjalmur Thor, Managing Director of Landsbanki Islands (National Bank of Iceland)

Accept [etc.]

THOR THORS

611.59A31/13

*The Secretary of State to the Icelandic Consul General at New York  
City (Thors)*

WASHINGTON, August 20, 1941.

MY DEAR MR. THORS: The receipt is acknowledged of your letter dated August 7, 1941 (reference 40.E.1) informing me of the names of the members of a trade delegation which has been appointed by the

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.



Government of Iceland to come to the United States to discuss in cooperation with you matters of interest to the Icelandic and United States Governments.

The officials of the Department of State will be pleased to receive the gentlemen in question upon their arrival in Washington and to discuss with them the matters covered by their instructions.

Sincerely yours,

For the Secretary of State:  
BRECKINRIDGE LONG  
*Assistant Secretary*

611.59A31/24

*Memorandum by Mr. Randolph Higgs of the Division of European Affairs*<sup>3</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] August 23, 1941.

Mr. Thor Thors, Consul General of Iceland at New York, called on Mr. Atherton, Acting Chief, Division of European Affairs, this morning at 10:50 to present the members of the Icelandic Trade Delegation:

Vilhjalmur Thor, Chairman of the Delegation and General Manager of the National Bank of Iceland.

Asgeir Asgeirsson, General Manager of the Fisheries Bank.

Björn Olafsson.

Mr. Thor Thors, Consul General of Iceland in New York.

Mr. Jonsson, Icelandic Vice Consul at New York and Secretary of the Delegation.

Mr. Atherton welcomed the Delegation and, in company with Mr. Higgs, Division of European Affairs, took the Delegation to Mr. Welles'<sup>4</sup> office.

[Here follows account of courtesy call upon the Under Secretary of State.]

At 11:15 the Delegation, accompanied by Mr. Atherton and Mr. Higgs, called upon Mr. Acheson. Also present were Mr. Charles Curtis, Mr. Meltzer and Mr. Cumming.<sup>5</sup> After being welcomed by Mr. Acheson, Mr. Thor read a memorandum<sup>6</sup> setting forth the desiderata of the Icelandic Delegation. After finishing reading the memorandum, Mr. Thor handed a copy thereof to Mr. Acheson. Mr. Acheson stated that the desiderata set forth by Mr. Thor appeared to coincide almost entirely with the ideas of the United States Govern-

<sup>3</sup> Addressed to Dean Acheson, Assistant Secretary of State; Charles Curtis, of the Division of Commercial Policy and Agreements; Bernard D. Meltzer, Assistant to Assistant Secretary of State Acheson; and Herbert Feis, Adviser on International Economic Affairs.

<sup>4</sup> Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State.

<sup>5</sup> Hugh S. Cumming, Jr., of the Division of European Affairs.

<sup>6</sup> *Infra.*

ment with respect to the development of trade relations between Iceland and the United States. He remarked that the principal difference seemed to lie in the greater emphasis which the United States Government placed upon the continuation of Icelandic exports to Great Britain. Mr. Acheson then told the Icelandic Delegation that Mr. Berle, Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. MacVeagh, newly appointed American Minister to Iceland, Mr. Atherton, Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs, and he himself would be principally concerned with the negotiations with the Delegation in so far as the United States is concerned. He stated that as a practical matter, however, it had been decided that Mr. Cumming of the Division of European Affairs, Mr. Curtis and Mr. Meltzer would begin conversations with the Delegation with a view to assembling relevant factual data which would later form the basis of negotiations looking toward a formal agreement between Iceland and the United States.

The several members of the Icelandic Delegation expressed their satisfaction with Mr. Acheson's suggestions as to the procedure to be followed in conducting the negotiations and the meeting closed with the usual amenities.

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611.59A31/24

*The Icelandic Trade Delegation to the Department of State*<sup>7</sup>

As a consequence of the fact that the United States has assumed the protection of Iceland<sup>8</sup> in accordance with messages exchanged between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Iceland,<sup>9</sup> the economic and commercial relations of the two countries are bound to undergo a fundamental change.

The war in Europe which now has lasted two years, has entirely dislocated the foreign trade of Iceland and cut her off from markets, on which her economic structure had depended to a great extent, and to which needs the Icelandic export industries had adapted themselves. Iceland has during the war depended upon Great Britain and the United States for the sale of her products and the supply of her needs. For obvious reasons Iceland must now more and more, as the war goes on, depend upon the United States for supply of necessities for the subsistence of the population and maintenance of her production, as well as the marketing of her products.

Great Britain has from the beginning of the war showed a friendly and understanding attitude towards Iceland and exhibited her

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<sup>7</sup> This memorandum was handed by Mr. Thor to Assistant Secretary of State Acheson on August 23, 1941.

<sup>8</sup> See pp. 776 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Hermann Jonasson.

willingness to lessen the difficulties which the war imposed upon trade and production of the Icelandic people by purchasing most of their products at remunerative prices and by supplying Iceland with most of her necessary imports. But as a natural consequence of the war, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Great Britain to provide Iceland with the most vital necessities.

With this in mind and especially with a view to the fundamentally altered circumstances due to the United States assuming the protection of Iceland and the promise of the United States Government to further the interests of Iceland in every way, including that of supplying her with sufficient necessities and concluding with her a favorable economic and commercial agreement, the Government of Iceland has now sent a special Delegation to Washington to negotiate with the Government of the United States regarding questions of finance, trade and shipping, which are of vital importance to Iceland.

The exports of Iceland consist mostly of Foodstuffs, the bulk of which at present goes to Great Britain, where these valuable food products are now meeting an urgent need. But as already mentioned, it is for obvious reasons becoming more and more difficult for Great Britain to supply Iceland's needs of goods in exchange for her export products. But unless Iceland is supplied with the equivalent of these export products in the form of necessary commodities and services, her production will definitely decrease and eventually come to a standstill.

With a view to the messages exchanged between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Iceland, as well as the contact now established, the Icelandic Government is fully confident that the Government of the United States will do everything in its power to further the interests of Iceland in every way under the unusual and difficult conditions now prevailing. The Icelandic Government further ventures to express the hope that the United States Government will treat these negotiations in the light of the exceptional circumstances which have made these discussions necessary. The Icelandic Government has authorized the Delegation to submit for discussion the following subjects:

1. Currency and financing of Imports to Iceland from the United States.
2. Import of Icelandic products to the United States and reduction of Import duties to facilitate the marketing of various products.
3. Supply of goods required by Iceland and facilities of producing permits and export licenses.
4. Shipping facilities.
5. Direct mail and telegraph connections.
6. Facilities for Icelandic fishing vessels to land and sell their catches in the United States free of duty.
7. Various other matters.

Further particulars concerning these items will be submitted by the Delegation during the first meetings or whenever desired.

In view of the traditional friendship and historical ties between the United States and Iceland, the Icelandic Government trusts that the present negotiations may form a lasting basis for economic and commercial cooperation between the two countries.

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611.59A31/22

*The Department of State to the British Embassy*

MEMORANDUM

The British Embassy's memorandum dated July 29, 1941 sets forth the view that owing to the limitations of available supplies in the United Kingdom, most of Iceland's requirements must to an increasing extent be drawn from the United States and Canada. Accordingly, it is proposed by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom:

(1) that the British Government and the United States Government discuss the means by which they may cooperate in fulfilling their respective obligations to provide for the economic welfare of Iceland;

(2) that the United States assume the responsibility for providing the tonnage necessary to transport such of Iceland's civil and military requirements which must be drawn from North America;

(3) that the United States arrange to assist Iceland to obtain such additional United States and/or Canadian dollars as may be needed to meet increased Icelandic purchases in North America;

(4) that the British Government continue to pay in sterling for purchases in Iceland of mutton, fish and fish oil necessary to fulfill the British food program; and

(5) that the United States provide tonnage for the transportation to Iceland of British military requirements to be purchased and shipped under lend-lease arrangements.

Before entering into detailed discussions of the British proposals, the Department of State would appreciate being informed as soon as practicable whether the British Government would be disposed to agree in principle to a procedure under which the United States Government would purchase in Iceland, in United States dollars from lend-lease appropriations charged to British account as defense aid, supplies of mutton, fish, fish oil, et cetera, which would then be moved from Iceland to the United Kingdom under shipping arrangements to be made by the British Government. Such purchases could provide Iceland with dollar exchange to cover payment of increased Icelandic purchases in the United States. The determination of the amount and value of such purchases will require discussions concerning the value

and quantity of supplies to be purchased by Iceland from the United Kingdom and the United States, respectively, and the supplies to be purchased by the United Kingdom from Iceland.

Upon being informed that this procedure is agreeable to the British Government, the Department of State will discuss the matter with the Government of Iceland.

While awaiting the reply of the British Government immediate consideration will be given to other phases of the British proposals.

WASHINGTON, August 29, 1941.

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611.59A31/22a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Reykjavik (Kuniholm)*

WASHINGTON, September 6, 1941—8 p. m.

51. At a meeting on September 5 the Icelandic Government Trade Delegation was informed that careful study had been given to the problem raised by the desire of the British to continue their heavy purchases of Icelandic fish and other products while at the same time decreasing their exports to Iceland and transferring to the United States the principal burden of supplying Iceland's needs and the tonnage necessary to carry such supplies from the United States to Iceland. After consideration of several possibilities the conclusion had been reached that the procedure which would best meet the needs of the British for Icelandic produce and the needs of Iceland for dollar exchange would be one under which the United States Government would purchase in Iceland in United States dollars, from Lend-Lease appropriations charged to British account as defense aid, supplies of mutton, fish, fish oil, et cetera, which would then be moved from Iceland to the United Kingdom under shipping arrangements to be made by the British Government. The Delegation was informed that the details of the quantities and value of such purchases would have to be worked out in consultation between Great Britain, Iceland and ourselves but that we felt that this procedure would provide Iceland with the necessary dollar exchange to cover increased purchases in this country. The Delegation was also informed that the British Government had already indicated its approval in principle.

The Chairman of the Delegation indicated that the procedure would be satisfactory to the Icelandic Government.

In your discretion you may orally inform the appropriate Icelandic authorities of the foregoing.

HULL

611.59A31/37

*The Chairman of the Icelandic Trade Delegation (Thor) to the Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, September 18, 1941.

SIR: I have the honor to refer to a meeting with Assistant Secretary of State Mr. Adolf A. Berle Jr. on September 5, 1941, at which the Icelandic Government Trade Delegation was informed that the United States Government in order to solve Iceland's dollar problem would undertake to pay in dollars Iceland's export to Great Britain but that it would take a few days to find suitable forms for the procedure.

With a view to the comprehensive contract which Iceland has recently made with Great Britain for the sale of fish products from July 1, 1941-June 30, 1942 it was discussed whether the United States Government could take over this contract from July 1, 1941. Later the Delegation was given to understand that it would be unpracticable to pay in dollars any goods shipped prior to the contract being formally overtaken by the United States Government. Accordingly Iceland can not expect to obtain dollars for any goods shipped to Great Britain until these formalities are concluded.

The bulk of the export of the most valuable Icelandic fish products is presently taking place and it is therefore of vital importance for Iceland that the new arrangement can enter into effect without delay.

Therefore the Icelandic Government sincerely request that a final arrangement be made now concerning this matter.

Accept [etc.]

VILHJALMUR THOR

611.59A31/46

*The Department of State to the British Embassy*<sup>10</sup>

MEMORANDUM

Reference is made to the memorandum of the British Embassy dated July 29, 1941, proposing to the United States cooperation in fulfilling parallel obligations to Iceland. It was pointed out that the British Government must continue to carry fish and fish oils from Iceland to the United Kingdom, but that "most of Iceland's requirements must to an increasing extent be drawn from the United States and Canada."

Reference is likewise made to the conversations had between Mr. Hugh Cumming of the Department and Mr. E. Wyndham White

<sup>10</sup> Substance of this memorandum was sent to the Minister in Iceland as telegram No. 90, October 9, 11 p. m.

of the British Embassy, from which proceeded the memorandum of the British Embassy dated September 5, 1941.<sup>11</sup> That memorandum stated that the British Government would welcome "an arrangement whereby the United States Government would purchase, in United States dollars from Lease-Lend appropriations charged to the British account as defense aid, all future imports from Iceland to the United Kingdom apart from those covered by the recent Fish Agreement between the British and Icelandic Governments." As respects the latter, should the Icelandic Government press for inclusion of that contract under the Lease-Lend arrangements, the British Government would be prepared to consider such a suggestion favorably.

The Department has been in communication with the Icelandic Government, and discovers that the Icelandic Government now presses for inclusion of the Fish Agreement under the proposed Lease-Lend arrangements, as well as the other future imports from Iceland to the United Kingdom.

The Government of the United States, in view of the very broad obligations assumed by it under the exchange of messages between the Prime Minister of Iceland and the President of the United States, considers that the only practicable arrangement is the purchase by it until further notice of all imports from Iceland to the United Kingdom, these to be supplied to the British Government and charged to the British account as defense aid. The difficulty of taking only a part of these importations is obvious, particularly in view of the importance which the Icelandic Government attaches to this feature, and to their unwillingness to increase further the balances of blocked sterling which have been accumulated in London.

The Icelandic Government has also drawn to the attention of the United States the existence of an agreement made between Iceland and Great Britain on the occasion of the sale by Britain to Iceland of approximately \$2,000,000 of Canadian and United States exchange last summer. That agreement calls upon Iceland, out of the first incoming dollars she might receive, to repurchase blocked sterling and thereby replace the amount of Canadian and American dollars sold to her.

The Icelandic Government has indicated that it feels this requirement is oppressive since it had already shipped goods to Britain represented by the blocked sterling; and is now obliged to ship further goods against American purchase under the Lease-Lend operation, and required to use the dollars to repurchase the blocked sterling. Further, since in effect this would result in an allocation of Lease-Lend funds part of whose purpose would be to purchase blocked

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<sup>11</sup> Missing from Department files.

sterling, the officials of the United States Treasury Department have indicated an objection. The United States Government, accordingly, believes that this agreement exacted from Iceland should be waived.

Finally, the Icelandic Government has raised the question as to whether some use might not be made of the very large balance of blocked sterling accumulated in London and from which, at present, the Icelandic Government can derive no benefit. Specifically, it is suggested that Iceland be given an opportunity to pay off or acquire the Icelandic debts held in Britain and there payable in pound sterling. Note is taken of the fact that £510,400 from this blocked fund is to be used in paying off the balance of the Icelandic 5½ percent loan of 1930. There remain, however, upwards of £800,000 of loans which are held in Britain and which could, perhaps, be reacquired by Iceland against proper debit to her blocked sterling account.

In view of the need for prompt flow of supplies to Iceland, the United States Government is proceeding on the basis of the arrangement accepted in the memorandum of the British Embassy of September 5, referred to above; and will send a representative of the Lease-Lend organization to Iceland in the near future.

It is planned to take over all of the unexpired contracts by which Iceland is obligated to supply goods to Britain, and by agreement with Iceland the goods naturally are to be made available to Britain. Those goods which are not under contract but which are currently supplied, such as fisherman's cargoes, can be arranged for on the ground between the representative of the Lease-Lend organization and the British representatives there.

As the unexpired contracts run out, the Government of the United States will be glad to confer with the British Government.

WASHINGTON, October 7, 1941.

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611.59A81/51

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Hugh S. Cumming, Jr., of the Division of European Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] October 13, 1941.

On instructions from Assistant Secretary Berle, I got in touch with Mr. Wyndham White, First Secretary of the British Embassy, late this afternoon and told him that in connection with our efforts to extend economic and financial assistance to Iceland, particularly to meet their immediate needs for some two million dollars with which to pay for urgently needed purchases in the United States, we had reached the conclusion that dollars could best be supplied in the form of a stabilization fund loan. The draft of a stabilization agreement had been prepared but after the Icelandic Delegation had examined



the draft they had informed us that the terms of an agreement concluded last spring between the British Government and the Icelandic Government would make it impossible for Iceland to sign the proposed stabilization agreement with the United States.

I told Mr. Wyndham White that Assistant Secretary Berle's observations to Sir Ronald Campbell<sup>12</sup> last week during which Mr. Berle expressed the hope that the British Government would release Iceland from its obligation to refund to Britain the first dollars which might come into Iceland's possession, included, of course, the expectation of the United States that any and all other agreements between Britain and Iceland which might impede or bar the conclusion of economic and financial agreements between Iceland and the United States would be waived by the British Government.

Mr. White said that he would dispatch a telegram to London immediately, since he felt sure that, since the Anglo-Icelandic agreements of last spring were negotiated and concluded without the possibility in mind that the United States might enter into the picture, his Government would release Iceland from the obligations which I had mentioned.

I told Mr. White that the matter was rather urgent and thanked him for undertaking to dispatch a telegram at once.

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611.59A81/61

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*<sup>13</sup>

With reference to the Department's memorandum of October 7th regarding the cooperation between the United States and British Governments in fulfilling their obligations to Iceland, we are authorized to state that the British Government agree in principle to the following proposals made by the Department in the aforementioned memorandum.

(a) That the fish agreement shall be included in the proposed Lease Lend arrangements.

(b) That in order that it may fulfill its broad obligations under the exchange of letters between the President and the Prime Minister of Iceland, the United States Government should purchase, until further notice, all imports from Iceland into the United Kingdom, these to be supplied to the British Government and charged to the British account as defense aid.

(c) That the United States Government should take over all of the unexpired contracts by which Iceland is obligated to supply goods to Britain. It is understood that goods which are not under contract

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<sup>12</sup> British Minister.

<sup>13</sup> Left at the Department on October 20 by Mr. Wyndham White. The substance of this memorandum was sent to the Minister in Iceland in telegram No. 98, October 21, 11 p. m.

will be the subject of arrangements to be made between the Lease Lend representative and the British representatives in Reykjavik, and further, that as unexpired contracts run out the United States Government will confer with the British Government.

The British authorities are communicating to the British Food Mission in Washington details of the working of the fish contract in order that discussions may take place with the United States authorities in order to ascertain how the proposals referred to above may be put into effect. Details of other outstanding contracts will also be transmitted to Washington.

As regards the question whether the British Government would require the Icelandic Government in accordance with the financial agreement between the two Governments to repay out of the dollars accruing under the present arrangements some two million dollars of Canadian and United States exchange advanced to Iceland by Great Britain last summer, we are instructed to say that the British Government would wish the Icelandic Government to admit their obligation to resell foreign exchange, but we are authorized to assure the United States Government that the British Government would not press the Icelanders to resell until they have substantial dollar balances.

Finally, in reply to the Department's suggestion that the Icelanders should be allowed to utilize sterling funds for re-purchase of Icelandic debts held in Britain, we are authorized to state that the British Government would raise no objection to a suggestion of this kind provided that the transaction were effected through paying agents.

[WASHINGTON,] October 20, 1941.

611.59A31/61

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*<sup>14</sup>

Reference is made to the Embassy's memorandum of even date about arrangements for cooperation between the British and United States Governments in fulfilling parallel obligations to Iceland. The new situation brought about by the Department's memorandum of October 7th compels the British Government to reconsider its general financial relations with Iceland which hitherto have been based on the agreement of March 14th, 1941. We are asked, therefore, to obtain the Department's views on the following proposals which the British Government are considering making to the Icelandic Government:—

(a) His Majesty's Government to renounce their right to control over Iceland's expenditure of foreign exchange and to agree to abolish committee of 2.

<sup>14</sup> Left at the Department on October 20 by Mr. Wyndham White. The substance of this memorandum was sent to the Minister in Iceland in telegram No. 98, October 21, 11 p. m.

(b) His Majesty's Government to renounce their right to control Iceland's import programme.

(c) His Majesty's Government to agree that Iceland's sterling accrued and to accrue shall remain available for any payments to residents of sterling area.

(d) Icelandic Government to renounce the right to call on His Majesty's Government to meet any deficit of foreign exchange (not only United States dollars but all other currencies than sterling and in particular Canadian dollars) including any deficit arising from service of export import bank credit.

(e) Icelandic Government to adhere to their obligation to resell to His Majesty's Government out of eventual surplus sums made available in foreign exchange by his Majesty's Government since beginning of British occupation.

(f) His Majesty's Government to agree to relinquish control of Krone-sterling rate provided that Icelandic Government agrees to make available without limit and at present rate the Krone required by His Majesty's Government for British forces in Iceland.

The above proposals are not being communicated to the Icelandic Government until the views of the United States Government are known.

[WASHINGTON,] October 20, 1941.

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611.59A31/62

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Hugh S. Cumming, Jr., of the  
Division of European Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] October 21, 1941.

Mr. Thor and Mr. Asgeirsson called at Mr. Berle's office at the latter's request at 4 o'clock this afternoon. Mr. Cumming was present during the conversation which ensued.

Mr. Berle referred to his conversation with the members of the Icelandic Government Trade Delegation some days ago during which he had informed them of the substance of the representations which he had made to the British Embassy on behalf of the United States regarding United States views as to the alterations which should take place in British-Icelandic trade and fiscal relations in order to clear the way for fulfillment by the United States of the broad obligations which it has assumed towards Iceland. Mr. Berle then read to Mr. Thor Mr. Wyndham White's memorandum numbered I<sup>15</sup> which he delivered to the Department on October 20. Mr. Thor listened attentively and expressed himself as being satisfied with the British memorandum with the exception of the statement that the British Government desired the Icelandic Government to admit their obliga-

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<sup>15</sup> *Ante*, p. 766.

tion to resell foreign exchange to cover some two million Canadian and United States dollars advanced to Iceland by Great Britain last summer. Mr. Berle pointed out that while the British Government had not fully acceded to his suggestion that the British entirely relieve Iceland of the obligation to repay this exchange, they had, according to the memorandum, in writing given an undertaking to the United States Government that they would not press the Icelanders to resell this exchange until Iceland should have accumulated substantial dollar balances; this therefore was an undertaking by the British Government to the United States and left the way open for the matter to be taken up again by the United States with the British when necessity therefor should arise. Some discussion took place at this point during which Mr. Berle emphasized that in his opinion the British had gone such a long way towards meeting the views of the United States and Iceland that the Icelandic Government might consider it wise to accept the British view in this respect for the time being.

In this last connection Mr. Berle, while reiterating his statement that it might be well to let further discussion of the point remain in abeyance until Iceland should have accumulated large dollar balances and the British should have made a claim against these balances for the two million dollars of exchange advanced Iceland by them, made the further personal suggestion that at some point the Icelandic Government might wish to consider offering to the British Government to utilize two million dollars' worth of United States exchange for the purchase of the Icelandic debts outstanding in Britain.

Mr. Berle then read to Mr. Thor, Mr. Wyndham White's memorandum numbered II,<sup>16</sup> cautioning Mr. Thor that this memorandum should be considered confidential since it contained proposals which the British Government had not yet made to Iceland but was only considering making. He added that the Department had informed the British Embassy that in its opinion the proposals made in the two memoranda left by Mr. White were fair and reasonable and that the Department would recommend that the Icelandic Government accept them as the basis for further negotiations between Iceland and the United Kingdom with respect to their fiscal relations.

With respect to sub-paragraph (f) in Mr. White's memorandum numbered II, Mr. Cumming said that he had been informed by Mr. White and by Mr. Kenneth Bewley, of the British Supply Council, that in their *personal* opinion the British Government might have had in mind not an undertaking by the Icelandic Government to sell the British unlimited kronur "at present rate" but an undertaking to sell

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<sup>16</sup> *Supra.*

to the British against sterling at whatever rate might be current at time of purchase of the kronur needed for the use of the British troops in Iceland.

Mr. Thor was somewhat doubtful as to the validity of the opinion expressed by Mr. White and Mr. Bewley and said that his knowledge of the course of Icelandic-British negotiations led him to believe that the British meant exactly what they said in the memorandum.

After further general discussion and expressions of appreciation by both Mr. Thor and Mr. Asgeirsson on behalf of their Government of the aid which had been given them by the United States, the meeting broke up.

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611.59A31/60 : Telegram

*The Minister in Iceland (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State*

REYKJAVIK, October 27, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received October 28—6:17 a. m.]

72. My No. 65, October 24, 9 p. m.<sup>17</sup> The British Minister told me this afternoon that he has today, under instructions, presented to the Icelandic Government the five proposals listed in paragraph 2 of your No. 98 of October 21.<sup>18</sup> He gave me a copy of his note, and said that the British Embassy in Washington has been instructed to inform the Department and request its support. The note concludes with the following:

“If the above proposals are acceptable to the Icelandic Government, His Majesty’s Government would [apparent omission] to telegraph the draft of the new agreement which would presumably take the form of an exchange of notes in the same manner as the agreement of March 14 last past.”

MACVEAGH

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611.59A31/60 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Iceland (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, October 28, 1941—5 p. m.

101. Your 72, October 27, 9 p. m. Please inform the Icelandic Government that in our opinion the British proposals are fair and reasonable and we recommend, as we have already done to the Icelandic Trade Delegation, that the Icelandic Government accept them as the basis for negotiations.

HULL

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<sup>17</sup> Not printed.

<sup>18</sup> See footnotes 13 and 14, pp. 766 and 767 respectively.

611.59A31/81

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. C. S. Campbell, Jr., of the  
Division of Commercial Policy and Agreements*

[WASHINGTON,] November 13, 1941.

Participants: Mr. Vilhjalmur Thor, Chairman of the Icelandic  
Government Trade Delegation  
Mr. Turkel, TA<sup>19</sup>  
Mr. Campbell, TA

Mr. Thor called today at his request in order to have a preliminary discussion about the general provisions which might be included in a trade agreement. The standard general provisions were explained to him. Mr. Thor seemed to think that they would, in general, be acceptable to his Government, although he said that the articles relating to quantitative restrictions, exchange control, and monopolies and government purchases were extremely rigorous.

The subject of herring oil was also discussed. Mr. Thor was told that herring oil was not included in the list of products approved by the Trade Agreements Committee but that it was desirable to take advantage of his presence in this country to get some information in case a concession to Iceland should ever be considered. He answered various questions regarding the production of herring oil and the possibility of selling it profitably on the American market. Mr. Thor said that the maximum reduction in the duty and the import tax might be of benefit to Iceland under certain special circumstances which might arise during the war but that in more normal times such a reduction would not be sufficient to enable Icelandic producers to compete on the American market.

611.59A31/83

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Harry R. Turkel of the  
Division of Commercial Policy and Agreements*

[WASHINGTON,] November 14, 1941.

Participants: Mr. Thor  
Mr. Asgeirsson, Icelandic Delegation  
Mr. Fowler,<sup>20</sup> TA  
Mr. Turkel, TA

Mr. Thor and Mr. Asgeirsson called on Mr. Fowler at 4 p. m. today to present a request for speedy action in respect to the announcement

<sup>19</sup> Division of Commercial Policy and Agreements.

<sup>20</sup> William A. Fowler, Assistant Chief of the Division of Commercial Policy and Agreements.

by this Government of an intention to negotiate a trade agreement with Iceland.

Mr. Thor stated that his delegation had arrived in Washington two and one-half months ago in order to obtain fulfilment by this Government of the promises<sup>21</sup> made by the President of the United States to the Prime Minister on the occasion of the entry of American troops into Iceland on July 7, 1941. One of the promises made was in respect of a favorable trade agreement with Iceland. On arrival the delegation was told that action could be expected in the very near future, and thus far there had been nothing but exploratory conversations. The delegation was leaving for Iceland on Tuesday or Wednesday and desired to know what report it could make to the Icelandic Government and people.

Mr. Fowler replied that the procedure for announcement of intention to negotiate often became complicated and took more time than had been originally anticipated; that a considerable amount of progress had been made on the proposed agreement and that it was reasonable to expect early action. Mr. Fowler further stated that he would discuss the matter with Mr. Hawkins<sup>22</sup> in an effort to expedite it, that if formal announcement were made before Wednesday the delegation would be informed at once, and if later than Wednesday, the American Legation at Reykjavik would be informed and they would communicate with the delegation members.

Mr. Thor stated that some members of the Icelandic Althing and public had stated that at the time it was decided to permit the establishment of American bases that it would be much easier for Iceland to obtain specific concessions before the troops were admitted and accordingly he was much disappointed that he might have to return to Iceland without the specific concessions which had been promised last July.

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611.59A31/74a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Iceland (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, November 17, 1941—5 p. m.

124. Public announcement of intention to negotiate a trade agreement with Iceland was issued today.<sup>23</sup> Listed below are the paragraph numbers of the United States Tariff Act of 1930<sup>24</sup> which include

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<sup>21</sup> See point 6 in draft message to be sent by the Prime Minister of Iceland to President Roosevelt, p. 785, and draft reply, p. 787.

<sup>22</sup> Harry C. Hawkins, Chief of the Division of Commercial Policy and Agreements.

<sup>23</sup> For list of products on which the United States agreed to consider granting concessions, see Department of State *Bulletin*, November 22, 1941, pp. 411-412.

<sup>24</sup> 46 Stat. 590.

the items on which the United States has announced its intention to consider granting concessions to Iceland. Following the numbers are listed the products of particular interest to Iceland which are to be considered under the respective tariff paragraphs. 717(c), mainly dried, unsalted fish, including "stockfish"; 718(a), mainly such Scandinavian specialties as herring fillets in oil, or in oil and sauce; 718(b), mainly such Scandinavian canned fish specialties as smoked herring fillets and boiled codfish balls; 719(2), mainly dried and green-salted cod; 719(4), salted herring of different kinds of cut and cure; 720(a) (6), mainly smoked lake fish; 721(d), fish roe other than sturgeon; 1685 and 1780, fish scrap and meal for fertilizer and for other than human consumption; 1730(b), cod oil and cod-liver oil; 1519(a), dressed lamb and sheep skins.

The closing date for submission of briefs is December 8, and a public hearing will be held on December 15.

Further instructions will follow.

HULL

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611.59A31/94a

*The Secretary of State to the Chairman of the Icelandic Trade Delegation (Thor)*

WASHINGTON, November 21, 1941.

MY DEAR MR. THOR: I have the honor to refer to your memorandum dated August 26, 1941<sup>25</sup> and to the conferences which have been held between the Icelandic Government Trade Delegation and officers of the Department of State regarding trade relations between the United States and Iceland, and to confirm to you my understanding that the situation with respect to each of the major points which have been under discussion is as follows:

1. Pursuant to the obligations assumed by the Government of the United States under the exchange of messages between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Iceland, as well as to further its policy of aiding the British war effort, this Government has proposed, and the Governments of Iceland and the United Kingdom have agreed, that until further notice this Government will purchase all exports from Iceland to the United Kingdom, the price of the supplies so purchased to be paid from Lend-Lease funds. In this connection it is understood that the Government of the United States will take over all of the unexpired contracts by which Iceland is obligated to supply goods to the United Kingdom, including the so-

<sup>25</sup> Not printed.



called "Fish Agreement" which expires June 30, 1942. It is further understood that goods which are not under contract but which are currently supplied by Iceland to the United Kingdom, such as fishermen's cargoes, will be the subject of arrangements to be made in Iceland by the representatives there of the three Governments concerned.

2. In response to the request of the Icelandic Government that arrangements be made to facilitate the sale of Icelandic products in the United States, this Government has announced its intention to negotiate a trade agreement with Iceland covering products of importance to the Icelandic export trade, such as herring of different cuts and cures, dried and salted cod, cod liver oil, herring oil and other fishery products as well as dressed lamb and sheep skin.

3. The procurement by Iceland from the United States of necessary imports will, it is anticipated, be facilitated by the Lend-Lease Agreement between the United States and Iceland<sup>28</sup> which has been concluded after discussion with the Icelandic Trade Delegation.

4. In order to contribute to the fulfillment of the Icelandic Government's wish to open direct mail and tele-communication services between the United States and Iceland, as well as to increase the security of the United States military and naval forces in Iceland, this Government has agreed to the request of the Icelandic Government that during the present emergency United States Government personnel undertake to maintain in Iceland censorship of telegrams and mail to and from Iceland. Arrangements are now being made, and it is hoped will be concluded shortly, to establish the necessary censorship organization in Iceland.

5. It is understood that the Iceland Trade Delegation has been in direct communication with the United States Maritime Commission with respect to the supply of shipping facilities essential to the Icelandic-United States trade and that arrangements satisfactory to Iceland have been agreed upon.

6. Other questions which have been raised by the Icelandic Trade Delegation, such as those relating to the discharge in the United States of the cargoes of Icelandic fishing vessels, are still under consideration by the responsible agencies of this Government.

Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation of the cooperation extended by you and by your colleagues, Mr. Ásgeir Ásgeirsson and Mr. Björn Ólafsson, in the course of the negotiations under reference.

Sincerely yours,

CORDELL HULL

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<sup>28</sup> See telegram No. 133, November 26, 11 p. m., to the Minister in Iceland, *infra*.

611.59A31/100c: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Iceland (MacVeagh)*

WASHINGTON, November 26, 1941—11 p. m.

133. On Friday, November 21, the Lend-Lease Agreement between the United States and Iceland <sup>27</sup> providing, in substance, as follows, was executed:

(1) The United States will procure defense articles for Iceland insofar as both Governments deem such procurement in their mutual best interests.

(2) Iceland will pay for such articles before delivery, except when the United States deems prior payment necessary to protect its interests.

When the agreement was signed, the Secretary handed a note <sup>28</sup> to the Icelandic Minister, stating that the United States would consent to distribution of the material procured under the agreement by usual distributing agencies within Iceland, subject to certain specified conditions.

The Delegation was also handed a memorandum <sup>29</sup> which set forth the basis upon which products within Iceland would be purchased by the United States for ultimate transfer as Lend-Lease aid to the British. A telegram dealing with this memorandum and related questions follows.

A copy of the Lend-Lease Agreement and the related note is being sent to you.

HULL

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[In January 1942, at the request of the Icelandic Government, negotiations for a trade agreement were transferred to Iceland. With instruction No. 41, March 19, 1942, proposed schedules and general provisions were sent to the Chargé in Iceland. The subject, however, received only intermittent attention and the reciprocal trade agreement was not signed until August 27, 1943. For text of agreement, see Department of State Executive Agreement Series No. 342, or 57 Stat. (pt. 2) 1075.]

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<sup>27</sup> For text of agreement, see Department of State Executive Agreement Series No. 429, or 58 Stat. (pt. 2) 1455.

<sup>28</sup> Not printed.

<sup>29</sup> Not found in Department files, but see letter to the Chairman of the Icelandic Trade Delegation, *supra*.

AGREEMENT WITH THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT FOR SENDING OF AMERICAN TROOPS TO ASSUME PROTECTION OF ICELAND<sup>80</sup>

859A.20/17

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*

The British authorities have been informed by Admiral Ghormley<sup>81</sup> that the United States Government have decided to send a force to Iceland in the very near future.

The British authorities are not clear whether the United States Government have as yet made any communication on this subject to the Icelandic Government but on the assumption that the latter have so far been left in ignorance of the United States Government's intentions, the British authorities feel that it would be preferable, for military and tactical reasons, that no advance information of the proposed despatch of United States forces should be given. The British authorities would suggest that the best course would be for the Icelandic Government to be presented with a *fait accompli* as was the case when the British troops occupied Iceland.

If the United States Government equally feel that it would be undesirable to disclose their intentions beforehand to the Icelandic Government, it would nevertheless seem necessary for the Icelandic authorities to be informed and for some public announcement to be made, either when the United States troops actually land or very shortly before the landing takes place. Furthermore, it seems very important that in any action which may be taken in this direction, the United States and British Governments should speak with the same voice. The United States Government have no doubt already taken this aspect of the matter into consideration and His Majesty's Government would be very grateful to learn how the United States authorities feel that the question should be dealt with.

The British Government venture to suggest for the consideration of the United States authorities that one method of dealing with the matter—based on the analogy of what was done when the British forces occupied Iceland—would be for the United States Consul<sup>81a</sup> and the British Minister<sup>81b</sup> in Reykjavik to make oral communications to the Icelandic Prime Minister<sup>82</sup> and for simultaneous statements on the subject to be issued to the press in the United States and in Great Britain. These statements, it is suggested, might perhaps be somewhat on the lines of the following paragraphs, the first of which is

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<sup>80</sup> For previous correspondence on the attitude of the United States toward taking Iceland under its protection, see *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, pp. 679 ff.

<sup>81</sup> Vice Adm. R. L. Ghormley, Chief of Special Mission to the United Kingdom.

<sup>81a</sup> Bertel Eric Kuniholm.

<sup>81b</sup> C. Howard Smith.

<sup>82</sup> Hermann Jonasson.

based on various passages in the President's radio address of May 27th.<sup>33</sup>

"It is the declared policy of the United States to keep Hitlerism away from any points in the world which could be used and would be used as bases of attack against the Americas. Iceland constitutes one of these points and its occupation by the Nazis would involve an immediate threat to the United States. It would also gravely menace the delivery of supplies to Britain which the United States in conformity with the ancient American doctrine of freedom of the seas and the declared intention to render all possible aid to the democracies in the fight against Hitlerism, are determined shall be delivered.

"For these reasons and in order to relieve Britain of the task of protecting a friendly and neutral country from being added to the list of victims of Nazi aggression, the United States Government have decided, in concert with His Majesty's Government, to assume direct responsibility for the defence of Iceland and gradually to relieve the present British garrison by stationing United States troops in the island."

The British authorities also suggest for the consideration of the United States Government that it might be desirable to add to the above-mentioned statement something to the effect that the United States Government declared it to be their intention not to interfere in the internal administration and economic life of Iceland beyond what might be necessary to ensure the security of the garrison, which would be withdrawn when the democracies had won the war against Hitlerism. A similar assurance was given by His Majesty's Government at the time of the British occupation and it might be desirable for it to be repeated again in order to relieve any possible apprehensions on the part of the Icelandic population.

[WASHINGTON,] June 16, 1941.

859A.20/17

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

[WASHINGTON,] June 18, 1941.

Mr. Butler<sup>33a</sup> of the British Embassy called to see me this morning at his request.

I stated to Mr. Butler that the President had requested me to inform the British Government that the plan of procedure concerning Iceland which was set forth in the secret memorandum<sup>33b</sup> handed me by Lord Halifax<sup>34</sup> two days ago and which I had submitted to the President yesterday was entirely unacceptable to the President.

<sup>33</sup> For text of address, see Department of State *Bulletin*, May 31, 1941, p. 647.

<sup>33a</sup> Neville M. Butler, British Minister.

<sup>33b</sup> *Supra*.

<sup>34</sup> British Ambassador.

The President desired to inform the British Government that the plan of procedure he envisaged was as follows:

The necessary American forces, ships and troops, would be concentrated at either Newfoundland or Bermuda, or both. The President estimated that approximately four days would be required for these forces to reach Iceland from the point of concentration. As soon as the concentration had been completed, the President believed that the British authorities should state to the Prime Minister of Iceland that because of their own defense requirements and military requirements in other parts of the world, it had become inconvenient for the British Government to maintain any longer their forces of occupation in Iceland and that, consequently, they were prepared to withdraw. The British authorities would likewise state to the Prime Minister of Iceland that the British Government was informed that the Government of the United States, because of its determination to defend the Western Hemisphere against any danger of attack by Germany, would be prepared to send forces to Iceland in replacement of the British forces in order to assist in the defense of the integrity and independence of Iceland and that, consequently, the Prime Minister of Iceland should send a message to the President of the United States requesting the United States to undertake the task of defending Iceland. Immediately upon the receipt of such a message from the Prime Minister of Iceland, the President would reply stating that American forces would immediately be sent for that purpose and would likewise state that the United States had no intention of impairing in any manner whatever the independence or sovereignty of Iceland and that as soon as the present emergency was passed, all American forces of occupation would be withdrawn. As soon as these messages had been exchanged, the American forces would be dispatched to Iceland to take over from the British forces.

I further stated that the President did not approve the suggested statement to be made by him as contained in the British memorandum and did not agree that any statement to be made by him should give the unfounded impression that the steps taken by the United States were taken "in concert with His Majesty's Government."

I stated that Ambassador Winant<sup>35</sup> had been fully instructed by the President along the lines I had just indicated to Mr. Butler, but that in view of my belief that time is extremely important in this matter now, I felt the President wished his views to be conveyed without delay to the British Government.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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<sup>35</sup> John G. Winant, Ambassador in the United Kingdom.

859A.20/201

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] June 22, 1941.

Lord Halifax called to see me this morning at his request.

The Ambassador brought up the question of Iceland. He informed me that the British Foreign Office and the British Minister to Iceland saw serious dangers involved in the procedure determined upon by the President. The British Minister in Iceland believed that it was doubtful whether Iceland would ask the United States Government to assist in its defense, and both he and the Foreign Office feared that there would be danger of leakage since there was no censorship of the press in Iceland and likewise no control over wireless installations on Icelandic fishing vessels. The British Government stated, however, that it would be prepared to acquiesce in any plan of procedure upon which the President was fully determined.

I replied to the Ambassador that the President had requested me to say to him that the plan of procedure which the President had outlined was the only plan of procedure which he desired to follow. I emphasized the fact that the President believed that in as much as the whole basis of our relations with the other American Republics was based upon our policy of non-aggression and non-intervention, the occupation by the United States of Iceland without having received from the Icelandic Government a request to do so, would destroy in great measure the confidence which the other American Republics possessed in this Government and would be utilized by axis propagandists throughout the Western Hemisphere. The President felt, I said, that exactly the same strong argument presented itself in so far as any action which we might later take with regard to the Azores was concerned. It must be clear to the British Government that if the United States occupied through force the territory of Iceland without receiving any request from the Icelandic authorities to take such action, the fears of Portugal with regard to our possible action in the Azores would be materially stimulated and would be exploited to our disadvantage and that of the British by German propaganda in Portugal.

The Ambassador then propounded the following questions:

1. Is it correct that United States forces would move upon Iceland in two movements, from Newfoundland and Bermuda, the first movement starting June 22?

I said to Lord Halifax that as I had previously explained to Mr. Butler, the President had asked me to make it clear that all that he envisaged was the concentration of the American forces required for the occupation in either Newfoundland or Bermuda, or both, and that no movement towards occupation would be undertaken until these

concentrations had been completed. (The President subsequently asked me to confirm this statement in his name to Lord Halifax and to add that Ambassador Winant would make this completely clear through a personal message which the President had instructed him to deliver to Mr. Churchill.<sup>55a</sup>)

2. Does the United States agree that during the interim period while American and British troops are both in Iceland that the total of such troops should not be less than the present total of the British garrison? (The President subsequently asked me to state to Lord Halifax that he confirmed this understanding with the proviso that, of course, in certain eventualities the total number might be very considerably greater than the present total of the British garrison.)

3. The British Government desired to know, since they themselves preferred to make no statement upon their departure from Iceland, whether the United States Government was agreeable to their refraining from making any statement. (The President asked me to let Lord Halifax know that this would be entirely agreeable to him.)

With regard to the statement which the United States would make after the procedure insisted upon by the President had been completed, the British Government was quite willing that the United States should omit any reference in such statement to any action taken by the United States "in concert with Great Britain". It was further suggested by the British Government that there be omitted from any American statement the first two sentences in the original draft presented to us for our consideration because of the British feeling that the two sentences which they had previously suggested would injure Portuguese susceptibilities.

Finally, the British Government asked whether they might be given the opportunity to see the draft of the proposed American statement before it was issued in order that they might be afforded the opportunity of making any suggestions they thought would be useful.

I told Lord Halifax that I would be very glad to see that that was done.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

859A.20/20½

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] June 25, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me this evening at his request. The Ambassador gave me to read a telegram received under date of June 24 by the British Foreign Office from the British Minister to Iceland. This telegram set forth the following facts:

1. The British Minister had spoken to the Icelandic Prime Minister of the need for the Icelandic Government to request the United States Government to defend Iceland and replace British troops of

<sup>55a</sup> Winston S. Churchill, British Prime Minister.

occupation with American troops. The Prime Minister had replied that many individuals in the Icelandic Government favored the step proposed but that he, the Prime Minister, himself was opposed to it.

2. The Prime Minister had stated that there had been a movement on foot in Iceland last autumn to make such a request of the United States Government but that at that time the American Consul, acting on instructions from Washington, had discouraged the move.

3. The British Minister expressed the opinion that it was possible that the Prime Minister or his Government could be persuaded to announce officially that the Government of Iceland "acquiesced" in American occupation in the place of British occupation, but that he doubted that the Icelandic Government would "request" such occupation.

Lord Halifax wished to know whether the President would regard the compromise suggested as satisfactory and, if not, whether the President would offer some counter proposal.

I replied that I would submit the question to the President and let the Ambassador have the President's views tomorrow morning.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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859A.20/20A

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] June 26, 1941.

Lord Halifax called to see me this morning at my request.

I informed the Ambassador that, after consultation with the President concerning the Ambassador's message of yesterday evening regarding Iceland, I had despatched the cable of today's date<sup>86</sup> to the American Consul at Reykjavik. I gave the cable to the Ambassador to read.

The Ambassador showed me a cable which he himself had despatched yesterday evening to the British Minister in Iceland which was couched in very stiff terms and which amounted literally to an instruction to the British Minister to "see to it" that the Icelandic Prime Minister sent a request to the President of the United States for assistance in defending the independence of Iceland.

I emphasized to the Ambassador the President's insistence that British forces in Iceland should not be diminished in number at this time nor after the arrival of American forces of occupation until such time as the United States and the British Governments were fully satisfied that the number of the forces of occupation was amply sufficient to take care of the situation in the event of German attack. I conveyed the President's opinion that the forces in Iceland should be far greater in number than those actually there.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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<sup>86</sup> Apparently the telegram of June 29, p. 788.



859A.20/20<sup>1/2</sup>*The British Embassy to the Department of State*<sup>87</sup>

## TELEGRAM FROM BRITISH MINISTER AT REYKJAVIK TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE, DATED JUNE 27, 1941

Despite my every argument and insistence Iceland Government refuse to use word "invite". Their position is that during last session of Parliament there was large majority in all parties against asking United States for protection. They cannot therefore assume responsibility for "inviting" without consulting Parliament, but they are anxious that whole plan should not come to nought. Therefore they ask me to send following reply in hope that it will be sufficient for President's purpose. It will be seen that impression conveyed is that this question has been discussed between United States and Iceland and that Iceland agrees that it is in her interest that United States troops come and therefore non-aggression platform of President is completely defended. It is also not expressly stated which side took the initiative.

2. I deeply regret that I failed, but in fairness to Iceland Government I must point out that I was instructed that three points were essential, speed, secrecy and definite invitation. Reply comes one day after completion of United States concentration. Iceland Government realise the importance of secrecy, and have not summoned Parliament, although this put very great responsibility on them; they point to the recent action of Swedish Government in having secret session of Parliament. After our insistence on strategic importance of Iceland they decline to believe that British troops would actually leave, if United States did not come. Government maintain that they are taking great risk in going so far as they have. President can surely regard the form of words used as tantamount to invitation. Iceland conditions, although meticulous, are not unreasonable, and I trust United States Government will not cavil at raising status of representatives. It will make a great difference when United States troops come and very greatly please Icelanders.

[The remaining part of this telegram contains a message from the Prime Minister of Iceland to President Roosevelt, part of which is quoted verbatim and part in substance. For text of the message agreed to by President Roosevelt, see page 785.]

859A.20/20<sup>1/2</sup>*Memorandum of Conversations, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] June 28, 1941.

The British Ambassador called me up late yesterday afternoon at my house to tell me that he had now received a report in regard to

<sup>87</sup> Handed by the British Ambassador to the Acting Secretary of State on June 28.

the situation in Iceland and asked that he be given the opportunity of talking with me at the first possible moment.

I consequently received the Ambassador this morning at 9:00 o'clock. The Ambassador handed me two secret telegrams received through his Foreign Office from the British Minister in Iceland. The text of these two messages is attached herewith.<sup>88</sup>

After studying the suggested message to be sent by the Prime Minister of Iceland to the President, I said that it appeared to me to cover the situation sufficiently well so far as to be acceptable. I said, however, that in regard to the list of conditions attached I felt that condition no. 2 would have to be modified radically in as much as the United States was not a belligerent, and consequently could not undertake commitment as to what would emanate from the Peace Conference at the end of the present war. I said, however, that I thought this problem could readily be solved by modifying the text of condition no. 2 so far as to make it clear that the United States would exercise its best efforts with the powers participating in the negotiations for such a peace treaty in order that there would be no encroachment upon the liberty or sovereignty of Iceland.

I said to the Ambassador that I had not yet received a reply to the message with which he was familiar which I had sent to the American Consul in Iceland yesterday and that I preferred to await the final decision until such a reply had been received. I stated that of course all the above is contingent upon the conversation with the President which I was planning to have at 10:00 o'clock, and I would then communicate the news of the President to the Ambassador.

I then spoke to the President on the telephone and read to him the text of the proposed message and informed the President of the nature of the conditions attached. After some consideration and discussion, the President agreed that the text of the enclosed message from the Icelandic Prime Minister could be regarded as satisfactory and suggested a slight change of phraseology in the text thereof which would make it clear that British troops now occupying Iceland would not necessarily be withdrawn and certainly not immediately.

The President agreed that it was better to wait and see if we got a message from the American Consul in Iceland during the course of the day, and I consequently arranged with the President that I would call him back at 6:00 o'clock this evening. The President agreed that as soon as the texts of the two messages have been finally agreed upon between the Icelandic and United States Governments,

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<sup>88</sup> For partial text of first message, see *supra*. The second message transmitted the conditions on which Iceland would be willing to entrust its protection to the United States; see draft of message to be sent by the Prime Minister of Iceland to President Roosevelt, p. 785.

the plans which were under contemplation would be immediately carried out and that the texts of the two messages might be made public four days after they had been agreed upon.

Lord Halifax returned to see me at 12:30 o'clock. I communicated to him the President's views, and it was further agreed that I should let him know this evening what the final decision of the President might be. I told him that as soon as the President had approved the revised text of the message to be sent by the Prime Minister of Iceland and the text of the decision that the President would make thereof, I should transmit copies of both documents to the Ambassador in order that he might in turn transmit them to the Government of Iceland, and that I myself would send a brief telegram to the American Consul at Reykjavik advising him of what had been done.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

859A.20/207

*The British Ambassador (Halifax) to the Acting Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, June 28, 1941.

MY DEAR WELLES: You will remember that during our conversation on June 26th about Iceland you told me that the President felt strongly that it would not be wise for any British forces to be withdrawn immediately on the arrival of the first American contingent. You also told me that the President had expressed some doubts whether there were nearly enough British troops in the Island at the moment.

I at once passed on what you said to me to London and have now received the enclosed telegram in reply.

Ys. truly,

HALIFAX

[Enclosure]

*Telegram Received by the British Ambassador (Halifax) From the British Foreign Office*

You may give the President formal and definite assurance that our forces will not be reduced until both parties are satisfied that the position is secure since I understand from Chiefs of Staff that arrangements have been made in concert with United States staff for considerable overlapping between the arrival of the United States contingent and departure of the first detachment of our troops.

2. As regards the last sentence of your telegram if we had had unlimited resources we should doubtless have put a larger garrison and particularly more air force into Iceland. Chiefs of Staff consider that it would not be an over-insurance if the United States were to increase the forces they at present contemplate sending to Iceland by an additional brigade group and some more air forces.

859A.20/194

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversations, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] June 28, 1941.

I read to the President by telephone this evening at six-thirty the suggested text of the message to be sent to him by the Prime Minister of Iceland and the text of a message to be sent by the President in reply. The President approved the two texts.<sup>85a</sup>

I asked the President if I was correct in my understanding that as soon as we now had word that the Icelandic Government approved the texts of these two messages that the troops now concentrated be immediately sent on their way to Iceland and that the texts of the two messages would be made public simultaneously with the arrival in Iceland of the first detachment of our forces. The President said that this was his desire and understanding.

I then called up the British Ambassador on the telephone and told him that I was sending to him immediately by special messenger copies of the texts of the two messages as now approved by the President. I said that I had not as yet received any reply to the message I sent to the American Consul General at Reykjavik and that I should consequently appreciate it, in order to avoid any delay, if the British Ambassador would clear these two messages as promptly as possible with the Prime Minister of Iceland and let me have the final and definite reply of the Icelandic Government as soon as possible. Lord Halifax replied that he would be glad to do so. I then informed Lord Halifax of the President's decision that as soon as final word from the Icelandic Government that the texts of the two messages were satisfactory was received by this Government, the forces of concentration would start immediately for Iceland and would be due to arrive there approximately four days from the date of departure. I further stated that the President had confirmed by understanding that the texts of the two messages would be made public here as nearly as possible simultaneously with the arrival in Iceland of the first detachments of our forces.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

859A.20/1

*Draft of Message To Be Sent by the Prime Minister of Iceland (Jonasson) to President Roosevelt*<sup>89</sup>

In a conversation of June 24th, the British Minister explained that British forces in Iceland are required elsewhere. At the same time

<sup>85a</sup> *Infra*.<sup>89</sup> Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y. Marginal note on original: "Approved by the President by telephone 6:30 P. M. June 28—S[umner] W[elles]".

he stressed the immense importance of adequate defense of Iceland. He also called my attention to the declaration of the President of the United States to the effect that he must take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the Western Hemisphere—one of the President's measures is to assist in the defense of Iceland—and that the President is therefore prepared to send here immediately United States troops to supplement and eventually to replace the British force here. But that he does not consider that he can take this course except at the invitation of the Iceland Government.

After careful consideration of all the circumstances the Iceland Government, in view of the present state of affairs, admit that this measure is in accordance with the interest of Iceland, and therefore are ready to entrust the protection of Iceland to United States on the following conditions.

1. United States promise to withdraw all their military forces land, air and sea from Iceland immediately on conclusion of present war.

2. United States further promise to recognize the absolute independence and sovereignty of Iceland and to exercise their best efforts with those powers which will negotiate the peace treaty at the conclusion of the present war in order that such treaty shall likewise recognize the absolute independence and sovereignty of Iceland.

3. United States promise not to interfere with Government of Iceland neither while their armed forces remain in this country nor afterwards.

4. United States promise to organize the defense of the country in such a way as to ensure the greatest possible safety for the inhabitants themselves and assure that they suffer minimum disturbance from military activities; these activities being carried out in consultation with Iceland authorities as far as possible. Also because of small population of Iceland and consequent danger to nation from presence of a numerous army, great care must be taken that only picked troops are sent here. Military authorities should be also instructed to keep in mind that Icelanders have been unarmed for centuries and are entirely unaccustomed to military discipline and conduct of troops towards the inhabitants of the country should be ordered accordingly.

5. United States undertake defense of the country without expense to Iceland and promise compensation for all damage occasioned to the inhabitants by their military activities.

6. United States promise to further interests of Iceland in every way in their power, including that of supplying the country with sufficient necessities, of securing necessary shipping to and from the country and of making in other respects favorable commercial and trade agreements with it.

7. Iceland Government expect that declaration made by President in this connection will be in agreement with these premises on the part of Iceland, and Government would much appreciate its being given the opportunity of being cognizant with wording of this declaration before it is published.

8. On the part of Iceland it is considered obvious that if United States undertake defense of the country it must be strong enough to

meet every eventuality and particularly in the beginning it is expected that as far as possible efforts will be made to prevent any special danger in connection with change-over. Iceland Government lays special stress on there being sufficient airplanes for defensive purposes wherever they are required and they can be used as soon as decision is made for United States to undertake the defense of the country.

This decision is made on the part of Iceland as an absolutely free and sovereign state and it is considered as a matter of course that United States will from the beginning recognize this legal status of the country, both states immediately exchanging diplomatic representatives.

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859A.20/1

*Draft of Message To Be Sent by President Roosevelt in Response to a Message From the Prime Minister of Iceland (Jonasson)*<sup>40</sup>

I have received your message in which you have informed me that after careful consideration of all the circumstances, the Iceland Government, in view of the present state of affairs, admits that the sending to Iceland of United States troops to supplement and perhaps<sup>41</sup> eventually to replace the present British forces there would be in accordance with the interests of Iceland and that, therefore, the Iceland Government is ready to entrust the protection of Iceland to the United States on the following considerations:

[Here follows repetition of the eight points set forth in draft message to be sent by the Prime Minister of Iceland to President Roosevelt, printed *supra*.]

You further state that this decision is made on the part of Iceland as an absolutely free and sovereign state and that it is considered as a matter of course that the United States will from the beginning recognize the legal status of Iceland, both states immediately exchanging diplomatic representatives.

I take pleasure in confirming to you hereby the conditions set forth in your communication now under acknowledgement are fully acceptable to the Government of the United States and that these conditions will be observed in the relations between the United States and Iceland. I may further say that it will give me pleasure to request of the Congress its agreement in order that diplomatic representatives may be exchanged between our two countries.

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<sup>40</sup> Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y. Marginal note on original: "Approved by the President by telephone 6:30 P. M. June 28—S[umner] W[elles]".

<sup>41</sup> In the final text the word "perhaps" was omitted at the request of the Prime Minister of Iceland.

It is the announced policy of the Government of the United States to undertake to join with the other nations of the Western Hemisphere in the defense of the New World against any attempt at aggression. In the opinion of this Government, it is imperative that the integrity and independence of Iceland should be preserved because of the fact that any occupation of Iceland by a power whose only too clearly apparent plans for world conquest include the domination of the peoples of the New World would at once directly menace the security of the entire Western Hemisphere.

It is for that reason that in response to your message, the Government of the United States will send immediately troops to supplement and perhaps <sup>42</sup> eventually to replace the British forces now there.

The steps so taken by the Government of the United States are taken in full recognition of the sovereignty and independence of Iceland and with the clear understanding that American military or naval forces sent to Iceland will in no wise interfere in the slightest degree with the internal and domestic affairs of the Icelandic people; and with the further understanding that immediately upon the termination of the present international emergency, all such military and naval forces will be at once withdrawn leaving the people of Iceland and their Government in full sovereign control of their own territory.

The people of Iceland hold a proud position among the democracies of the world, with a historic tradition of freedom and of individual liberty which is more than a thousand years old. It is, therefore, all the more appropriate that in response to your message, the Government of the United States, while undertaking this defensive measure for the preservation of the independence and security of the democracies of the New World should at the same time be afforded the privilege of cooperating in this manner with your Government in the defense of the historic democracy of Iceland.

I am communicating this message, for their information, to the Governments of all the other nations of the Western Hemisphere.

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Reykjavik Consulate Files, Lot 55F44 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Consul at Reykjavik  
(Kuniholm) <sup>43</sup>*

[WASHINGTON,] June 29, 1941.

It is my understanding that you have been informed by the British Minister concerning his discussions with the Prime Minister of Ice-

<sup>42</sup> In the final text the word "perhaps" was omitted at the request of the Prime Minister of Iceland.

<sup>43</sup> Original of this document not found in Department files; this is a paraphrase printed from the Reykjavik Consulate files.

land in which he set forth the suggestion of his Government that the Icelandic Government, through the Prime Minister, should ask the United States to take measures to aid in defending the security of Iceland by replacing gradually with American forces the present British occupying forces.

Please seek a personal interview with the Prime Minister and in a completely confidential conversation with him make clear the following points :

1. The Government of the United States has announced as its policy that it will defend the Western Hemisphere against any attempted aggression by Germany. Since the United States believes that there is imminent danger of such attempted aggression, it is necessary that the independence and integrity of Iceland be maintained so that the historic liberty and independence of the people of Iceland may be safely preserved, and by reason of the fact that, if Iceland were to be occupied by Germany, this occupation would immediately place in jeopardy the safety of the entire Western Hemisphere.

2. The peril of German aggressive action against the Western Hemisphere is at present far more immediate than it was in the fall of 1940, when this Government understood that the Icelandic Government had considered requesting the United States to aid in preserving the independence of Iceland.

3. If the Prime Minister of Iceland, on behalf of his Government, should now ask the United States to aid in preserving Icelandic liberty, the President of the United States would at once reply in the affirmative. His reply, which he would send as soon as such a request might be received from the Prime Minister of Iceland, would contain a public statement that aid was being rendered Iceland by this country to guard against German aggression against Iceland and to guarantee likewise the safety of the Western Hemisphere; that this move was undertaken by the United States with full awareness of the sovereignty and independence of Iceland and with the definite understanding that American naval and military forces sent to that country would in no way interfere however slightly with the internal and domestic affairs of the Icelandic people; and lastly, that at once upon the termination of the present international emergency, all these American naval and military forces would immediately be withdrawn, leaving the Government and people of Iceland in full and sovereign control of their own territory.

4. You will state that you have been directed to furnish these assurances to the Prime Minister as additional to the communications already handed to him by the British Minister. You will say that, in the President's judgment, the position is exceedingly serious and that action of the character proposed is essential for the purpose of maintaining the independence and liberty of Iceland.

You are directed to advise the British Minister of the instructions you have received and to inform the Department by telegraph, in Navy Department code, immediately concerning any reply which may be made to you by the Prime Minister of Iceland.



859A.20/193 : Telegram

*The Consul at Reykjavik (Kuniholm) to the Secretary of State* <sup>45</sup>

I have conveyed to the Prime Minister today the substance of your strictly confidential message <sup>45</sup> delivered to me last night by the USS *Goldsborough*. The Prime Minister, on behalf of the Icelandic Government, made the following observations: Since the President is prepared to accept in principle the conditions and reservations transmitted to the British Government by Prime Minister, there remains only the announcement to be made by the President.

The moral effect on Icelanders of a change in military occupation from troops of a belligerent to those of a neutral country will be considerable. This effect might be lost if the wording of the President's public statement were to read "supplement and perhaps eventually to replace" instead of "relieve at once" in connection with the transfer of military control. The Icelandic Government would prefer that the interchange take place as quickly as possible.

The Icelandic Government is particularly anxious to avoid any semblance of a condominium in military control as between Great Britain and the United States. It is felt that joint occupation would be worse than the existing *status quo*.

KUNIHOLM

859A.20/204

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] July 1, 1941.

The British Ambassador called me on the telephone this morning to say that he had information for me with regard to the Iceland question. I consequently arranged to see the Ambassador at eleven o'clock.

The Ambassador came in with two messages for me which are attached herewith. He read to me likewise additional telegrams he had received from his Government which made it entirely clear that the Icelandic Government and the British Government approved entirely of the texts of the messages proposed by the President to be exchanged between the Prime Minister of Iceland and himself and likewise with regard to all of the other steps, including the timing of publicity to be given to these messages as specified in the last conversation I had with the Ambassador on this subject. The sole reser-

<sup>45</sup> This telegram was sent in naval code to the Secretary of State. It is undated but probably was sent on June 30, 1941.

<sup>46</sup> *Supra*.

vation made was that the Icelandic Government, for the reasons expressed in the memorandum handed to me by the Ambassador, hoped that the President would agree to use the phrase "to replace" instead of the phrase suggested by the President "to supplement and perhaps eventually to replace" in the penultimate sentence of the first paragraph of the message to be sent by the Prime Minister of Iceland to the President. I said that this suggestion had been made by the President himself and that I doubted very much that the President would feel able to modify his decision in that regard, but that I would submit the matter to the President and let the Ambassador have the President's decision in the matter.

It was further clearly stated by the Ambassador that the Prime Minister of Iceland agreed that the agreement now reached between him and the President as to the texts of the two messages to be exchanged should be regarded as sufficient and that no texts need actually be telegraphed.

I subsequently spoke with the President on the telephone and he authorized me to state to the Ambassador that he was willing to omit the word "perhaps" from the suggested message but that he would have to insist upon the retention of the phrase "to supplement and eventually to replace" in lieu of the mere phrase "to replace".

I then called Lord Halifax on the telephone and communicated to him the President's decision. Lord Halifax said that I was to understand that this was entirely satisfactory to the Prime Minister of Iceland and that the two texts of the messages were now to be regarded as finally approved.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

[Annex 1]

The penultimate sentence of the first paragraph of the text of the message which the Iceland Prime Minister originally suggested that he should send to the President ran as follows:

"He also called my attention to the declaration of the President of the United States to the effect that he must take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the Western Hemisphere—one of President's measures is to assist in the defence of Iceland—and that the President is therefore prepared to send here immediately United States troops to replace the British force here."

This paragraph was redrafted by the President to run as follows:—

"He also called my attention to the declaration of the President of the United States to the effect that he must take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the Western Hemisphere—one of the President's measures is to assist in the defense of Iceland—and that the President is therefore prepared to send here immediately United States troops to supplement and perhaps eventually to replace the British force here."

The Iceland Prime Minister has now replied through the British Minister in Reykjavik that the Iceland Government would greatly prefer the original wording which they themselves suggested.

This is important from the point of view of their own internal political position. They had counted on being able to defend their action in the Icelandic Parliament by saying that Iceland would now be accepting the protection of a non-belligerent power instead of that of a belligerent. The wording desired by the President suggests, however, that in theory, at all events, Iceland may be under a joint occupation for an indefinite period. The Iceland Government do not understand the necessity for the President's amendment since they feel that it is already provided that it should be left to the judgment of the United States and British Governments to decide when the British forces should leave.

One of the "reservations" or "conditions" asked by the Iceland Government from His Majesty's Government, and accepted by the latter, ran as follows:—

"Great Britain promises to withdraw all her armed forces as soon as the transport of the United States forces is so far advanced that their military strength is sufficient for the defence of the country. The defences of the country while the change is to be effected never to be less than they are now."

The Iceland Government hope that if the President feels unable to withdraw his proposed amendment and return to the text originally suggested by the Iceland Prime Minister, he will be prepared to have the word "perhaps" in his draft omitted.

The Iceland Government agree to the President's proposal that once the texts of the two messages have been finally agreed upon<sup>46</sup> this agreement shall be regarded as being equivalent to the two notes having been exchanged and it will not be necessary for them actually to be telegraphed. The Iceland Government also agree that as soon as the draft messages have been finally settled the United States forces should start.<sup>47</sup>

JULY 1, 1941.

[Annex 2]

The Foreign Office are anxious to be informed as long as possible in advance of the date and hour of publication in Washington of the exchange of messages between the President and the Iceland Prime Minister. They are also anxious to know whether the President proposes to publish any other material at the same time. In that event they would like if possible to be informed of the text of this additional material in advance.

JULY 1, 1941.

<sup>46</sup> The final texts of the two messages, dated July 1, are printed as Department of State Executive Agreement Series No. 232.

<sup>47</sup> United States Forces arrived in Iceland on July 7, 1941.

## ITALY

### CLOSING OF ITALIAN CONSULAR AND OTHER OFFICES IN THE UNITED STATES AND OF SIMILAR AMERICAN OFFICES IN ITALY<sup>1</sup>

125.691/18

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State  
(Long)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 12, 1941.

The Italian Ambassador<sup>2</sup> called upon me today at his own request. He said that he had just been requested by his Government to advise the Department of State that all the governments were being requested to move their consulates from Palermo and Naples to a place as far north as Rome or farther north, and to a place which was not on the sea coast.

He said that he had been instructed to say that it applied to all governments and was not intended for any one government. He stated that in his opinion it was related to the bombardment of Genoa, and the possibility of a recurrence of that activity in other places, and that it might be for the safety of foreign consular officers.

I asked him if there were any further decisions on the part of his Government as to leaving a person or persons in charge of the files and buildings and suggested that it was a radical move. He said he understood his instructions to mean that the functions of the consulates would be performed in the consulates moved temporarily from the areas indicated.

He asked if I had any inquiries to make or any communication for his Government and I answered in the negative and said that I would consult with the proper authorities in the Department.

B[RECKINRIDGE] L[ONG]

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702.6511/1837a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, February 28, 1941—4 p. m.

132. Your 244, February 20.<sup>3</sup> Unless you perceive a compelling reason to the contrary you are requested immediately to convey orally

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<sup>1</sup> For similar developments with respect to Germany, see pp. 628 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Don Ascanio dei principi Colonna.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

to the appropriate Italian authorities the desire of the United States Government that the Italian consular offices at Newark, New Jersey, Detroit, Michigan, and Seattle, Washington, should be closed and that the Italian personnel be withdrawn from these places. Please telegraph action taken.

Upon receipt of your telegram the Italian Ambassador will be informed that you have made this request and also of the desire of this Government that the officials of the Italian Government within the territory of the United States confine their movements to areas in which they exercise the recognized duties of their respective offices. This request does not include the personnel of the Italian Embassy in Washington whose names appear on the *Diplomatic List*. The Ambassador will also be asked to keep the Department of State currently informed of the movements outside of Washington of the military and naval personnel attached to the Italian Embassy.

It is not believed that any explanation is required but, for your own information, this decision has been taken because it seemed clear that the Italian Government in its recent restrictive regulations is concerned lest the presence of American consular officers in certain areas would mean they are able to obtain information concerning local conditions which the Italian Government is desirous of preventing. In as much as the presence of Italian officials at some ports in the United States and on the Canadian Border where supplies are being shipped to Great Britain may also permit them to obtain information which this Government might in turn wish to prevent, the aforesaid restrictive measures are being taken.

HULL

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702.6511/1338 : Telegram

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

ROME, March 1, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received March 2—8:53 a. m.]

297. Department's 132, February 28, 4 p. m. While I am, of course, quite ready to carry out the Department's instructions, I am not certain from Department's telegram whether you have taken into consideration that the limitations which the Italian Government have applied to American diplomatic and consular officers are in fact applicable to all foreign diplomatic and consular officers with the exception naturally of the Germans. According to my information there are no foreign career consular officers at Newark or Detroit except Italian; consequently there would be no complications arising from the closing of those offices. I note, however, that at Seattle the British, Japanese, Chinese and possibly others have establishments under career officers.

If, therefore, we should single out the Italian Consulate for closing at Seattle the Italian Government might retaliate by singling out for closing further American consulates in Italy.

I submit these thoughts for your consideration before taking action on Monday morning.<sup>4</sup>

PHILLIPS

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702.6511/1338 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 3, 1941—8 p. m.

144. Your 297, March 1, 1 p. m. The Department had taken into consideration the points raised in your telegram under reference but considered that the continued presence of German Consular Officers at Naples and Palermo in fact constituted a violation of the most-favored-nation principle.

On the other hand it may be preferable for the time being to omit Seattle from the restrictive measures proposed. Consequently your request to the Foreign Office should be limited to the closing of the offices at Detroit and Newark.

HULL

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702.6511/1341a

*The Secretary of State to the Italian Ambassador (Colonna)*

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Royal Italian Ambassador and has the honor to refer to his oral communication of February 12, 1941, with respect to the Italian Government's request that the Consulates now established at Palermo and Naples should be moved to a place as far north as Rome or farther north, and to a place which was not on the sea coast.

Instructions to these offices of the American Government have been issued in accordance with this request and the supervisory consulate general of the United States in Italy is being established in Rome.

The Secretary of State avails himself of this opportunity to make request of the Italian Ambassador that all officials of his Government within the territory of the United States will confine their movements to those areas in which they exercise the recognized duties of their respective offices. This request does not include the personnel of the Italian Embassy in Washington whose names appear on the *Diplomatic List*. It would be appreciated, however, if the Italian Ambassador would keep the Department of State currently informed of the movements outside of Washington of the military and naval personnel attached to the Italian Embassy.

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<sup>4</sup> March 3.

As regards the Italian consular offices at Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan, the Italian Ambassador is informed that the American Ambassador in Rome has been requested to convey orally to the appropriate Italian authorities the desire of the United States Government that these offices should be closed and that the Italian personnel be withdrawn from these places. Should they remain within the jurisdiction of the United States the Department of State should be kept fully informed of their place of residence.

WASHINGTON, March 5, 1941.

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702.6511/1353

*The Italian Embassy to the Department of State*

MEMORANDUM

The contents of the note of the Department of State of March 5, 1941, addressed to the Italian Embassy, has been communicated to Rome and a reply will be conveyed to the Department as soon as the Embassy will be in a position to do so.

The Italian Embassy feels, however, that it should point out in the meantime that:

1) The request of the Italian Government that foreign consulates established south of Rome should be moved as far north as Rome or farther north, has been made, as far as the Embassy knows, to every foreign consular office and is connected with the state of war, as the Embassy has already informed the Department of State.

2) The request now made by the United States Government that the Italian consular offices at Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan, should be closed and that the Italian personnel be withdrawn from these places, seems instead to have a different character because it appears to affect only Italian consular offices, apart from the fact that the United States are not in a state of war.

Concerning the request that all the Italian officials in the United States "will confine their movements to those areas in which they exercise recognized duties of their respective offices", the Italian Embassy should like to receive clarification on the following points:

a) Does the request mean that the Ambassador will not be able any longer to call to Washington such Italian officials in order to confer with them, which is also part of his and their duties?

b) Does the request of the Department of State imply that the Embassy will no longer be able to send or receive special couriers carrying official mail to and from the Italian consular offices in the United States?

c) The statement that the Department's request does not include the personnel of the Italian Embassy in Washington whose names

appear in the *Diplomatic List* may it be construed [*construed?*] as covering also the children and servants of these officials?

d) Does the request of the Department of State apply also to the employees of this Embassy and of the Italian consular offices who are American citizens?

e) In those cases in which the request of the Department of State applies, how may the Italian officials involved get permission, in case of need, in order to be able to leave the areas in which they are to be confined?

WASHINGTON, March 6, 1941—XIX.

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702.6511/1349

*The Italian Ambassador (Colonna) to the Secretary of State*

The Italian Ambassador presents his compliments to the Honorable Secretary of State and has the honor to refer to the Department's note of March 5, 1941, concerning the request of the Honorable Secretary of State that all officials of the Italian Government in the United States (with the only exception of the personnel of the Italian Embassy in Washington whose names appear in the *Diplomatic List*) confine their movements to those areas in which they exercise their recognized duties of their respective offices, and that the Italian consular offices at Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan, be closed.

In this connection the Italian Ambassador, following instructions received from his Government, has the honor to call the attention of the United States Government to the following points:

1) Movements of foreign diplomatic and consular officials stationed in Italy have been restrained on account of unavoidable necessities of military nature but only in those areas interesting war operations and where consequently such conditions require special precautions. Outside said areas foreign officials are free to travel as they wish and the suggestion that the Italian Foreign Office be kept informed of their movements was made only with the purpose to avoid possible inconveniences to said foreign officers in connection with examinations and controls that, owing to the state of war, have been enforced throughout the country for everybody, Italian citizens included.

2) The request of the Department of State that officials of the Italian Government confine their movements to limited areas could not, therefore, be compared in any way with the measures adopted by the Italian Government and the request of the Honorable Secretary of State, which applies only to officials of the Italian Government, does not appear to be inspired and justified by the same considerations and necessities which prompted the Italian Government.

3) The request to close the Italian Consular offices in Newark and Detroit could be interpreted only as a measure of groundless retaliation owing to the fact that—as it has already been made clear by the



Italian Foreign Office to the United States Embassy in Rome—the measure of transfer solicited by the Italian Government applies to all foreign consulates in the largest centers of southern Italy. Said transfer is already taking place, besides the consular offices of the United States, for the consular offices of Argentina, Yugoslavia, Switzerland and Turkey, while similar arrangements have been made for the same purpose in regard to the few foreign consular officers of the remaining countries.

The Italian Government wishes, therefore, to express its confidence that the United States Government will reconsider its requests in the light of the situation of fact and the circumstances set forth in the present communication.

WASHINGTON, March 12, 1941—XIX.

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702.6511/1353

*The Secretary of State to the Italian Ambassador (Colonna)*

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Royal Italian Ambassador and has the honor to refer to the latter's memorandum of March 6, 1941, raising certain questions in connection with the request of this Government that the Italian officials in the United States confine their movements to those areas in which they exercise recognized duties of their respective offices.

The request of this Government would not, of course, preclude the Italian Ambassador calling to Washington Italian officials to confer with him as it is recognized that such would be part of his and their duties.

Special couriers carrying official mail to and from Italian consular offices in the United States may proceed in the discharge of their duties provided their names as well as the offices between which they travel are communicated to the Department of State.

The Department's request is not intended to include the wives, children and servants of Italian officials in the United States.

The request of the Department of State applies to employees of the Embassy and Italian consular offices in the exercise of their duties regardless of nationality.

It is anticipated that Italian officers shall obtain permission in case of need to leave the areas in which they exercise their duties in the same manner as prescribed with regard to the limitation imposed upon American consular officers in Italy by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' note of February 11, 1941.<sup>5</sup> This note states that the Ministry

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<sup>5</sup> Text of note quoted in telegram No. 208, February 13, 7 p. m., from the Ambassador in Italy, not printed.

of Foreign Affairs will facilitate the trips to be made by the personnel of the missions or of consular officers which are notified to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Chief of the diplomatic mission concerned. In other words, the Department of State will be glad to take into consideration any requests from the Italian Ambassador relating to such necessary trips.

WASHINGTON, March 14, 1941.

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702.6511/1349

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Samuel Reber of the Division of European Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] March 17, 1941.

The Marchese Rossi Longhi<sup>o</sup> called today at his own request to discuss the interpretations to be placed on the Department's note of March 14, 1941, concerning the restrictions imposed upon the movements of Italian officials in the United States. He specifically inquired regarding the necessity of obtaining advance permission for Italian officials to come to Washington to confer with the Ambassador or for Italian subordinate officers to proceed to consult with their supervising Consuls General or Consuls. I stated that while no specific directives had been given me in this connection, it was my understanding that such trips were part of the "recognized duties of their respective offices" and such would be subject only to notification. I reiterated that the request of the Department applied to the Italian officers concerned as regards the exercise of their duties but that the Department would, of course, appreciate being informed of their general movements.

As regards the specific trips performed by the military and naval personnel of the Embassy, the notification of which was to be given to the Department, no specific line could be drawn beyond which notification of trips would be necessary. It would, in general, be left to the Ambassador to determine how the spirit of the Department's request could best be complied with as it was apparent that the Italian Embassy now appreciated the situation. In answer to a specific inquiry on the part of Marchese Longhi, I stated that I did not anticipate that the Department would be in a position to reconsider its request concerning limitations imposed upon the activities of Italian officials in this country.

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<sup>o</sup> Minister Counselor of the Italian Embassy.

125.0065/200 : Telegram

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

ROME, June 19, 1941—7:30 p. m.

[Received June 19—3:22 p. m.]

844. Wadsworth <sup>7</sup> has just returned from the Foreign Office where the following note was handed to him by Count Vitetti: <sup>7a</sup>

"The Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs has the honor to bring to the knowledge of the Embassy of the United States of America the following: The Italian Government which has been following for some time the activities of the Consulates of the United States in the Kingdom has, after careful evaluation of the facts, come to the conclusion that these activities have gone and go in many instances far beyond the functions which are attributed and permitted to consular offices and are assuming a character especially in the field of information that is wholly illicit and in any case incompatible with the duties which are incumbent upon Consuls towards the country in which they perform their functions.

In bringing to the knowledge of the Embassy of the United States of America this regrettable fact the Italian Government finds itself obliged to ask the Government of the United States to be good enough to take appropriate steps to the end that the functionaries and employees of North American nationality of the consular offices of the United States in the Kingdom and in the territories placed under Italian sovereignty or occupied by our troops be withdrawn in the near future and in any case prior to July 15 by which date the Italian Government asks that the Consulates of the United States in the Kingdom and in the said territories kindly be closed.

The Italian Government reserves the right to proceed to the closing of the offices of the American Express Company."

PHILLIPS

125.0065/200 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, June 20, 1941—8 p. m.

428. Your 844, June 19, 7:30 p. m. You are instructed to submit the following reply to Count Vitetti's note concerning the activities of American Consuls in Italy:

"The Embassy of the United States of America has the honor to acknowledge the communication from the Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs relating to the activities in Italy of American Consuls and requesting that officials and employees of American nationality in the consular offices of the United States and the Kingdom of Italy and

<sup>7</sup> George Wadsworth, Counselor of Embassy in Italy.

<sup>7a</sup> Count Leonardo Vitetti, Director General in the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

in territories under Italian sovereignty be withdrawn. Under instructions from its Government the Embassy states in reply that the Government of the United States cannot accept the charge that American consular officers have acted improperly and wholly rejects the allegations contained in the note under reference.

"Under the circumstances the Government of the United States is making arrangements to effect the withdrawal of its consular officers from Italian territory and the American Embassy will make arrangements for the removal and safety of the American citizens and property involved."

Detailed instructions regarding the closing of American Offices will follow shortly.

For your information, we are, through the Italian Ambassador here, requesting the Italian Government to remove its consular officers from the United States, as well as all Italian nationals in any way connected with organizations of the Italian Government in the United States with the exception of its representation in Washington.

HULL

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702.6511/1482a

*The Secretary of State to the Italian Ambassador (Colonna)*

WASHINGTON, June 20, 1941.

EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that the President has directed me to request that the Italian Government promptly close all Italian consular establishments within United States territory and remove therefrom all Italian consular officers, agents, clerks and employees of Italian nationality. In the opinion of the Government of the United States it is obvious that the continued functioning of Italian consular establishments in territory of the United States would serve no desirable purpose.

I am likewise directed to request the closing of all agencies in this country connected with the Italian Government, together with the cessation of their activities, and, furthermore, the removal of all Italian nationals in any way connected with organizations of the Italian Government in the United States, with the exception of its duly accredited representation in Washington.

It is contemplated that all such withdrawals and closures shall be effected before July 15, 1941.<sup>8</sup>

Accept [etc.]

For the Secretary of State:  
SUMNER WELLES

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<sup>8</sup> For arrangements for departure of Italian officials from the United States and return of American officials from Italy, see bracketed note, p. 632.

REQUEST BY THE UNITED STATES FOR THE RECALL OF THE ITALIAN  
NAVAL ATTACHÉ IN WASHINGTON; SIMILAR ACTION BY ITALY  
REGARDING THE AMERICAN ASSISTANT MILITARY AND AIR AT-  
TACHÉ IN ROME

701.6511/1027

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State  
(Long)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 2, 1941.

The Italian Ambassador<sup>9</sup> called about six o'clock this evening at my request. At the direction of the Secretary I had obtained the approval of the President, by telephone, to notify the Ambassador his Naval Attaché is *persona non grata*.<sup>10</sup> When the Ambassador came I told him it became necessary to notify him about one of my friends who was one of his staff. He asked if I referred to Lais. I replied in the affirmative and started to hand him the note.<sup>11</sup> He hesitated to receive it and asked if we would not send it to the Rome Embassy for delivery to the Italian Government. I replied in the negative and said we felt he was the proper channel. He said it would be much easier for him if we could notify through Rome and thought that was the protocol. I told him we would advise Rome to notify the Italian Government we had delivered the note to him.

The Ambassador was very downcast and nervous. He did not read the note in my presence or even open the envelope. When I remarked that their action in destroying the engines constituted the vessels obstacles to navigation in our waters as well as being an illegal act he started to say they were no more obstacles than they were before, either tied to docks or anchored in the stream, but I promptly dismissed that as legitimate argument and stated they had become like barges, lacking the power to propel themselves, and had lost their character as vessels, and that it was a breach of good faith to so act while enjoying our hospitality. I also added that aside from the violation of American law the action was fantastic in the extreme; that we had had no intention to expropriate either the Italian or German vessels because they were in a category distinct from the other vessels lying idle in our ports—being active belligerents—and for the crews to act in such a manner and seriously damage valuable vessels was an act which in our eyes was inexplicable and fantastic, but that the serious part of it was that the act was committed in our ports and was a serious infraction of our laws.

<sup>9</sup> Don Ascanio dei principi Colonna.

<sup>10</sup> On April 1 the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury (Gaston) transmitted to the Department a copy of a report from the Office of the Collector of Customs at Norfolk that the master of an Italian vessel in that port had supplied copies of telegrams from Adm. Alberto Lais, Italian Naval Attaché, instructing him to place his ship out of commission and to read the Attaché's instructions to the masters of four other Italian ships in port.

<sup>11</sup> *Infra*.

The Ambassador left in a very meek manner and soon telephoned me to know just what we meant by the word "immediate". I replied that the word was used in its ordinary sense but of course he would have an opportunity to cable his Government and time to receive a reply. We would expect arrangements to be made for the departure of the Admiral at the earliest opportunity and could no longer consider him to be Naval Attaché.

B[RECKINRIDGE] L[ONG]

701.6511/1012

*The Secretary of State to the Italian Ambassador (Colonna)*

WASHINGTON, April 2, 1941.

EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to state that various facts and circumstances have come to the attention of the Government of the United States connecting Admiral Alberto Lais, Naval Attaché of the Royal Italian Embassy, with the commission by certain persons of acts in violation of the laws of the United States.

The President has reached the conclusion that the continued presence of Admiral Lais as Naval Attaché of the Embassy would no longer be agreeable to this Government.

The President has directed me, therefore, to notify Your Excellency that Admiral Lais is *persona non grata* to this Government as Naval Attaché of the Royal Italian Embassy at Washington, and to request that Your Excellency's Government withdraw him immediately from the United States.

The Royal Italian Government will no doubt realize that the Government of the United States has, in view of all the circumstances, no alternative course.

Accept [etc.]

CORDELL HULL

701.6511/1020

*The Italian Ambassador (Colonna) to the Secretary of State*

No. 1860

WASHINGTON, April 8, 1941—XIX.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: I have the honor to inform you that the request of the United States Government, transmitted with your Note of April 2, 1941, that Admiral Alberto Lais, Naval Attaché of the Royal Italian Embassy, be immediately withdrawn from the United States being at present *persona non grata* to the United States Government as Naval Attaché of the Italian Embassy, has been brought to the knowledge of the Royal Italian Government.

I have now been instructed to communicate to you that Admiral Lais has ceased from his functions and will leave this country without delay.

Inasmuch as Admiral Lais is planning to sail on April 25th from New York on the Spanish S/S *Marques De Comillas*, accompanied by two Italian sailors who are his orderlies, namely, Gaetano Canepa and Giovanni Burlo, I shall appreciate to be informed as soon as an understanding shall be reached between the Department of State and the appropriate British authorities in order to assure this Embassy that no attempt will be made by the British Control to interfere with the return to Italy of Admiral Lais and the two Italian sailors accompanying him.

In compliance with instructions received, I avail myself of this opportunity to state that Captain William C. Bentley, Assistant Military Attaché for Air of the United States Embassy in Rome, is *persona non grata* to the Royal Italian Government and to request, therefore, that he be immediately withdrawn from Italy.

Accept [etc.]

A. COLONNA

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701.6511/1020 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 9, 1941—3 p. m.

250. Italian Ambassador has informed Department that "Admiral Lais has ceased from his functions (as Naval Attaché) and will leave this country without delay."

For your information, the same note from the Italian Ambassador dated April 8 states that Captain William C. Bentley, Assistant Military Attaché for Air at your Embassy, is *persona non grata* to the Italian Government and requests that he be immediately withdrawn from Italy. War Department informed and has agreed to withdrawal. Newspaper correspondents being informed by Department. Instructions regarding Bentley's recall will follow.

HULL

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701.6511/1028

*The British Ambassador (Halifax) to the Secretary of State*

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

His Majesty's Ambassador presents his compliments to the Secretary of State and has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Hull's note of April 10th<sup>12</sup> regarding the return to Europe of Admiral Alberto Lais, former Naval Attaché at the Italian Embassy in Washington, and his two Italian naval orderlies, Gaetano Canepa and Giovanni Burlo.

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<sup>12</sup> Not printed.

This matter has been referred to His Majesty's Government who have now authorized Lord Halifax to give the assurance that the British authorities will not attempt to prevent the return of Admiral Lais or his orderlies to Europe.

WASHINGTON, April 17, 1941.

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701.6511/1041

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

[WASHINGTON,] April 21, 1941.

Mr. Butler <sup>12a</sup> of the British Embassy called on me this afternoon at the request of Lord Halifax.

Mr. Butler said that he had just received a message from his Government with regard to Admiral Lais, the Naval Attaché of the Italian Embassy, who was due to return to Europe on a Spanish vessel, the British Government having informed the United States that he would not be detained by British naval authorities. The British Government wished this Government to know that while Admiral Lais would not be detained, nor would his personal effects be detained, it nevertheless intended to search the papers which he might have with him. The British Government wished to give this advance notice in order that the Government of the United States would not feel that the British Government had gone back on its assurances, and the British Government further took the position that the search of his papers was in line with agreements recently entered into between the two Governments covering cases of this character and likewise in line with the precedent established when Von Papen <sup>12b</sup> was handed his passport by the United States Government during the last war.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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865.85/402 : Telegram

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

ROME, April 21, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received April 21—4:35 p. m.]

571. The following is a translation of a statement read to foreign newspaper correspondents at the press conference at the Ministry of Popular Culture today:

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<sup>12a</sup> Neville M. Butler, British Minister.

<sup>12b</sup> Franz von Papen was the German Military Attaché in Washington; in 1915 his recall was requested by President Wilson. See *Foreign Relations*, 1915, Supp., pp. 947 ff.



"You will recall that in the declaration which was read to you during this press conference on April 9, 1941, on the question of the seizure of Italian ships by the United States,<sup>14</sup> reference was made to the fact that the Washington Government had requested the recall of Admiral Lais, Italian Naval Attaché to the United States, with an explanation which gave rise to the assumption that it held him morally responsible for the damage done by Italian crews to the ships given into their custody.

Some days later the Fascist Government requested of the Washington Government the recall from Rome of Captain Bentley, Assistant Military and Air Attaché of the United States Embassy at Rome.

Secretary of State Cordell Hull in announcing this request for Captain Bentley's recall at the usual press conference ventured to remark that 'certain governments today intent upon lawless activities do not hesitate to show resentment for activities of foreign representatives and governments within the bounds of the law'.

In connection with this surprising statement by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, the Fascist [Government?] desires to make the following public:

(1) Admiral Lais' activities in Washington have always remained strictly within the legitimate bounds of his duties which he has always fulfilled in the most commendable manner.

(2) The decision taken by the Fascist Government to regard Captain Bentley as *persona non grata* is not to be interpreted as a measure of reprisal for the departure of Admiral Lais from Washington although a measure of this kind would be wholly legitimate and justified but as a decision dictated by definite reasons *which has been and can be checked* regarding Captain Bentley's activity, which activity certainly went beyond his official duties quite aside from the question of his obligations as guest of a country at war.

(3) During this same conference the juridical and moral considerations militating in favor of the Italian protest against the illegal seizure of our ships in American ports were amply explained to you. The gratuitous insults launched against the alleged 'lawless governments' might easily be turned against governments which, after perpetrating gestures of rapine against merchant ships which in no way belong to them, claim that such ships should be delivered to them with all flags flying in sign of rejoicing."

Correspondents are permitted to attribute statements of this nature to "competent quarters" but are not ordinarily allowed to describe them as coming from an "official" source.

Text of the April 9th press conference statement is being forwarded by mail.

PHILLIPS

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<sup>14</sup> See vol. I, pp. 451 ff.

[Admiral Lais was detained by the British a few days in Bermuda pending arrangements for the safe return by the Italians of Mr. Ronald Campbell, British Minister to Yugoslavia, and staff, who had fallen into the hands of the Italian Forces in Yugoslavia. The United States lent its good offices in reaching satisfactory arrangements regarding this matter by the British and Italian Governments.]

## NETHERLANDS

### LEND-LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE NETHERLANDS, SIGNED AUGUST 9, 1941

856.24/63

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Treaty Division (Barnes) to the  
Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] August 8, 1941.

#### AGREEMENT WITH THE NETHERLANDS FOR THE PROVIDING OF DEFENSE ARTICLES AND DEFENSE INFORMATION

The agreement which is to be signed by you and the Netherlands Minister<sup>1</sup> at noon on August 9, 1941, has been negotiated under the authority of and in conformity with the "Act to Promote the Defense of the United States", commonly referred to as the lend-lease Act, approved March 11, 1941.<sup>2</sup>

Under this agreement, the United States agrees, upon certain conditions, to supply defense articles and defense information to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands agrees, on similar terms, that whenever it is in a position to do so it will make available to the United States defense articles and defense information which the United States in its own defense or in the defense of the Americas shall require.

The agreement becomes effective when signed and will continue in effect until a date to be agreed upon between the two Governments.

CHARLES M. BARNES

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856.24/63

#### *Lend-Lease Agreement Between the United States and the Netherlands*

Whereas the United States of America and the Kingdom of the Netherlands declare that, with self-restraint and sober purpose, they are engaged in a cooperative undertaking, together with every other

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Loudon.

<sup>2</sup> 55 Stat. 31.

nation or people of like mind, to the end of laying the bases of a just and enduring world peace securing order under law to themselves and all nations;

And whereas the President of the United States of America has determined, pursuant to the Act of Congress of March 11, 1941, that the defense of the Kingdom of the Netherlands against further aggression is vital to the defense of the United States of America;

And whereas the United States of America and the Kingdom of the Netherlands are mutually desirous of concluding an agreement for the providing of defense articles and defense information by either country to the other country, and the making of such an agreement has been in all respects duly authorized, and all acts, conditions and formalities which it may have been necessary to perform, fulfil or execute prior to the making of such an agreement in conformity with the laws either of the United States of America or of the Kingdom of the Netherlands have been performed, fulfilled or executed as required;

The undersigned, being duly authorized for that purpose, have agreed as follows:

#### ARTICLE I

The United States of America will supply the Kingdom of the Netherlands with such defense articles and defense information as the President shall authorize to be transferred.

#### ARTICLE II

The Kingdom of the Netherlands will, until further notice, pay in advance for all defense articles and defense information requested by it and the transfer of which has been authorized. The United States of America, however, reserves the right at any time to suspend, defer, or stop deliveries of such articles or information whenever in the opinion of the President further deliveries are not consistent with the needs of the defense of the United States of America.

Records shall be kept of all defense articles transferred under this Agreement, and not less than every ninety days schedules of such defense articles shall be exchanged and reviewed.

#### ARTICLE III

The Kingdom of the Netherlands will not, without the consent of the President of the United States of America, transfer title to or possession of any defense article or defense information transferred to the Kingdom of the Netherlands under this Agreement, or permit its use by anyone not an officer, employee, or agent of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

## ARTICLE IV

If, as a result of the transfer to the Kingdom of the Netherlands of any defense articles or defense information, it becomes necessary for the Kingdom of the Netherlands to take any action or make any payment in order fully to protect any of the rights of a citizen of the United States of America who has patent rights in and to any such article or information, the Kingdom of the Netherlands will take such action or make such payment when requested to do so by the President of the United States of America.

## ARTICLE V

In the event that circumstances arise in which the United States of America in its own defense or in the defense of the Americas shall require defense articles or defense information which the Kingdom of the Netherlands is in a position to supply, the Kingdom of the Netherlands will make such defense articles or defense information available to the United States of America on terms similar to the terms expressed above in this Agreement.

## ARTICLE VI

This Agreement shall continue in force from the date on which it is signed until a date agreed upon between the two Governments.

Signed and sealed at Washington in duplicate this ninth day of August, 1941.

For the United States of America:

CORDELL HULL

*Secretary of State of the United  
States of America*

For the Kingdom of the Netherlands:

A. LOUDON

*Envoy Extraordinary and Minister  
Plenipotentiary of Her Majesty the  
Queen of The Netherlands at Wash-  
ington*

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740.0011 European War 1939/16245b

*The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government  
in Exile (Biddle), at London*

No. 10

WASHINGTON, October 27, 1941.

The Secretary of State transmits, for the information of the Minister a mimeographed copy of the lend lease agreement between the United States of America and the Kingdom of the Netherlands signed

August 9, 1941.<sup>3</sup> The agreement has not been made public in any form whatsoever and the fact of conclusion as well as the text must be treated as strictly confidential.

HULL

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[This agreement of August 9, 1941, was replaced by a Preliminary Agreement, *Principles Applying to Mutual Aid in the Prosecution of the War Against Aggression*, signed at Washington July 8, 1942. The latter was supplemented by a further Agreement, *Principles Applying to Provision of Aid to the Armed Forces of the United States*, signed at Washington June 14, 1943. For respective texts and accompanying exchanges of notes, see Department of State Executive Agreement Series, Nos. 259 and 326, or 56 Stat. (pt. 2) 1554 and 57 Stat. (pt. 2) 991.]

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**ARRANGEMENTS FOR SENDING AMERICAN FORCES TO SURINAM TO ASSIST IN PROTECTION OF BAUXITE MINES**

856A.20/121a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, September 1, 1941—4 p. m.

3520. For Ambassador Biddle.<sup>4</sup> Please deliver at earliest moment the following message from the President to Queen Wilhelmina:

“Your Majesty’s gracious letter<sup>5</sup> is appreciated and I regret sincerely that matters of state prevent your visit to Hyde Park at this time. Mrs. Roosevelt and I cannot be but deeply disappointed but trust that your visit is only delayed.

Your heavy responsibilities are fully appreciated yet since I may not have the pleasure of welcoming you to Hyde Park now, I venture to raise in this message a matter of great mutual concern to your country and mine.

This country secures from the Bauxite mines in Surinam 2 million tons of ore annually or 65 percent of our total supply and if this supply were interrupted in any way it would most seriously delay the production of aircraft which are so urgently needed by all nations resisting aggression.

The information reaching me indicates that the Bauxite installations in Surinam are at present inadequately protected and could be destroyed either by sabotage or by raiders approaching from land, sea, or air. In addition the transportation of the ore could be interrupted by sinking ships in the river approaches to the mines since these are the only avenues of egress for the ore.

The situation is so grave that I turn to you direct in order that a way may be found for you and your Government to devise further

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<sup>3</sup> *Supra.*

<sup>4</sup> Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile, established at London. Mr. Biddle was also Ambassador to the Polish Government in Exile.

<sup>5</sup> Not found in Department files.

means of protection. If you approve, I should be prepared, having in mind the Habana procedure,<sup>6</sup> to make arrangements for the immediate entry of troops into Surinam to remove the threat to this source of critical raw material. If this form of protection is agreed, I and any American associates will of course give you formal assurance that occupation by American troops would be a temporary measure for the period of the emergency only and that they will be withdrawn as soon as the threat of damage to these vital mines is removed. The military forces involved will approximate a battalion of infantry, a battery of antiaircraft artillery together with the necessary aircraft and service troops. The total force should not exceed 3,000 officers and men. They would be accompanied by suitable vessels to patrol the river approaches to the mines.

I am confident you will realize that the situation requires immediate action, and while our preparations to move are being completed, we cannot go forward without the urgent reply of you and your Government.

The importance of secrecy is so great that I suggest the utmost precautions be taken to insure that no information is divulged until you and I are agreed in principle upon the course of action and subsequently upon the text of identical announcements. With this initiative upon our parts the details can be carried on by the appropriate officials of our respective governments.

Mrs. Roosevelt's and my enjoyment of Princess Juliana and her husband's visit can only be exceeded by our anticipated pleasure in welcoming you at an early date in this country.

Your friend,

Franklin D. Roosevelt."

HULL

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856A.20/31 : Telegram

*The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

LONDON, September 3, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received September 3—12: 15 p. m.]

Netherlands Series number 20. For the President. Your 3520, September 1, 4 p. m.

1. Message conveyed to Queen Wilhelmina at 11 a. m. this morning, and at her request, to Prime Minister Gerbrandy at 1 p. m.

2. Gerbrandy will consult with the Queen this evening and call Cabinet together Thursday morning<sup>7</sup> on this matter. Immediately thereafter, he will notify me of decision taken.

3. He revealed that a small Dutch force of 300 men had already been ordered to Surinam; half from here and half from the East Indies. He felt that if the Government accepted your gracious offer, collaboration Kingdom forces could be readily effected.

<sup>6</sup> See Act of Habana, signed July 30, 1940, 54 Stat. (pt. 2) 2491.

<sup>7</sup> September 4.

4. It was his belief that the Cabinet would render a favorable decision at tomorrow's meeting. Meanwhile, the Queen and he wish to express to you their deep gratitude for your suggestion.

[BIDDLE]

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856A.20/83 : Telegram

*The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

LONDON, September 5, 1941—1 a. m.

[Received 9:18 a. m.]

Netherlands Series 21. For the President. Reference Department's 3520, September 1, 4 p. m., and my 20, September 3, 4 p. m.

1. Queen Wilhelmina has asked me to convey the following message to the President.

"I should like to thank you and Mrs. Roosevelt most sincerely for your kind message. I am always hoping to be able to come and as soon as circumstances allow I will ask whether my visit at Hyde Park would suit you. I entirely agree that the possibility which has arisen of enemy action against the vitally important bauxite mines in Surinam and against the safe transport to the United States of bauxite mineral for the benefit of the nations resisting the Axis Powers should be completely removed as soon as is practicable. The reinforcement of the Netherlands units in Surinam by Netherlands troops from the Netherlands Indies and Britain is being organized but it will be some time before these troops can reach Surinam and it is necessary in present conditions not to deplete more than is unavoidable the strength of the Netherlands forces, especially in the Indian Archipelago whence aircraft and anti-aircraft artillery in particular can ill be spared. In these exceptional circumstances which justify exceptional measures your offer to send immediately into Surinam the troops mentioned in your message to me is therefore gladly accepted. Of course I understand, in accordance with your assurance, that these troops shall be withdrawn as soon as the present danger to the mines is removed and at the latest at the conclusion of hostilities. The elaboration of the necessary complete arrangements will reach your Government by the intermediary of a letter from my Minister for Foreign Affairs to your Minister here. While agreeing also with your suggestion concerning the secrecy to be observed until identical announcements can be made it seems to me that it would be appropriate to inform previously our British ally." (By this the Queen means that she will instruct her Foreign Minister to inform the British Government previous to the announcement.)

"With kindest regards to you and Mrs. Roosevelt. Yours most sincerely Wilhelmina".

2. The following is the "elaboration" mentioned in the Queen's message to the President handed to me by Minister for Foreign Affairs Van Kleffens. The message and this elaboration are to be consid-



ered as one whole, and together constitute the Queen's answer as previously agreed by the Cabinet:

"(1) The American forces to be sent to Surinam shall be withdrawn as soon as the present danger to the mines is removed, and at the latest at the conclusion of hostilities;

(2) As in the case of the British forces now guarding Curaçao together with Netherlands forces, the American troops in Surinam would be placed under Netherlands command;

(3) Their maintenance in accordance with the standards of the United States forces shall be paid for by the Netherlands, supplies being found as far as possible on the spot;"

(Van Kleffens asks me to point out that his Government would be glad if the payments in this connection could be made in sterling.)

"(4) Their task shall be limited to helping the Netherlands authorities and forces in taking all measures for insuring the complete safety of the bauxite mines and bauxite transport, and that consequently the administration of Surinam shall in no way be interfered with;

(5) All public declarations by American authorities shall be in keeping with these points. As soon as the Netherlands Government learn that these points are accepted by the United States Government, the necessary instructions will be given at once to the Governor of Surinam. It would be appreciated if, in any official statement to be issued on behalf of the American Government, the exceptional and temporary nature of the measures were to be stressed and explained in conformity with the Queen's message to the President."

3. In response to my remark that my Government might wish to propose alternative measures in connection with the above enumerated points, Minister Van Kleffens said that his Government would be glad to take any suggestions under consideration.

4. He then disclosed contents of report just received from Governor of Surinam,<sup>8</sup> that Colonel Hobbs, Chief of Staff, Trinidad, recently arrived at Paramaribo, Surinam, and announced to the Governor that in case of danger to the bauxite mines, an American occupational force would be sent there. The Governor told him he would not admit any foreign troops, American or otherwise, unless previously authorized to do so by the Netherlands Government. Both Van Kleffens and the Prime Minister consider this incident extremely regrettable in view (a) of the utmost importance of secrecy in this matter and (b) of the potentially unfortunate local effect in Surinam. I am aware that this report was a source of real concern for the Government here.

5. In my opinion it is highly important to exercise great care in the selection not only of the commanding officer but also of the junior officers and personnel in general, of the force proposed for this task, in order to insure greatest possible collaboration locally.

[BIDDLE]

<sup>8</sup> J. C. Kielstra.

856A.20/33 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government  
in Exile (Biddle), at London*

WASHINGTON, September 20, 1941—5 p. m.

Netherlands Series No. 27. Your 21, September 5, 1 a. m. Please transmit the following message from the President to Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands:

“I have received your message informing me of your agreement that measures should be taken to safeguard the important bauxite mines in Surinam and inviting me to send immediately United States forces into Surinam on the basis of the following considerations:

‘1. The American forces to be sent to Surinam shall be withdrawn as soon as the present danger to the mines is removed and, at the latest, at the conclusion of hostilities;

2. As in the case of the British forces now guarding Curaçao together with Netherlands forces, the American troops in Surinam would be placed under Netherlands command;

3. Their maintenance in accordance with the standards of the United States forces shall be paid for by the Netherlands, supplies being found as far as possible on the spot;

4. Their task shall be limited to helping the Netherlands authorities and forces in taking all measures for insuring the complete safety of the bauxite mines and bauxite transport and that, consequently, the administration of Surinam shall in no way be interfered with;

5. All public declarations by American authorities shall be in keeping with these points.’

I take pleasure in confirming to you that the conditions set forth above are acceptable in principle to the Government of the United States. Accordingly, it would be appreciated if the necessary instructions could be given at once to the Governor of Surinam, as forces of appropriate strength and composition are now prepared for immediate embarkation. As these forces would include aircraft it is requested that the instructions to the Governor include authorization for the use by the United States of the Paramaribo (Zanderij) airport.

With reference to the desire of the Royal Netherlands Government that the United States forces in Surinam be placed under Netherlands command, I suggest that since the United States is not a belligerent United States forces cooperate with the Netherlands authorities in the defense of the bauxite mines and the approaches thereto under the general direction of the Netherlands authorities. It may be understood that if this arrangement is agreeable to the Netherlands Government, all details can be arranged locally between the Netherlands authorities and the United States military commander.

I also wish to urge most earnestly that Your Majesty's Government invite the Government of Brazil, in terms and under conditions relating to entry, occupation, and withdrawal identical with those applicable in the case of this Government, to participate in the defense measures contemplated in Surinam. I make this suggestion because the close and friendly relations which exist between the United States

and Brazil, and particularly because the nature of the inter-American commitments for continental defense to which Brazil and the United States have subscribed, as well as the consultations which have taken place between the two Governments with respect to defense problems of mutual interest in that area, are such as to make it imperative from the standpoint of this Government that Brazil be asked to join with us in any action such as that now contemplated. Moreover, Brazil is the only one of the American republics having a common frontier with Surinam.

In addition to the very real assistance which Brazilian armed forces would render, their presence in Surinam jointly with the forces of the United States would serve to a large extent to nullify the inferences which unfriendly propaganda would surely draw from the dispatching of United States troops alone to the mainland of the South American Continent. If you agree to this suggestion, I should be glad to have the United States Ambassador at Rio de Janeiro collaborate with the Netherlands Minister there, after the latter has presented the invitation to the Brazilian Government, in explaining the purpose and conditions of the proposed action and urging at least token Brazilian representation.

I suggest that we continue to observe the greatest degree of secrecy with regard to the proposed arrangements until an appropriate time and occasion for publication shall have been agreed upon between our Governments. However, I have no objection whatever to prior communication of our plans to the British Government."

For your personal and strictly confidential information and in order that you may be fully aware of the importance which this Government attaches to the sending of an invitation to the Brazilian Government, the status of negotiations between the Governments of Brazil and the United States regarding the defense of the Western Hemisphere are such as to make it vital that Brazil be asked to join with the United States in any military action involving Surinam.

HULL

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856A.20/37: Telegram

*The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

LONDON, September 25, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received September 25—4: 45 p. m.]

Netherlands Series 24. For the President. Your 27, September 20, 5 p. m. Your message was yesterday handed to Queen Wilhelmina who expressed deep appreciation of your acceptance of the points she had proposed as a basis for collaboration in safeguarding the Surinam bauxite deposits.

With regard to the proposal to extend the arrangement to Brazil, she said that the introduction of this new question would require

careful consideration. She felt constrained to admit that as an initial reaction she was doubtful. She was receiving Prime Minister Gerbrandy that afternoon and would discuss the matter with him with a view to his calling an early Cabinet meeting.

I emphasized at some length the considerations which rendered Brazil's inclusion in the protective scheme of vital importance and she indicated that she clearly understood the position and would undertake to send you a reply as early as possible.

I have since seen Prime Minister Gerbrandy who tells me in confidence that he found the Queen in a quandary over the question of including Brazil. She had reservations about conditions there and felt the Dutch people would not understand a joint occupation of Surinam by Brazilian troops. She had looked forward with enthusiasm to collaboration with the United States, but Brazil was another matter.

While there were difficulties to be overcome, Professor Gerbrandy said that both he and the Foreign Minister hoped it would be possible to find a formula which would meet the situation, for they both shared the Queen's understanding of the President's position in this matter. They were turning over in their minds the idea of whether a solution might be found in a Brazilian military mission, but no troops. I have pointed out to [apparent omission] the necessity of our course of avoiding any appearance of a discriminatory arrangement.

Professor Gerbrandy went on to say that the Government realizes the urgency of this matter; that he will try to assure a reply early next week; and that meanwhile he will keep me advised of progress.

[BIDDLE]

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856A.20/41 : Telegram

*The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

LONDON, September 30, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received September 30—3 p. m.]

Netherlands Series 26. For the President. Your 27, September 20, 5 p. m., and my 24, September 25, 7 p. m. Queen Wilhelmina has requested me to send you following message:

“Thank you very much for your kind message of September 22 which I have studied with great interest. I am pleased to see that we are in agreement in principle on the terms on which the forces you have offered to send to Surinam would be received there. Before giving instructions to the Governor I should like to suggest that we first agree on the question of finding a basis agreeable to us both for the purpose of inviting some form of participation by Brazil. May I suggest, that your Minister here discuss this important point with my Minister for Foreign Affairs, when I feel sure that a solution

will be found satisfactory to us both, assuring you at the same time that you have made your point of view in this matter perfectly clear to me so that I fully realize the goal you wish to attain for the common cause of the countries resisting aggression.

I quite agree that the observation of secrecy should be continued for the present, and you can count on us in this respect."

I am seeing the Foreign Minister Van Kleffens at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning at his request.

[BIDDLE]

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856A.20/44 : Telegram

*The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

LONDON, October 1, 1941—5 p. m.  
[Received October 1—3 : 22 p. m.]

Netherlands Series 27. For the President. My 26, September 30, 8 p. m. In conversation this morning Foreign Minister Van Kleffens said that the Queen desired him to convey the following as background of what she and her Ministers had in mind.

As greatly as they wished to cooperate with you, they felt bound to state frankly that circumstances both of fact and of sentiment, made them extremely reluctant to call upon Brazil for aid to be sent into Surinam. They also had to think of their relations with Venezuela which had always been delicate. If they admitted Brazilian troops into Surinam, Venezuela could rightly ask why they [had] not sought Venezuelan aid when British forces were accepted at Curaçao. Dr. Van Kleffens digressed to explain that Dutch relations with Venezuela had encountered difficulties for over a century due to the nearness of Curaçao and Aruba and the action of Venezuelan political refugees in seeking asylum there and their not infrequent abuse of such asylum. Since the major part of the British war effort was now conducted on oil from Curaçao and Aruba the Netherlands Government was eager to avoid any action which might conceivably interfere with the flow of oil from Venezuela to the refineries on these Islands.

At the same time, he continued, they fully realized the President's problem and also the advantages which from a general political point of view would result "to us all" from some acceptable form of Brazilian cooperation. In the circumstances they wondered whether considering that Brazil and Surinam had a common frontier and that there were so many Germans in Brazil the Netherlands Government, in addition to informing the Brazilian Government as an act of courtesy of the projected arrival of the American troops in Surinam, could not ask that Government, which in view of Nazi plots in other South American countries was doubtless well aware of the German

danger, to contribute to the common aims in some appropriate form, for instance: (1) By exercising some special measure of military vigilance in the frontier zone adjacent to Surinam and (2) by sending a mission to Paramaribo for the purpose of exchanging information and concerting all requisite measures.

Dr. Van Kleffens said that the Queen hoped that some such form would solve both your difficulties and those of the Netherlands Government, and that she would be grateful if you would let her have your views on this suggestion.

He added that the Netherlands Government felt sure the question of command as raised in your message would present no practical difficulties. There was another point which they thought should be considered. Since there was not sufficient housing to accommodate the full American force and since what Surinam chiefly lacked was aircraft and anti-aircraft artillery, they wondered whether the troops sent in the first instance might not best be aircraft and anti-aircraft.

[BIDDLE]

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856A.20/37 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle), at London*

WASHINGTON, October 13, 1941—9 p. m.

Netherlands Series no. 31. Your no. 24, September 25, and no. 26, September 30.

1. The President is greatly heartened by Her Majesty's expression of appreciation and is extremely gratified by her frank exposition of the difficulties.

2. The President perceives no objection to the formula suggested in the third paragraph of your no. 27 of October 1, 5 p. m. Furthermore, the War Department is prepared to send immediate assistance which will be strong in air and anti-aircraft units. It states that the initial forces will be restricted to approximately 1,000 officers and men.

3. You should discuss with Her Majesty or her Ministers a joint United States-Netherlands announcement along the following lines, the specific text of which it is proposed should be communicated confidentially in advance to the Brazilian Government when the Netherlands Government invites the Brazilian Government to send a mission to Surinam.

[Here follows text of draft announcement.]

4. It is hoped that the Netherlands Government will see no reason to object to notifying this Government in advance of the proposed text of the Netherlands' invitation to Brazil, and in this connection you may wish to inform Dr. Van Kleffens that the Department will

be pleased to instruct the United States Ambassador at Rio de Janeiro to cooperate in every appropriate manner with Her Majesty's Minister there.

5. Please telegraph if the foregoing is agreeable to the Netherlands Government and at what time instructions will be telegraphed to the Governor of Surinam.

HULL

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856A.20/48a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, October 13, 1941—9 p. m.

940. From the Under Secretary.<sup>9</sup> With reference to the message of the President to President Vargas of last July 10<sup>10</sup> and particularly the question of Surinam, Biddle has been discussing with Queen Wilhelmina and the Netherlands Foreign Minister the bases for an invitation by the Netherlands Government to this Government to protect the bauxite mines in Surinam, which supply over 60 percent of our requirements and for which the Netherlands Government is unable to provide full protection. The War Department has ready at Trinidad for immediate despatch about 1,000 officers and men, strong in air and anti-aircraft personnel. This force will be sent simultaneously with an announcement of agreement between this and the Netherlands Government on the defense of Surinam. Queen Wilhelmina has agreed to enter into discussions with the Brazilian Government concerning measures of military vigilance on the Brazilian-Surinam frontier and to invite Brazil to send a mission to Paramaribo to exchange information and concert all requisite measures. It is proposed that the text of the United States-Netherlands agreement regarding Surinam be communicated in advance confidentially to the Brazilian Government together with the Netherlands' invitation to Brazil. It would be desirable, it appears to me, for the Brazilian Government to release a statement simultaneously with the statement of the United States and Netherlands Governments indicating its knowledge of and agreement with this action designed for the defense of these supplies vital to hemisphere defense.

You may wish to seek an audience with President Vargas to inform him in the name of the President of the foregoing discussions and of the steps taken since his personal message to Dr. Vargas of July 10. You should explain that General Marshall<sup>11</sup> feels that it is essential that United States troops and equipment proceed to Surinam without

<sup>9</sup> Sumner Welles.

<sup>10</sup> See telegram No. 525, July 10, 9 p. m., to the Ambassador in Brazil, vol. vi, in section under Brazil entitled "Cooperation Between the United States and Brazil on Certain Measures for Hemisphere Defense."

<sup>11</sup> Gen. George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.

delay to forestall any damage through sabotage or other enemy action to the bauxite mines and the lines of supply. Please cable me at once any suggestions President Vargas may wish to make with regard to the procedure suggested above. [Welles.]

HULL

856A.20/50 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

RIO DE JANEIRO, October 15, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received October 15—7:55 p. m.]

1501. For the Under Secretary. Department's telegram No. 940, October 13, 9 p. m. President Vargas says that he agrees in principle and that he will await the Netherlands invitation.

CAFFERY

856A.20/52 : Telegram

*The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

LONDON, October 17, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received October 18—12:35 a. m.]

Netherlands Series 30.

1. I conveyed contents of your 31, October 13, 9 p. m. to Foreign Minister Van Kleffens on October 14.

2. In conversation today Van Kleffens gave me the Netherlands Government's reply. On second thought, he said, the Queen and her Government, prompted by security considerations, had become "extremely reluctant" to invite a Brazilian mission to Surinam. They were deeply concerned over (a) the character of the personnel of such a mission and (b) the possibility of its reports on Surinam reaching Axis hands through someone in the Brazilian War Office. They were more worried about the latter than the former possibility and a realistic attitude prompted their guarding against both.

3. Van Kleffens thereupon handed me the following draft of an alternative wording of the proposed joint communiqué which he hoped might meet with our approval:

[Here follows text of revised draft and some comment on it.]

5. To safeguard the feelings of the people of Surinam, Holland and the East Indies, the Netherlands Government would like the joint communiqué to state that the United States troops would be under Netherlands command and that the Netherlands would see to their maintenance. On the question of command, I recalled to his mind the President's earlier suggestion that since the United States was not a belligerent, the American forces cooperate in the defense of



the mines under the general direction of the Netherlands authorities. I also referred to his past assurance that this would present no practical difficulties. He replied that while the Netherlands Government preferred its own suggestion, it would consent to exclude this statement if we so desired. However, since it was important from the Dutch point of view, his Government would have to bring these points out in the Dutch language reports to its people through their radio and press service.

6. He added that instructions to the Netherlands Minister in Rio de Janeiro were being prepared and he would let me have a copy informally before their despatch.

7. He was unable to specify the date when the Governor of Surinam would be notified but would advise me as soon as his Government had completed arrangements with Brazil.

8. He said that a further message from the Governor of Surinam indicated that there were insufficient accommodations for 1,000 men. Hence he believed that if United States forces were restricted to air and anti-aircraft elements this would be sufficient.

9. In the foregoing conversation Van Kleffens gave the impression of being both embarrassed [and] harassed. I did not conceal my surprise at the reversal of the earlier formula and said I feared it would be most upsetting to the scheme itself and to the President's general hemispheric policy. I again stressed my past statements regarding the vital importance to the President's policy of Brazil's inclusion in the arrangements in an acceptable form. I said the Netherlands authorities had put forward the idea of a military mission as an acceptable compromise; I feared the present proposal annulled the compromise and boiled down to a suggestion that the Brazilians guard their own frontier. He expressed the opinion that the Brazilian Government could present the proposal favorably to Brazilian opinion.

10. I inquired whether the Netherlands Government's "extreme reluctance" to invite a Brazilian military mission into Surinam represented a definite decision or a preference which was open to revision. Van Kleffens replied that it was a definite decision and expressed the hope that since it was a matter of major consideration for the Netherlands Government the United States Government would understand.

11. I may add that Prime Minister Gerbrandy recently remarked to me that he was confronted with a most serious crisis in his Cabinet, certain members of which were seeking to make an issue of the charge that he was taking too much power into his hands and that he was not consulting sufficiently fully with his colleagues. While he did not directly relate this remark to any negotiations with us, the inference may not be unjustified that considerations of secrecy in

Dutch strategic arrangements have had an influence on the situation and that he has been unable to carry with him his Cabinet in this instance.

[BIDDLE]

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856A.20/52 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle), at London*

WASHINGTON, October 21, 1941—5 p. m.

Netherlands Series No. 34. Reference is made to the telegram simultaneously being sent you regarding action in Surinam.<sup>12</sup>

If you have any reason to believe that the reversal in the Netherlands Government's position is traceable to the British Government, you are authorized in your discretion to consult with Ambassador Winant and, should you both agree to the wisdom of such action, arrange to have our position brought to the attention of the Foreign Secretary or the Prime Minister, together with an expression of our hope that the British Government will feel that in the interest of the success of our joint efforts it will lend its full and immediate support to our position.

HULL

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856A.20/52 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle), at London*

WASHINGTON, October 21, 1941—6 p. m.

Netherlands Series No. 35. Your Netherlands Series 30, October 17, 8 p. m. By direction of the President you are requested to seek an immediate audience with Her Majesty The Queen and present on an urgent basis the following views of the United States Government:

You may state that this Government accepted the formula set forth in your 21<sup>13</sup> as the official statement of the Netherlands Government and accordingly informed President Vargas in confidence of the Netherlands' suggestion that a Brazilian Mission be invited to participate in the contemplated joint action in Surinam. President Vargas has replied through Ambassador Caffery that he agrees in principle to the Dutch suggestion and that he is awaiting the Netherlands Government's invitation.

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<sup>12</sup> *Infra.*

<sup>13</sup> September 5, 1 a. m., p. 813.

The present decision of the Netherlands Government, if acceded to, coming after the exchange of communications by the President of the United States and the President of Brazil referred to in earlier telegrams and after the receipt by this Government of assurances of Brazilian approval and cooperation, places both this Government and the Netherlands Government under the invidious obligation of withdrawing a proposal which the Brazilian Government is entitled to consider as having been made in good faith by both the United States and the Netherlands.

The proposal of the Netherlands Government reported in your 30 amounts in effect to a suggestion that the Brazilian Government take action within its own territories which in fact it is at full liberty to do on its own initiative. This would not only be unsatisfactory and perhaps even offensive to Brazil; it would cast doubt upon the good faith of this Government in matters of possibly even greater importance to Hemisphere defense which may from time to time arise.

Furthermore, the framework of the inter-American agreements and understandings reached during the past years, and specifically the agreements reached at the Second Consultative Meeting of American Foreign Ministers held in Habana in July 1940,<sup>14</sup> provides for inter-American cooperation in all questions which relate to the defense of the Western Hemisphere. It is obvious that the brunt of the defense of the Western Hemisphere must be taken by the United States. It is, nevertheless, the considered policy of this Government, in all questions relating to the defense of the American continent, and in particular in all measures involving the prevention of acts of aggression against the colonies within the Western Hemisphere of European powers, to undertake measures of defense in cooperation with our neighbors in the New World. Were the United States now to disregard prior understandings of this character and change the policy it has consistently followed, it would give rise to very serious misunderstandings and to charges by German propaganda that the United States was embarking upon such defense measures purely in its own interest and for ulterior purposes.

The Government of the United States lays great stress upon the vital importance both to the United States and to the Netherlands Governments' position vis-à-vis their South American neighbors of going through with the arrangements in substantially the form originally proposed by the Netherlands Government and subsequently agreed to by the United States and Brazil.

In pressing this matter you are instructed by direction of the President to seek an immediate reply.

HULL

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<sup>14</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. v. pp. 2 ff.

856A.20/55 : Telegram

*The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle)  
to the Secretary of State*

LONDON, October 23, 1941—8 p. m.  
[Received October 23—4: 30 p. m.]

Netherlands Series 33. Your 35, October 21, my 32, October 23.<sup>15</sup>

1. Foreign Minister Van Kleffens requested me to transmit to the President the following message from Queen Wilhelmina :

“I thank you for the very kind and frank manner in which you have asked Mr. Biddle to convey your views to me.

Mr. Biddle explained to me very clearly and fully the difficulties which would arise if we refrained from inviting the Brazilian Government to send a mission to Paramaribo. I am pleased to be able to tell you that in view thereof, I and my Government consider that we should not insist on the inconveniences inherent in receiving a Brazilian mission in Surinam, and therefore the Brazilian Government will be invited by my Minister at Rio de Janeiro to send a mission. I am happy at the thought that in this way the difficulties would seem to be over.”

2. In handing me the foregoing message, Minister Van Kleffens emphasized that the Queen had not known of the request to omit from the original formula the invitation to the Brazilian Government to send a mission to Surinam.

3. He went on to say that he had not fully realized the extent of difficulties which might be caused the President's policy should the Netherlands Government not invite Brazil to send a military mission to Surinam.

In view of this fact, he wanted us to know that the Netherlands Government shared the Queen's sense of gratification over the thought that by inviting Brazilian mission to Surinam these difficulties would be removed.

4. The Netherlands Government earnestly hoped that we would cooperate in measures to guard against the dangers which might arise from the possibility of the mission's reports reaching Axis hands through someone in the Brazilian War Office. To his Government this danger was very real.

5. With regard to joint communiqué Van Kleffens stated that certain revisions of the original text would now be necessary. I shall obtain his draft tomorrow.

[BIDDLE]

<sup>15</sup> Latter not printed.

856A.20/55 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle), at London*

WASHINGTON, October 24, 1941—9 p. m.

Netherlands Series No. 36. Your Netherlands Series 33, October 23, 8 p. m.

1. On behalf of the President, please convey to Queen Wilhelmina an expression of his deep appreciation of the action which she and her Government have taken. The President regards Her Majesty's decision, which was taken after a full and friendly exchange of his and her views, as a further token of the integrity of the association between the United States and the Netherlands Governments in their defense against the menace of the aggressor powers. You may also give similar assurances of the appreciation of this Government to the Foreign Minister and other officials.

2. With respect to paragraph 4 of your telegram you may inform the Foreign Minister that we will, of course, cooperate in taking any measures designed to prevent information regarding the military situation in Surinam from reaching Axis hands, since we have no less an interest in the security of the United States forces in Surinam than the Netherlands Government have in the security of their own forces.

HULL

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856A.20/55a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, October 24, 1941—9 p. m.

1012. From the Under Secretary.

1. Ambassador Biddle has informed us that an invitation in the sense mentioned in my 940, October 13, 9 p. m., is being sent by the Netherlands Government to the Brazilian Government through the Netherlands Minister at Rio de Janeiro. Please telegraph when the invitation has been received.

2. The text of the joint United States-Netherlands statement regarding Surinam which is to be issued will be telegraphed to you as soon as it shall have been agreed upon. [Welles.]

HULL

856A.20/63a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, October 25, 1941—5 p. m.

1019. From the Under Secretary. The Government of the United States and the Netherlands Government are considering the release of the following draft statement:

"The Bauxite mines in Surinam furnish upwards of 60 percent of the requirements of the United States aluminum industry which is vital to the defense of the United States, the Western Hemisphere and the nations actively resisting aggression.

It is therefore necessary that the safety of these mines should be as completely assured as present conditions demand.

In normal circumstances the Government of the Netherlands would, for the purpose of strengthening further the defenses of Surinam, draw on the armed forces of the Netherlands Indies. In view, however, of the present situation in the Southwestern Pacific, it is thought inadvisable to follow that course.

For this reason the Governments of the Netherlands and of the United States of America have entered into consultation. As a result, the latter has agreed to send a contingent of the United States Army to Surinam to cooperate with the Netherlands forces in assuring the protection of the Bauxite mines in that territory. This contingent will, of course, be withdrawn as soon as the present danger to the mines is removed and at the latest at the conclusion of hostilities.

Simultaneously the Government of the Netherlands has invited the Government of the United States of Brazil to participate in this defense measure. It is understood that Brazil will contribute to the common aim by exercising an especial measure of military vigilance in the frontier zone adjacent to Surinam and by sending a mission to Paramaribo to exchange information and concert all other steps on the basis indicated to assure maximum efficiency of the safety measures thus being jointly undertaken by the Brazilian, United States and Netherlands forces.

The Government of Brazil has indicated its wholehearted approval of the emergency measures.

At the same time, the Government of the United States has notified the governments of the American republics of the foregoing arrangements which have been reached in the interests of all."

Please discuss the foregoing draft statement with President Vargas and ascertain whether it is acceptable to him in its present form.<sup>16</sup>

With reference to the Department's 940 of October 13, 9 p. m., please telegraph likewise the full text of any similar statement which the Brazilian Government may wish to release simultaneously. The precise time for simultaneous release will be determined after the Brazil-

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<sup>16</sup> Ambassador Caffery informed the Department in telegram No. 1617, October 30, 6 p. m., that the statement in the form drafted was acceptable to President Vargas (865A.20/114).

ian Government has received and accepted the Netherlands invitation, and after the governments of the other American Republics have been informed. [Welles.]

HULL

856A.20/70 : Telegram

*The Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

LONDON, October 31, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received 9:58 p. m.]

Netherlands Series 37.

1. Van Kleffens states Netherlands Government concurs in text of communiqué as given in paragraph 3 of your 37, October 27, 6 p. m.<sup>17</sup>

2. Following are instructions as handed me by Van Kleffens which are being sent Netherlands Minister at Rio de Janeiro:

[Here follow the instructions containing text of communiqué.]

As for the time table for succeeding steps, Van Kleffens states Netherlands Government desires first to await Brazilian Government's answer to its invitation. He adds that the time for the despatch of troops and the issue of the communiqué should await specific agreement from here.

4. He also tells me (and this may explain a certain drag in action) that the Government is greatly exercised by some particularly pernicious German propaganda at this time which seeks to exploit the presence of British troops in Curaçao to discredit the Queen and her Government with the Dutch people. According to him, six times within the past week the German radio, claiming some Spanish newspaper as authority for a report that the British, following their occupation of Curaçao, are now turning it over to the United States, asserts that this shows that the Dutch runaway Queen and Government are no longer masters in their own house and that therefore the Dutch Nazi Party should take over in Holland. Van Kleffens cites this as a major reason for treading a little cautiously and says that "as a matter of fact, we should like to wait at least a week to let this wave of confusion among the Dutch people die down".

5. As regards eventual publicity on the question of command Van Kleffens states Netherlands authorities will bear in mind our request that they adhere to the sense of the President's language as repeated in paragraph 2 of your 37 of October 27. They contemplate confining any public statement to the sense of the first of the two sentences

<sup>17</sup> Not printed; the text of the communiqué is the same as that given in telegram No. 1019, October 25, 5 p. m., to the Ambassador in Brazil, *supra*.

quoted in paragraph 2, i. e., that the American Forces shall cooperate under the general direction of the Netherlands authorities. They intend to omit any public reference to the suggestion that details of cooperation can be arranged between the local authorities and the United States military commander.

[BIDDLE]

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856A.20/70 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle), at London*

WASHINGTON, November 1, 1941—3 p. m.

Netherlands Series No. 39. Your no. 37, October 31, 9 p. m.

1. We are telegraphing to Ambassador Caffery the text of the instructions to the Netherlands Minister in Rio de Janeiro, together with the views of the Netherlands Government with respect to the time table for succeeding steps.

2. You may inform the Foreign Minister that his proposed time table is agreeable to us and that we shall await an indication from him as to the time when his Government desires the dispatch of our troops. In this connection we assume that appropriate instructions will be sent to the Governor of Surinam when the Brazilian Government's reply has been received.

HULL

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856A.20/77a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle), at London*

WASHINGTON, November 5, 1941—8 p. m.

Netherlands Series No. 40. Ambassador Caffery has informed us that the Brazilian Government has accepted the Netherlands invitation.

As you were informed in our no. 39, we agreed to the wishes expressed by the Netherlands Foreign Minister that the United States troop movement be postponed for about a week for the reasons given in paragraph 4 of your 37, October 31, and our military and naval plans have been drawn accordingly.

The War Department is now anxious to commence the troop movement on or about Saturday, November 8, and is arranging for naval protection for the Army transports on that basis. We earnestly hope, therefore, that the Netherlands Government will send appropriate instructions to the Governor of Surinam in strict confidence



in order that the combined army and navy operations may go forward as contemplated.

Should the Foreign Minister raise the point that the time is too short to permit adequate arrangements being made for the reception of our troops, including housing, you may say that the Force will be self-contained, will take with it such housing as may be immediately required, and will at first require only a minimum amount of assistance from the local authorities in Surinam.

Upon hearing from you that the foregoing time table is agreeable to the Netherlands Government, and that instructions have been sent to the Governor of Surinam, we will inform you and the American Consulate in Paramaribo of the time our forces may be expected to arrive. Their time of arrival will also determine the date and hour of release of the proposed joint United States-Netherlands statement.

HULL

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856A.20/80 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Biddle), at London*

WASHINGTON, November 15, 1941—noon.

Netherlands Series 44. Your 42, November 12, 5 p. m.<sup>18</sup> Please see the Foreign Minister and say that we appreciate that he is doing everything possible to complete the arrangements for the entry of our troops into Surinam. The question has again become urgent from the standpoint of security. For example the Brazilian Foreign Office has already received reports from a Brazilian mission in another American country indicating that the fact that American troops are to move into Surinam is becoming known. It is obvious that the longer the troop movement is delayed the wider the circulation of such reports will become, thus endangering the lives of the troops when they do move and prejudicing the success of their mission. An additional consideration is the fact that the delay is tying up Army transports and naval escort vessels which are badly needed for important duty elsewhere.

HULL

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856A.20/88a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Vice Consul at Paramaribo (Norden)*

WASHINGTON, November 19, 1941—8 p. m.

1. The Governments of the United States and of the Netherlands have agreed upon the following text of a statement to be made public

<sup>18</sup> Not printed.

simultaneously in Washington and London at 1:45 o'clock, Washington time, afternoon of Monday, November 24:

[Here follows text of statement which is the same as draft quoted in telegram No. 1019, October 25, 5 p. m., to the Ambassador in Brazil, printed on page 827.]

2. In accordance with the arrangements which have been agreed upon, United States troops numbering about 1,000 officers and men under the command of Colonel Parley D. Parkinson will be dispatched to Surinam in 3 echelons. Weather permitting, the first echelon consisting of Colonel Parkinson and some staff officers will arrive at Zandery Air Field, Paramaribo, by air not earlier than 1:45 o'clock, Washington time, afternoon of November 25, which is 3:15 p. m., Paramaribo time. Second echelon comprising about 250 officers and men will arrive Paramaribo November 28 by sea and the third consisting of remainder of ground force on November 30, also by sea. Second and third echelons will probably be accompanied by naval escort. Air units will arrive as soon as air field can accommodate them, but no sooner than 1:45 o'clock, Washington time, afternoon of November 25.

3. War Department is instructing the commanding officer of the United States forces to keep in close touch with you and to consult you with respect to political matters. He has also been authorized to show you the text of his instructions in order that you may be fully informed and in a position to give every possible assistance to the force to the end that its mission may be accomplished successfully. You will keep the Department fully informed of any arrangements that may be discussed between the United States military authorities, the Surinam authorities, and the Brazilian Mission. The Department is not informed at this time as to the date when the Brazilian Mission may be expected in Surinam.

4. It is understood that the force will be prepared to take care of its own needs, including housing, at least during the initial stages.

5. You will not communicate the contents of this telegram to the Governor of Surinam nor discuss the matter with him, unless he should raise the subject with you. It is understood that shortly appropriate instructions will be sent to him by the Netherlands Government in London.

HULL

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856A.20/17 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, November 25, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 5:44 p. m.]

4174. Despite its preoccupation with the anti-Comintern meeting the German press this afternoon finds considerable front page space

and prominence for comment on the sending of American troops to Dutch Guiana. This is variously described in lengthy news despatches and editorials as "Roosevelt's military aggression against South America", the seizure of an American spring board to Dakar, a prelude to the occupation of French Guiana, and a violation of the Atlantic Charter<sup>19</sup> as well as of the Habana agreements with the other American Republics. The newspapers state that the "seizure" of the bauxite mine is only one of the numerous crimes committed by this single action and that in particular it is noteworthy as being the first major step along the road of aggressive imperialism which the United States has allegedly chosen to follow. It is suggested that the concurrent action of Brazil is ambiguous since the guards stationed by that country along its frontier with Dutch Guiana may well be intended to protect South America from further "Yankee penetration". The newspapers also attempt to ridicule the position of the Dutch Government which they say proved its impotence as well as its naiveness in believing this colony would be restored to it after the war.

The semi-official *Dienst aus Deutschland* directs its attention mainly toward the effect of the action on French interests. It asserts that "it is obvious beyond all doubt that the occupation of Dutch Guiana is only a preliminary step to an action directly or indirectly against French Guiana" and that it must be viewed in the light of "the well-known Anglo-American intentions with regard to French West Africa". The *Dienst aus Deutschland* then states: "The American action is also being followed in Vichy with the greatest attention though as yet with complete silence but no doubt is left that Vichy may be compelled in the very near future to make serious decisions."

Repeated to Vichy.

MORRIS

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856A.20/20 : Telegram

*The Vice Consul at Paramaribo (Norden) to the Secretary of State*

PARAMARIBO, November 25, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received November 26—8:25 a. m.]

Colonel Parkinson and staff arrived at Zanderij 1:50 afternoon today Washington time.

NORDEN

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<sup>19</sup> Joint statement by President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Churchill on August 14, 1941; for text, see vol. I, p. 367.

856A.20/135

*Memorandum by Mr. Louis J. Halle, Jr., of the Division of the  
American Republics*

[WASHINGTON,] December 5, 1941.

ATTITUDE OF THE OTHER AMERICAN REPUBLICS TO THE JOINT ACTION  
OF BRAZIL AND THE UNITED STATES FOR THE PROTECTION OF SURINAM

News of the recent Brazilian-American joint action in Surinam has been received with calm realism throughout Latin America, in official circles and in the press alike. It may, perhaps, be viewed as an indication of the success achieved by our Good Neighbor Policy that our motives in taking this action have been almost universally accepted on the basis of our own avowal. The step has not met with the fear and suspicion that it might have aroused a few years ago.

In governmental circles, the responses that have not been explicitly favorable have been merely non-committal, and only the pro-Axis press has found fault. The general view has been that the action was a logical, almost an expected forward step, in keeping with the progressive development of hemisphere defense since the autumn of 1939, and thus to be regarded as a matter of course. It has been viewed as stemming from the Act of Habana (in spirit at least) and leading toward an anticipated occupation of French Guiana at some appropriate future moment; and also as a gratifying indication of our determination to defend the Western Hemisphere. While definitely unfavorable comments are not to be found outside the pro-Axis press, notices expressing outright jubilation have appeared only in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Brazil (where pride is aroused by Brazilian participation together with some disappointment at the limited nature of that participation). However, Colombia's *El Liberal* (not considered pro-Nazi) published an ambiguous comment that might be construed as an expression of alarm.

The responses of government officials have ranged from silence (Mexico, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador) through non-committal comment (Colombia, Peru) to unqualified concurrence in the action (Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras [*New York Times*],<sup>19a</sup> El Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile).

The Foreign Minister of Argentina,<sup>20</sup> in a note handed to our Ambassador, stated that his Ministry considered that "the measure mentioned assures continental defense within the spirit of American

<sup>19a</sup> Brackets appear in the original.

<sup>20</sup> Julio Roca.

solidarity and of the pacts signed, which are its practical manifestation." The Associated Press reported him as stating, also, that the move was "a normal thing," analogous to our occupation of Iceland.

The Foreign Minister of Paraguay<sup>21</sup> said that the action appears logical for hemisphere defense. The Chilean Foreign Minister<sup>22</sup> expressed himself as being personally in accord. The Foreign Minister of Panama<sup>23</sup> said that the action is greatly in the interest of all the American Republics, adding that the statement that the contingent will be withdrawn at the conclusion of hostilities should obviate any possible criticism which might have arisen.

For the most part, the Latin American press has confined itself to reporting the news without editorial comment. The press has been explicitly favorable in Cuba, Nicaragua, Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina.

Cuba's *El Mundo* stated that no one in the Americas would disapprove of the occupation of Surinam but would, rather, view it as evidence of the firm determination of the United States to maintain its rights and those of the other republics of the Western Hemisphere by force of arms. The only editorial comment in Guatemala and in Venezuela accepted the step as a natural development to be regarded as a matter of course.

The only comment in the Colombian press (that of *El Liberal* referred to above) foretold, as a result of the step, imminent economic complications and a radical alteration in international affairs, for which Colombia must be prepared. The only exception to the favorable reaction of the Uruguayan press has been that of the *Herrerista Debate*, which referred to the action as "an outrage against the rights of others." In Argentina, only *El Pampero* has viewed the step with alarm; its tone, according to Ambassador Armour, was one of discouragement. The Ecuadoran press, while refraining from editorial comment, has published some news-reports of German statements that the United States has "invaded" South America.

It may be said that on the whole the Latin Americans were not shocked by our action and, except at the prompting of malice from abroad, did not misconstrue our motives.

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<sup>21</sup> Luis Argana.

<sup>22</sup> Bianchi Gundian.

<sup>23</sup> Raúl de Roux.

## **POLAND**

**INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE POLISH GOVERNMENT IN  
EXILE, AND ITS RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, 1939-1941**

(See Volume I, pages 206-271.)

## PORTUGAL

### CONCERN OF THE UNITED STATES OVER THE FATE OF PORTUGAL AND HER ISLAND POSSESSIONS IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTACK BY GERMANY

740.0011 European War 1939/9887a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 11, 1941—midnight.

1230. Please transmit the following message to the Former Naval Person: <sup>1</sup>

“We propose immediately to take the following steps in relation to the security of the Western Hemisphere, which steps will favorably affect your shipping problem. It is important for domestic political reasons which you will readily understand that this action be taken by us unilaterally and not after diplomatic conversations between you and us. Therefore before taking this unilateral action I want to tell you about the proposal.

This Government proposes to extend the present so-called security zone and patrol areas which have been in effect since very early in the War <sup>2</sup> to a line covering all North Atlantic waters west of about west longitude 25 degrees. We propose to utilize aircraft and naval vessels working from Greenland, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, the United States, Bermuda and West Indies, with possible later extension to Brazil if this can be arranged. We will want in great secrecy notification of movement of convoys so our patrol units can seek out any ships or planes of aggressor nations operating west of the new line of the security zone. We will immediately make public to you position aggressor ships or planes when located in our patrol area west of west longitude 25 degrees.

We propose to refuel our ships at sea where advisable. We suggest your longer shipping hauls move as much as possible west of new line up to latitude of the Northwest approaches.

We have declared Red Sea area no longer a combat zone. We propose sending all types of goods in unarmed American flag ships to Egypt or any other non-belligerent port via Red Sea or Persian Gulf.

<sup>1</sup> Code name for Winston S. Churchill, British Prime Minister.

<sup>2</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. v, pp. 85 ff.

We think we can work out sending wheat and other goods in American ships to Greenland or Iceland through the next 6 months.

We hope to make available for direct haul to England a large amount of your present shipping which is now utilized for other purposes. We expect to make use of Danish ships very soon and Italian ships in about 2 months.

I believe advisable that when this new policy is adopted here no statement be issued on your end. It is not certain I would make specific announcement. I may decide to issue necessary naval operations orders and let time bring out the existence of the new patrol area. Roosevelt."

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/10232½ : Telegram

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

LONDON, April 23, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 6:47 p. m.]

1599. Department's 1230, April 11, midnight. Personal for the President from Former Naval Person.

"(1) I now reply in detail to your message of April 11. The delay has been caused by waiting for Admiral Ghormley<sup>3</sup> whose arrival was uncertain. The First Sea Lord<sup>3a</sup> has had long discussions with Ghormley, as the result of which I am advised as follows:

(2) In the battle of the Atlantic we have two main problems to deal with in addition to the menace of aircraft round our coast. These problems are those of U-boats and the raiders.

(3) As regards the U-boats, we have had considerable success in dealing with these pests when they were working somewhere in the longitude of 22 degrees west in northwestern approaches. Whether it was because of our success or for some other reason, they are now working in about 30 degrees west.

(4) We have, however, been able gradually to strengthen our escorting forces, thanks to the United States destroyers which were sent us, and by the use of Iceland as a refueling base for the escorts.

(5) It may be expected that the enemy's reaction to this will be to send his U-boats still further west, and as most of them are based on either Lorient or Bordeaux they can do this without operating further from their bases than they are at the present time.

(6) It is quite likely therefore that the area to the westward of 35 degrees west and to the southward of Greenland will be the next

<sup>3</sup> Vice Adm. Robert Lee Ghormley, American Naval Observer in London.

<sup>3a</sup> Adm. Sir Dudley Pound.



danger area, and it is one which it is difficult for us to deal with. Aerial reconnaissance which could be carried out from Greenland to cover this area would therefore be of the greatest value, as if a U-boat were located we should be able to re-route our convoys by signal so as to pass clear of the danger.

(7) Another area in which we are having considerable trouble is that from Freetown up through the Cape Verdes to the Azores. We cannot route our convoys very far to the west owing to the endurance of the vessels on this run. In fact it is only by reducing their cargo and taking in extra fuel that they can make the passage. We are providing such escorts for these convoys as we are able, but it is quite inadequate, and it would be of the greatest help if air reconnaissance by one of the United States carriers would cover the water some distance in advance of the convoys.

(8) There will be no difficulty in giving the American naval authorities notification of the movements of convoys.

(9) As regards raiders, one great danger point is off Newfoundland, as we have a very large amount of shipping proceeding independently through this area. This was the area in which *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* made such a bag. Any additional long-range air reconnaissance which could be carried out from Newfoundland or Nova Scotia would be of the greatest assistance.

(10) We hope to station a powerful capital ship in either Nova Scotia or Newfoundland which would be able to take advantage of any information which we receive regarding the activities of raiders.

(11) There are various areas on our trade routes in which the enemy is liable to operate, and which are west of the longitude 25 degrees west. There are also certain areas in the North and South Atlantic off the trade routes in which the enemy maintain their supply ships and where they go to refuel. Up to the present time we have been unable to search out these areas as we have not had the ships to do it with. If we knew that reconnaissance was going to take place over any given area, we would endeavor to have in the vicinity a force which would be capable of dealing with any raider which was located. Apart from any information which your ships were able to broadcast, the mere fact of air reconnaissance taking place over these areas would give the enemy a great feeling of uneasiness.

(12) It is understood that arrangements have already been made for secret intercommunication between British and United States warships.

(13) For yourself alone. There is another matter closely connected with the above which is causing me and the naval staff increasing anxiety. The capacity of Spain and Portugal to resist the increasing German pressure may at any time collapse, and the anchorage at Gibraltar be rendered unusable. To effect this the Germans would not

need to move a large army through Spain, but merely to get hold of the batteries which molest the anchorage, for which a few thousand artillerymen and technicians might be sufficient. They have already done some of their usual preliminary penetration into Tangier, and thus both sides of the straits might quickly pass into the hands of expert hostile gunners.

(14) Of course the moment Spain gives way or is attacked, we shall dispatch two expeditions which we have long been holding in readiness, one from Britain to one of the islands in the Azores, and subsequently to a second island, and the second expedition to do the same in the Cape de Verde. But these operations will take 8 days from the signal being given, and one can never tell that the Germans may not have forestalling plans on foot. With our other naval burdens we have not the forces to maintain a continuous watch. It would be a very great advantage if you could send an American squadron for a friendly cruise in these regions at the earliest moment. This would probably warn Nazi raiders off, and would keep the place warm for us as well as giving us invaluable information.

(15) I have had long talks with Mr. Forrestal,<sup>4</sup> and am taking him and Harriman<sup>5</sup> with me tomorrow night to study the position in the Mersey area, so important to the northwestern approaches.”

WINANT

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740.0011 European War 1939/10485½ : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 1, 1941—9 p. m.

1471. Your 1599, April 23 and 1668, April 29.<sup>6</sup> For Former Naval Person [from President Roosevelt].

1. In relation to paragraph 14 of yours of April 23 we received strong protest from Portuguese Government in regard to a proposed friendly visit to Azores and Cape Verde Islands at this time. In view of this we deferred proposed visit. We then received recommendation from American Ambassador in Spain<sup>6a</sup> that friendly visit planned to Canaries or to Spain be carried out but that no fuel should be taken on locally in the Islands or in Spain. In view of this situation the proposed naval visits were cancelled.

The new naval patrol now going into operation will extend to westerly side of both the Azores and Cape Verde Islands but planes will not be flown over the Islands themselves. Our patrol is already

<sup>4</sup> James V. Forrestal, Under Secretary of the Navy.

<sup>5</sup> W. Averell Harriman, Special Representative of President Roosevelt at London with the rank of Minister.

<sup>6</sup> Letter not printed.

<sup>6a</sup> Alexander W. Weddell.

on way to take positions assigned and I think liaison work between the two naval services is being established satisfactorily.

2. It is, of course, of utmost importance, in my judgment, that you send no expedition to either place unless Portugal is attacked or you get definite word of an immediate German attack on the Islands. Furthermore, I know you will not mind my saying that in the event of a British expeditionary force you make it very clear to the American people that in case of Azores it is for purpose of British defense and not for permanent occupation. In other words, that Britain will restore Islands to Portuguese sovereignty at close of war if Portugal is restored as an independent nation. The reason I suggest this is that as you know, most of Azores are in Western Hemisphere under my longitudinal map reading.

[Here follows material on other subjects.] Roosevelt.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/10599½ : Telegram

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

LONDON, May 3, 1941—midnight.

[Received May 4—4:15 a. m.]

1753. Department's 1471, May 1, 9 p. m. From Former Naval Person to President Roosevelt.

1. Your friendly message assured me that no temporary reverses, however heavy, can shake your resolution to support us until we gain the final victory. I quite see your difficulties about paragraph 1 so far as visits are concerned but the consequences reflect themselves upon paragraph 2.

2. The conditions in your first sentence of this paragraph (paragraph 2) make it almost certain that we shall be forestalled. We ourselves are deeply impressed by those conditions, but on the other hand how are we to deal with German penetration by tourists and agents ready for some fine day when a German armed expedition will arrive finding all prepared beforehand? The terror which Germany exercises on the Governments of Portugal and Spain forces them to take no notice of infiltration in these islands lest worse befall them at home. You may be sure that they will try to synchronize any decisive move from Spain or Portugal with a stroke on the islands. We have taken no decision yet but I am sure you would not wish to prescribe our remaining passive, if we feel we have to act in advance of the conditions set forth in the first sentence of your paragraph 2.

3. Should we decide to move against these islands not only would we declare that they are occupied only for the purpose of British defense and not for permanent occupation and that we will restore the

islands to Portuguese sovereignty at the close of the war if Portugal is restored as an independent nation, but we should be perfectly ready that the United States should stand guarantor for the execution of such an engagement. We are far from wishing to add to our territory, but only to preserve our life and perhaps yours.

[Here follows material on other subjects.] [Former Naval Person.]  
WINANT

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853B.014/16

*The Spanish Ambassador (Cárdenas) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

No. 64

WASHINGTON, May 7, 1941.

MR. SECRETARY: With surprise and great displeasure I read in yesterday's evening papers and saw reproduced in this morning's papers the proposal of Senator Pepper<sup>7</sup> asking that the United States seize various bases in the Pacific and in the Atlantic, among them the Canary Islands.

As the above-mentioned senator is a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs I cannot refrain from addressing to Your Excellency my protest against the attitude of the said member of the Senate.

Being convinced that the proposal in question does not represent the expression of official opinion, I should be very grateful if Your Excellency would be good enough to undo the bad impression that the incident has produced, at the same time clarifying the viewpoint of the American Government.

I avail [etc.]

JUAN F. DE CÁRDENAS

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853B.014/14 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Portugal (Fish)*

WASHINGTON, May 9, 1941—6 p. m.

253. Reference Department's no. 210, April 18, 4 p. m.<sup>8</sup> The Portuguese Minister<sup>9</sup> today called at the Department and left a memorandum<sup>8</sup> summarizing a statement published by the Portuguese Government referring to mutual accusations by belligerent Governments over the radio of aggressive intentions against territories belonging to others, declaring that the Portuguese Government has received no request or suggestion for the eventual use of any Portuguese ports, bases, coasts or islands by any belligerent Governments

<sup>7</sup> Claude Pepper, Senator from Florida.

<sup>8</sup> Not printed.

<sup>9</sup> João Antonio de Bianchi.

or by any other third power, and further stating that the Government has taken measures for the defense of the three island groups in the Atlantic not only as an assertion of sovereignty but also with the purpose of resisting any attack that might be directed against them, although the Government does not anticipate any such event. The published text of this statement adds that the Portuguese Government is in a position to state, in accordance with an expressed declaration by the Government of the United States, that Senator Pepper's views and other similar ones in no way correspond to the feeling of complete respect for Portuguese sovereignty by the United States Government.

In reply to a question regarding the foregoing statement of the Portuguese Government at my press conference today, I emphasized that there is really nothing new in our friendly relations with Portugal. I added that it was, of course, well known that members of separate and independent branches of our Government state their individual views whenever they see fit but that such statements do not, of course, undertake to represent the views of this Government.

The foregoing is transmitted for your information. You are authorized in your discretion to make such use of this information as may appear to be desirable.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/11895

*The British Ambassador (Halifax) to the Secretary of State*<sup>10</sup>

SUMMARY OF A TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE ON  
MAY 23

It has now been possible to make soundings in Lisbon regarding the intentions of the Portuguese Government in the event of a German attack or menace of attack. Although at the outset Dr. Salazar<sup>11</sup> was reticent, he has now sent a communication to the British Government. This communication is being urgently examined in London and it is felt that it may be possible that some arrangement may be reached regarding the Atlantic Islands. That being so, it is felt that in the meantime it might be preferable not to send any United States emissary to Lisbon. Portuguese public opinion is at the moment rather nervous regarding American and British intentions concerning the Azores or even the mainland. The arrival at this juncture of an American representative might increase these rumours and give an opportunity to the Germans for mischievous propaganda. In the circumstances, the British Government's view, subject to what the

<sup>10</sup> Transmitted with covering letter dated May 24, 1941.

<sup>11</sup> Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal.

United States Government may feel, is that it would be better to hold American influence in reserve for the moment.

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740.0011 European War 1939/11410½ : Telegram

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

LONDON, May 29, 1941—midnight.

[Received May 29—10:17 p. m.]

2200. Personal for the President from the Former Naval Person:

"1. We cordially welcome your taking over Iceland<sup>12</sup> at the earliest possible moment, and will hold ourselves and all our resources there at your disposal as may be found convenient. It would liberate a British division for defense against invasion of the Middle East. It would enable us to concentrate our flying boats now there on north-western approaches. If it could be done in the next 3 weeks or less, or even begun, it would have a moral effect even beyond its military importance. You have only to say the word and our staffs can get to work at once.

2. Spain and Portugal. At any time now Hitler may obtain air bases in southern Spain or in North Africa, Spanish or French, from which he can make Gibraltar harbour unusable by our fleet. The moment this happens, or we are sure it is going to happen, we shall send our expeditions which have long been prepared and are waiting beside their ships, to occupy the Grand Canary, the Cape Verde Islands and one of the Azores. The code names for these three expeditions will be cabled in a separate message.

[3.] We cannot provide an army to defend Portugal on the mainland, and the same is true of Spain, though we would try to help a guerilla there. Meanwhile we were about to offer Portuguese anti-aircraft and other equipment to defend Azores and Cape Verde Islands, and were encouraging them to withdraw their Government there if overrun by the Nazis. If Salazar accepts our help and protection in the islands we would of course welcome assistance of United States support. As we are already discussing with Salazar help to Portugal, had we not better go ahead and try to obtain his approval of the idea [of] withdrawing to the islands? It is a matter of approach and method. These could be discussed forthwith between State Department and Foreign Office. Whatever Salazar's decision we should in the event have to obtain control of the islands for which United States cooperation would be invaluable.

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<sup>12</sup> See pp. 776 ff.

We should welcome collaboration with an American token force, before, during or after occupation of Atlantic Islands and if you wish would turn them over to you as a matter of mutual war convenience.

4. We should naturally welcome United States occupation of Dakar, and would afford all facilities in our power. We have some rather costly experience and knowledge of this place. Surest method by landing tanks from specially constructed vessels on neighboring beaches. I suggest that immediate consultation between your officers and ours should be given to make a workable plan, and have it ready in case circumstances should require its use.”

JOHNSON

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853B.014/36

*The Portuguese Legation to the Department of State*

[Translation]

The Portuguese Government have taken cognizance by excerpts circulated by news agencies and by complete broadcasts, of the fireside chat made by His Excellency President Roosevelt in the evening of May 27.<sup>13</sup>

The Portuguese Government would not feel justified in addressing itself to the Government of the United States to refer to an address made by the Chief Executive of the Great American Nation to its citizens, were it not for the fact that it contains direct references to Portuguese territories which, coupled with some of the theses set forth by President Roosevelt, and unaccompanied by any express mention of respect for the complete and centuries old sovereignty of Portugal over those territories, are open to diverse interpretations and, therefore, could not fail to surprise the Portuguese people.

Portugal has maintained during the present war a neutral position which does not imply the breach of any of its international undertakings. On the contrary, her policy has had the consistent concordance of the Government of Great Britain, her ally. This Neutrality has been impeachably [*impeccably*] observed and has provided Europe and the two Americas with their last direct contact. In order to ensure it and to assert their sovereignty in an unmistakable way in the present conjuncture or any other with which they may be confronted, the Portuguese Government have endeavoured to set up a state of efficient defense, with all the means at their disposal, in the territories which it is said are more exposed to attack, precisely those very same ones to which His Excellency President Roosevelt made direct and repeated references: the Islands of Cape Verde and the

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<sup>13</sup> For text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, May 31, 1941, p. 647.

Azores. The sending of troops to the said possessions together with other defense measures already accomplished and in progress were not kept secret, and the Government of the United States are certainly aware of them.

The Portuguese territories have not, therefore, presented any harm, hindrance or menace to any of the belligerents or their allies, in the first place owing to the irreproachable attitude maintained; secondly, because the Portuguese Government declare and manifest their disposition to defend such an attitude against whoever may be; and, in the third place, due to the fact that such territories have not been the object of any threat by any of the belligerents or third powers. It is therefore not possible to understand the specific reference by name to those Portuguese possessions which by itself could not fail to surprise the Portuguese people and Government.

Furthermore, those references are involved with the expounding of the thesis that it devolves on the United States to define and decide whether, and when and where they are threatened and how their forces are to be used to defend themselves or others. And in expounding such a thesis there is not the slightest reference to the fundamental principle of respect for the sovereignty of others exercised and maintained without prejudice to anybody.

Regarding such a thesis, in so far as it may involve their territories, the Portuguese Government deem it their imperative duty to request a clarification otherwise it might be interpreted as conducting to the admission that in order to defend other countries or for its own defense, a great nation would be at liberty to commit a violation similar to those the threat of which is said to exist from third States.

The Portuguese Government, having recently received, with satisfaction and gratitude, from the United States Government through the words of the Secretary of State, assurances of the respect for their sovereignty, would now appreciate being placed in a position to assure that in the references made by His Excellency President Roosevelt and in the thesis that he expounded nothing exists that is contrary to the former declarations or which may be interpreted as derogatory of the sovereign rights of Portugal.

From their own part, the Portuguese Government reassert their indefectible determination to defend to the limit of their forces, their neutrality and their sovereign rights against all and any attack to which they may be exposed, though continuing to state they do not anticipate any such event.

WASHINGTON, May 30, 1941.



853B.014/36

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] May 31, 1941.

The Minister of Portugal called at his request and handed me the attached note from his Government, together with the English translation.<sup>14</sup> I said to the Minister that I would not undertake to say a single word orally in reply to the note but that I would give it my early attention.

The Minister really told me nothing new except to emphasize the fear that his Government felt that the utterances of the President might be availed of by Germany as an excuse for seizing the Azores and the Cape Verdes for herself, or what would be a terrific blow for his country, to seize and occupy Portugal. I replied that, of course, Hitler always finds an excuse or a pretext for anything that he finds it profitable or desirable to do for himself or from his own standpoint, and that that has so far governed his rather sudden seizure and occupation of some 15 countries in Europe after solemnly disclaiming any purpose of invasion and asserting only a policy of neutrality until he gets good and ready to pounce upon his intended victim, which he then proceeds to do without delay; that Hitler is moving across the Mediterranean on a march of unlimited world conquest; that this has been demonstrated in every conceivable way by his acts and utterances; that every nation not yet captured may well look in the direction of Hitler primarily for danger rather than in any other direction secondarily; that, of course, I can understand the viewpoint which the Ambassador says his note expresses; and I reiterated that this country is speaking and acting solely from the standpoint of the application of the doctrine of self-defense for this hemisphere and hence for the United States.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

853B.014/36

*The Secretary of State to the Portuguese Minister (Bianchi)*

[WASHINGTON,] June 10, 1941.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge your communication of May 30, 1941 transmitting the observations of the Government of Portugal with respect to the references to the Portuguese Islands in the Atlantic made by the President in his address of May 27, 1941.

I have carefully studied the observations of the Portuguese Government, and have noted the declarations reaffirming its position of neutrality and its determination to defend its neutrality and sovereign rights against any attack.

<sup>14</sup> *Supra.*

For its part, the Government of the United States can state categorically that it harbors no aggressive intentions against the sovereignty or territorial integrity of any other country. The Government and people of the United States have sought to live in peace and friendship with all other nations, and have consistently supported the principle of non-aggression and non-intervention in the relations between states. This Government time and again has reiterated its support of this principle.

Our policy today is based upon the inalienable right of self-defense. The Government of the United States can not but view with increasing anxiety the constantly expanding acts of aggression on the part of a certain belligerent power, which now threaten the peace and safety of the countries of this hemisphere.

In referring to the Islands in the Atlantic it was the intention of the President to point out the dangers to this hemisphere which would result if these Islands were to come under the control or occupation of forces pursuing a policy of world conquest and domination. The strategic importance of these Islands, because of their geographical location, was stressed by the President solely in terms of their potential value from the point of view of attack against this hemisphere.

Accept [etc.]

CORDELL HULL

853B.014/27

*The Portuguese Minister (Bianchi) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

No. 95

WASHINGTON, June 13, 1941.

EXCELLENCY: I did not fail to transmit to my Government without delay Your Excellency's reply to my note of May the 30th and have been instructed to thank Your Excellency for the careful attention, Your Excellency states, Your Excellency gave that communication.

The Portuguese Government have taken due note of the declaration contained in Your Excellency's reply regarding the United States policy of non aggression and the motives for which the Portuguese Islands in the Atlantic were mentioned in the address delivered by His Excellency the President.

At the same time, however, the Portuguese Government—and I am requested to convey it to Your Excellency—can not but regret that, in the presence of a precise request for clarification contained in the final paragraphs of their note, and involving the concrete revindication of the sovereign rights of a friendly power, the Government of the United States of America should not have gone beyond a generical and vague declaration which did not even refer individually to the very country in question, and failed to assert whether or not they maintained the former declarations made by the Secretary of State.

I avail myself [etc.]

J. DE BIANCHI

853B.014/27

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

[WASHINGTON,] June 13, 1941.

The Minister of Portugal called to see me this morning at his request. The Minister handed me a note a copy of which is attached herewith.<sup>16</sup>

After reading the note I inquired of the Minister what he desired me to understand to be the intention of his Government in addressing this communication to the Government of the United States.

I said to him that I was familiar with the conversation which Secretary Hull had had with him some two weeks ago and I was, of course, familiar with the contents of the note which Secretary Hull had addressed to him in reply to the first note on the subject which the Minister had addressed to the Secretary of State. I said it seemed to me that the statements made by Secretary Hull and the declarations contained in the subsequent note sent by the Secretary of State could not have been clearer nor more specific, and it was consequently difficult for me to understand what was implied by the Portuguese Government when it used the phrase "a generical and vague declaration". I said surely the Portuguese Government must recognize that the Government of the United States throughout the past nine years had not only upheld by declaration and by the pronouncements of the spokesmen for this Government the principles of scrupulous respect for the independence and integrity of other peoples, and a policy of non-aggression and of non-intervention, but it likewise meticulously carried out these principles in practice in every possible way. I said it was difficult for me to draw any implication from this communication except the implication that Portugal—faced on one side by Germany, which had broken every standard of morality and of international law, had utterly disregarded the rights of independent peoples, had paid not the slightest heed to the neutrality nor the neutral rights of other nations, had occupied and despoiled country after country in Europe, and had made it evident to the entire world that she was set upon a policy of world conquest and of world domination; and faced across the Atlantic by a traditionally friendly power, the United States, which had not only upheld the principles of international law and of respect for the sovereign rights of all other nations, but had scrupulously adhered to such policies and principles—considered the two countries as on a par. I said this surely was not the implication which the Portuguese Government would desire this Government to draw and I would, consequently, like to know quite frankly and definitely from the Minister whether I was to understand that his Government seriously believed

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<sup>16</sup> *Supra.*

that any further assurances were required from this Government that it was not in fact determined to embark upon a policy of aggression and of despoiling Portugal of her overseas colonies and possessions.

I said that I was confident that the Government of Portugal knew very well indeed that, as announced by the President in his recent addresses and as had been announced by the Secretary and others speaking for the administration, the policy of this Government at the present moment in the world's history was based upon the principle of self-defense and that no interpretation could legitimately be given to this policy from which could arise the conclusion that the policy of self-defense was a policy of aggression or of despoiling others of their legitimate rights.

The Minister said that he felt he could speak frankly with me and that the fact of the matter was that German propaganda was beginning to have its effect upon public opinion in Portugal and that recent speeches in the United States, such as those made by Senator Pepper, and many newspaper articles and editorials which the Germans took pains to see were republished in the Portuguese press, were beginning to make the Portuguese people suspicious that the Government of the United States was going to seize the present opportunity of taking possession of their overseas colonies. He said that the desire of his Government was that this movement on the part of public opinion be checked and that it believed that the only way in which it could be checked was by some categorical statement here which would put an end to it. The Minister said that he felt he should say in all frankness that he hoped that this Government was aware of the fact that German influence existed in certain sections of the Portuguese Government itself and that this influence was one of the chief contributing factors to the disquiet of the chief of the Portuguese Government.

I said that surely the Minister and his Government must be aware of the fact that every word of the President's speech made it clear that the Government of the United States had not the slightest desire to see any alteration in the sovereign control by Portugal of the Azores and of the other Portuguese colonies.

The Minister said that he was sure his Government had no doubts on that subject, but that to calm the situation and to make their own position easier, they felt it necessary that some more categorical assurance be given.

I said I would give further consideration to the note which had been handed me by the Minister and I would advise him of the conclusions that this Government reached.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

853B.014/53

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Adviser on Political Relations  
(Dunn)*

[WASHINGTON,] June 17, 1941.

The Portuguese Minister came in this morning and gave me the sense of a telegram he had received from his Government with further reference to the second note from his Government which he had handed to Mr. Welles on June 13, 1941.

Mr. Bianchi stated that he had reported to Lisbon the conversation he had with Mr. Welles on that day, and his Government had now telegraphed him to say that if he had given the impression that a reply was expected to this second note, he was instructed to correct that impression. He said that the telegram from his Government went on to say that in view of the fact that our reply to their first note was published so suddenly and had been so generally disapproved by the Portuguese public and the Portuguese press, his Government felt that it was necessary further to explain their position to this Government. They wished it distinctly to be understood, however, that they had not intended that this second note should be considered as requiring any reply on our part.

The Minister himself stated that he entirely agreed with the position of his Government in this respect and he was only sorry that his Government had not made it clear that they had not expected a reply to this second note, as, in that event, he would have been enabled so to state when he left the note at the Department. He also stated that he felt it was entirely advisable for the discussion of the question of any possible action with regard to the Portuguese islands in the Atlantic to be terminated without further extension of correspondence on the subject.

I told the Minister that I felt this would be entirely satisfactory to this Government, as I had not, myself, seen how it would be possible to frame any reply to the second note of the Portuguese Government which would contain any more than a repetition of the statements contained in our first reply.

JAMES CLEMENT DUNN

853B.014/30

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

[WASHINGTON,] June 18, 1941.

Mr. Butler <sup>17</sup> of the British Embassy called to see me this morning at his request. Mr. Butler requested me to submit to the President the

<sup>17</sup> Nevile M. Butler, British Minister.

following request of the Prime Minister which he understood had already, at least in part, been under consideration by the President.

The British Government desired to know whether the Government of the United States would be prepared immediately to undertake joint staff conversations with the British Government to agree upon plans covering the occupation of the Azores, such plans to be contingent upon the unwillingness of the Prime Minister of Portugal to request assistance of the British and United States Governments in the defense of the independence and integrity of those islands.

I stated to Mr. Butler that I would submit this request immediately to the President and let the British Ambassador have the President's reply.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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853B.014/40a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, July 7, 1941—11 p. m.

2463. The President has asked me to let you know that he is planning to write a personal note to Dr. Salazar couched in a very friendly and informal tone which will make clear to Dr. Salazar that this Government has never had the slightest intention of encroachment in any form upon Portuguese sovereignty over the Azores or the other Portuguese colonial possessions. The President will also make clear what the views of this Government are with regard to the need to defend the Western Hemisphere against any threat of German aggression and, without entering into the field of the conversations held in London, will make it plain that this Government will be prepared to take such action as may be required to assist Portugal in the event that Germany undertakes any aggressive move against the Azores.

WELLES

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853B.014/41a

*President Roosevelt to the Portuguese President of the Council of Ministers (Salazar)*<sup>18</sup>

WASHINGTON, July 14, 1941.

MY DEAR DR. SALAZAR: I am writing this entirely personal and informal letter to you in the belief that it may be easier for me, in this manner, to put an end effectively to certain misunderstandings which have regrettably arisen during recent weeks between our two Governments.

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<sup>18</sup> Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.

May I say first of all that, in the opinion of the Government of the United States, the continued exercise of unimpaired and sovereign jurisdiction by the Government of Portugal over the territory of Portugal itself, over the Azores and over all Portuguese colonies offers complete assurance of security to the Western Hemisphere insofar as the regions mentioned are concerned. It is, consequently, the consistent desire of the United States that there be no infringement of Portuguese sovereign control over those territories.

This policy of the United States I made emphatically clear in the message which I addressed yesterday<sup>19</sup> to the Congress of the United States concerning the steps which had been taken to assist the people of Iceland in the defense of the integrity and independence of their country.

I feel sure that there has never been any doubt in your own mind with regard to this question and that the questions which have been raised with regard thereto in the press have had their origin in false reports deliberately circulated by propaganda emanating from governments which have desired to impair the traditional relations between our two countries.

For all of the reasons I have mentioned above, this Government views with the greatest gratification the steps which already have been taken and which are being taken by your Government to strengthen the defense of the Azores and other outlying portions of the colonial possessions of Portugal so as to render any surprise attack upon them by Germany, or by powers cooperating with Germany, less likely of success.

I need merely add that in view of the vital importance to the United States that Portuguese sovereignty over the Azores and certain other outlying Portuguese possessions remain intact, this Government will stand prepared to assist the authorities of Portugal in the defense of those possessions against any threat of aggression on the part of Germany, or of the powers responsive to Germany, should your Government express to me its belief that such aggression is imminent or its desire that such steps be taken. Any such measures would, of course, be taken in full recognition of the sovereign rights of Portugal and with categorical assurances that any American forces sent to Portuguese possessions would be withdrawn immediately upon the termination of the present war.

In the event that this contingency were to arise and the Government of Portugal considered it desirable, because of the close relations which happily exist between Portugal and Brazil, to ask that the Brazilian Government participate in these measures of defense, such a step would

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<sup>19</sup> The word "yesterday" was probably inadvertently retained from an earlier draft. The reference apparently is to message of July 7, 1941, printed in *Congressional Record*, vol. 87, pt. 6, p. 5868.

be most satisfactory to the Government of the United States. I feel certain that Brazil and the United States would cooperate effectively and whole-heartedly in assisting the Portuguese Government and people in the defense of the Azores.

I have felt it desirable to clarify the situation completely in order to have the assurance that there may not be the slightest misunderstanding of these facts between you and myself.

Frankly, I have felt particularly chagrined that any question should have arisen concerning my own attitude with regard to complete respect for the sovereignty of Portugal. I say that because, as you will remember, during the World War of 1914-1918, the Government of Portugal made available to its allies and subsequently to the United States the port of Horta as a fueling base and the port of Ponta Delgada as a naval base. At that time, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, I had the privilege of visiting those ports in the interest of the United States Navy and I was thus afforded the opportunity of seeing for myself how particularly close and friendly the relations between the Portuguese people and the members of the naval forces of the United States had become. There existed a complete spirit of cooperation between them and of course as soon as the international emergency had passed, all of the forces of the allied and associated powers were immediately withdrawn without the slightest detriment to the sovereign jurisdiction of the Portuguese Government. Because of this experience which I had, I should have a personal interest in seeing to it that the relations between our two Governments and between the peoples of our two countries were always conducted with a full reciprocal respect for the sovereign rights of each and that in any form of cooperation which might be undertaken between Portugal and the United States the best interests of the Portuguese people were completely safeguarded.

With the assurances [etc.]

[FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT]

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853B.014/414

*The Portuguese President of the Council of Ministers (Salazar) to President Roosevelt*<sup>20</sup>

[Translation]

LISBON, July 29, 1941.

MR. PRESIDENT: It was particularly gratifying to me to receive Your Excellency's letter and to have been apprised through a direct

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<sup>20</sup> No Portuguese text of this document was found in Department files. The files did contain, however, an English translation with the notation "Non guaranteed translation" but no clue as to origin. In reply to a request for permission to print the "non guaranteed translation", the Portuguese Foreign Office prepared and authorized for publication the translation herewith printed (023.1/3-1258).



message from Your Excellency, of the sentiments of the United States and of their Government towards Portugal and of their precise position as regards Portuguese territories in the Atlantic in relation to the security of North America.

I have always declined to believe that in any statements by Your Excellency one should of necessity detect disregard for the sovereign rights of Portugal or the veiled intention to violate them in certain circumstances. Since, however, the true sense of Your Excellency's statements in your speech of May 27th was not made quite clear, there was left in the minds of many a doubt which it was desirable to dispel.

For this there was—it must be confessed—some reason. The thesis that American defence is dependent on certain strategic points repeatedly referred to without allusion to a foreign sovereignty which must needs be respected, lent itself, in these calamitous times in which violence has repeatedly been resorted to the world over in the guise of preventive action, to the most unfavourable interpretation. Without doubt this interpretation was seized upon by interested propaganda for its own ends, but the American press, with some exceptions, was not, in its characteristic briskness, at pains to see to it that it did not provide the antagonists with erroneous versions and occasions for accusations.

In the absence of satisfactory clarification, which we hastened to request in friendly terms, there was left to us, to enable us to hold to the favourable interpretation of Your Excellency's words, the valid reason that, notwithstanding that a certain passing inferiority might thereby be created for them, nations should remain faithful to their ideal and cannot, in their political action, violate the very principles they claim to defend or for which they are ready to fight. In the light of this consideration, the Portuguese press, which could hardly have failed to react in the name of the aggrieved national sentiment, soon realised that it must not take things to excess and thereby disturb the good relations existing between us.

Although the Portuguese military authorities did not share the fears of an attack on the Azores by German forces, since control of the Atlantic is not theirs, the Government, out of prudence and in order to ensure the security of Great Britain, our centuries-old ally, have spared themselves neither effort nor expense to see to it that the Azores Islands and also those of Cape Verde are kept in conditions of efficient defence. We believe that the forces and the material already accumulated there, together with a certain amount of aviation and anti-aircraft material the British Government have undertaken to supply forthwith, will place the islands beyond the possibility of a successful attack being launched against them, resolved as we are to see that Portuguese sovereignty and our neutrality are respected.

This assurance Great Britain has received and we have also spontaneously given it to Brazil insofar as our control of the Atlantic Islands may concern her defence. In the event, however, that Britain should find difficulties in connection with the provision of the supplies referred to above or of others acknowledged to be necessary, I should be gratified to receive from the United States Government facilities for the attainment of an end which is also of such particular interest to them.

At the moment, I am, of course, considering only the continuance of the neutral position which Portugal adopted from the outset of the European conflict; should however, that position change in consequence of a violation of her sovereignty, the situation resulting therefrom would have to be examined in a different light and the new position would have to be defined. I have no wish to foresee this future, but I give full weight and value to Your Excellency's statement and, having regard to the closeness of our relations with Brazil, I am confident that Portugal would, in such an emergency, be able to count on that country's solidarity and on its full support.

It remains, Mr. President, for me gratefully to thank you for the initiative of your letter and for the frankness and loyalty of your declarations, and to assure you that your desire that the relations between our two countries and the two Governments should always be firm in friendship and that no misunderstanding should disturb them coincides with our own most vehement wish. We have been fortunate in uninterruptedly maintaining the best of relations with the United States and their Government; we fought side by side in the last war; many thousands of Portuguese nation[al]s, precisely from the Azores, work and rely for their livelihood on the American economy and on American hospitality; and we cannot forget that we owe to one of Your Excellency's predecessors in the Presidency of the United States precisely the recognition of our rights to some colonial territory with careful attention whatever concerns the clarity and consistency of our relations. I am confident that, on Your Excellency's side, I shall always meet with the same understanding and good will.

I beg [etc.]

ANTONIO DE OLIVEIRA SALAZAR

853B.014/58

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] July 30, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me this morning at his request. The Ambassador told me that the Portuguese Prime Minister, Dr. Salazar, had informed the British Ambassador in Lisbon of his great satisfaction and pleasure with the letter which the President had sent to him. The British Government felt that the President's letter had completely removed the misunderstandings which had occurred and had greatly facilitated the British policy in Portugal.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

853B.01/10

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

[WASHINGTON,] December 24, 1941.

The Portuguese Minister called to see me this morning at his request.

The Minister had received an instruction by cable to communicate to me the views of the Portuguese Government, which he understood would be likewise communicated by Prime Minister Salazar to the American Minister in Lisbon.

These views are more or less as follows:

(a) The Portuguese Government is very much concerned and irritated by the radio and press campaign in the United States which would seem to indicate that public opinion in the United States is bringing pressure to bear upon the American Government to seize the Azores, the Cape Verde Islands, et cetera, as "a preventive measure" in order to forestall German seizure of those colonies. It was the urgent desire of the Portuguese Government that this campaign cease.

(b) The Portuguese Government wished this Government clearly to understand that, notwithstanding its need on account of its very difficult situation to make a show of indignation with regard to the seizure of the island of Timor by Australian and Dutch forces, it nevertheless had not the slightest intention of throwing itself into the arms of Germany because of this incident. It desired specifically to call the American Government's attention to the fact that prior to the occupation of Timor, the Portuguese and British Governments had just about concluded negotiations for joint action by the British and Portuguese in the event of an attempted act of aggression against Timor by the Japanese.

(c) The Portuguese Government wished this Government to remember that, notwithstanding its situation vis-à-vis Germany, the Portuguese Prime Minister had time and again during the past two years publicly reaffirmed the continuation of the traditional alliance between

Portugal and Great Britain, and, in the very speech which Dr. Salazar had made a few days ago to the Portuguese National Assembly protesting against the British and Dutch occupation of Timor, he had publicly referred to Great Britain as "Portugal's ally".

(d) The Portuguese Government had taken note of my designation as representative of the United States at the Rio de Janeiro Consultative Meeting.<sup>20a</sup> The Portuguese Government was very hopeful that a satisfactory outcome of this conference would take place, but it felt that the United States Government would realize how much antagonism would be created in Brazil against the United States were any American occupation of the Azores or of any other Portuguese colony to take place prior to the Consultative Meeting because of the close ties of relationship between Brazil and Portugal.

(e) The Portuguese Government earnestly hoped that the American Republics would remain neutral in the present conflict. It felt that it would be unfortunate were there any attempt on the part of the United States to bring them into the war, and believed that the American Republics would be far more useful in the war were they to remain out of the war, although, of course, maintaining complete solidarity with the United States under the terms of existing inter-American agreements.

When the Minister had concluded I said that I felt the time had come for a very frank statement on my part without evading any of the issues raised by this communication from the Portuguese Government. I stated that in my considered judgment the rumors and reports now circulating with such violence concerning some imminent action on the part of Germany with regard to France, Spain, North Africa or Portugal or other parts of the world had been deliberately created by the German Government itself in order to create a smoke screen for German action to avert alleged preventive measures by the allied governments or for the creation of a state of confusion in order to make it easier for Germany to strike next. I said it seemed to me that there was little ground for Portugal to complain to the United States with regard to these present rumors and that if she considered it necessary to complain at all, the complaint should be addressed to the Axis powers and not to the United States or its associates.

I stated that the position of the United States had been clearly and frankly and in the most friendly way set forth by the President in his letter to the Prime Minister of Portugal last summer. I said the President had been greatly gratified by Dr. Salazar's understanding reply to that communication. I said that the position of the United States was essentially that set forth by the President in that communication but that of course the Portuguese Government must realize, and I was sure did realize, that should Germany undertake to attack

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<sup>20a</sup> See vol. vi, section under General entitled, "Third Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the American Republics Held at Rio de Janeiro January 15-28, 1942: Preliminaries."

Portugal or any of its possessions, the United States in such event would take any and all action which it considered necessary and desirable in the interest of its own defense and in the interest of the powers associated with the United States.

I said that I was very happy to receive the assurances given by the Portuguese Government concerning its attitude subsequent to the Timor incident. I said that the United States fully understood and appreciated the very difficult situation in which Portugal found itself.

With regard to the remarks of the Portuguese Government concerning the approaching Consultative Meeting in Rio de Janeiro and the attitude of the United States in connection therewith and concerning the desire of the Portuguese Government that the American Republics remain out of the war, I felt it incumbent upon me to make these statements. The United States had not brought any pressure to bear upon any of the American Republics as to their course nor would it bring any pressure to bear. The American Republics could individually or collectively determine their own course as they saw fit in their own national interest. I had no reason to doubt the close racial and sentimental ties between the people of Portugal and the people of Brazil. I felt quite sure, however, in view of the more than a century old intimate friendship between Brazil and the United States, which had never been shadowed by the slightest cloud, that whatever course the United States pursued, it would not be misunderstood by the people of Brazil nor by their Government, and I was quite unwilling to agree that, should the United States find it necessary to act in self defense, both in its own interest and in the interest of the Western Hemisphere, such course on our part would be questioned or be misunderstood by the Brazilian Government and people.

With regard to the expressed desire of the Portuguese Government that the American Republics remain out of the war, I said I felt that the Portuguese Government had failed to appreciate to its full value the experience of many nations during the past two years which, by trusting to their neutrality and by trusting to the tenets of international law, had one after the other made it possible for Hitler to occupy them, to ravage them and to place their peoples in a state of abject slavery. I said it was my earnest hope that the peoples of the American Republics would not pursue this blind and fantastic course which had in so great a part made it possible for Hitler to achieve the easy conquests which he had thus far secured. I said, however, that I felt the American Republics were all far too well aware of the dangers of the moment and of their need for concerted defense of the New World to fall into any such errors as those which had been committed by such Governments as Holland and Belgium.

I reiterated that this Government desired to maintain its close and traditional relations of friendship with Portugal and that we recog-

nized, as I had said before, very fully the difficulties with which the Portuguese Government was confronted. I desired that nothing which I had said be regarded as having been said in an unfriendly spirit, but I said I felt that the best kind of friendship at this moment was to speak frankly in order that opposition might be clearly realized.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

## RUMANIA

### PERSECUTION OF JEWS IN RUMANIA<sup>1</sup>

871.4016/253 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, January 30, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received January 31—6 a. m.]

89. Please transmit also to the President. Although wholesale sacking and pillaging were, of course, the order of the day, reports are now reaching me of appalling brutality to the Jews of Bucharest during the recent uprising of German and Communist-inspired elements of the Iron Guard. The Turkish Ambassador's<sup>1a</sup> estimate of 284 Jews wantonly killed in the slaughterhouse near the Jewish quarter is the most conservative in numbers. He blamed primarily the savage Macedo Rumanians, otherwise known as Kutzovlachs. But according to a reliable Jewish informant of mine up to yesterday noon 727 burial permits for Jews in the common grave in the Jewish cemetery had been applied for. The slaughterhouse certainly did figure inasmuch as I have it indirectly from an engineer working there that when he reported for work the next day he found 60 Jewish corpses on the hooks used for carcasses and all skinned. The quantity of blood about would seem to indicate that they had been skinned alive.

The above estimate takes no account of the much larger number of those wounded, maimed or beaten beyond recognition by the brutes and footpads of the Iron Guard. Ignorant primitive young savages whose dull vengeful minds responded to the German-controlled and inspired Rumanian press of repetitive slogans and shibboleths of Jewish and Jewish-English alleged inimical evil doings. It makes one sick at heart to be accredited to a country where such things can happen even though the real faults of inspiration and encouragement lie elsewhere.

GUNTHER

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<sup>1</sup> Continued from *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, pp. 764-779.

<sup>1a</sup> Bey Suphi Tanriöer.

871.00/857

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Robert D. Coe of the Division of European Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] February 6, 1941.

Participants: M. Brutus Coste, Rumanian Chargé d'Affaires ad interim,  
Mr. Atherton<sup>2</sup> and Mr. Coe.

The Rumanian Chargé d'Affaires called on Mr. Atherton and referred to the gross exaggerations in the American press of the numbers of victims in the recent disturbances in his country. M. Coste said that Reuters was the chief offender in this regard. He then read some figures giving the actual number of deaths, which he apparently had obtained from his Government. Among other figures were 250 dead in Bucharest, of which 118 were Jews.

Mr. Atherton then told M. Coste that he wished to speak quite frankly with him on this matter. He said that this Government looked with horror on the recent outrages in Rumania and regarded the bestialities and brutalities involved in these murders as evidence of the criminal tendencies unloosed by the forces now at work in Europe. Mr. Atherton said that he, of course, was expressing our displeasure at these irresponsible, loose elements and not at the Rumanian Government. He said that this Government and its Minister in Bucharest have the highest regard for General Antonescu<sup>3</sup> in his efforts to retain as much of the integrity of the Rumanian State as possible. Mr. Atherton said that he did not wish to criticize or condemn General Antonescu because of the recent disorders but he did feel that the civilized world in general was aghast at the murders of the Jews and others in Rumania.

M. Coste likewise deplored the recent events, declaring that he was of the same age group as the Iron Guardists in general and he well realized their irresponsible and loose behavior. He felt that these happenings were a blot on Rumania's reputation.

871.4016/260

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

No. 1744

BUCHAREST, February 10, 1941.

[Received March 11.]

SIR: Referring to my numerous past despatches regarding the situation of the Jews in Rumania, I have the honor to report certain interesting statements on the Jewish problem of this country which

<sup>2</sup> Ray Atherton, Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. Ion Antonescu, Rumanian Acting Chief of State.



Dr. Hermann Neubacher, formerly Mayor of Vienna and now accredited to Bucharest as German Minister Plenipotentiary charged with economic matters in the Balkans, made a few days ago to the Military Attaché, Colonel Ratay.

Speaking first of certain aspects of the recent political rebellion, Dr. Neubacher went on to say that he was not so much concerned with the "political mess", but that he certainly would see that order was established in the economic life of the country without delay. Remarking that everything that had been done in the way of "Rumanization" of business enterprises must be revoked, he went on to say:

"The Jews must go, but they will be liquidated gradually and according to laws and regulations which will be promulgated. These laws will be closely patterned after the laws which I had promulgated for that purpose in Vienna. A plenipotentiary commission will be set up for that purpose, and I shall have an expert come from Vienna who, as 'adviser', will take charge of the work.

"The Jews are a problem which concerns all of Europe, if not the whole world. After the war, a conference of all great powers will have to be called to settle this problem. A space must be found large enough for 15-20 million people where the Jews can be settled. They must be able to take means with them, and they must have help from all countries, to be able to get started. A strong international commission will have to be formed to direct and supervise this work."

Respectfully yours,

FRANKLIN MOTT GUNTHER

871.4016/261

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

No. 1746

BUCHAREST, February 10, 1941.

[Received March 11.]

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith copies of four of a series of five articles<sup>4</sup> written by an American journalist, Mr. Leigh White, regarding the pogrom conducted against the Jews of Rumania in the course of the recent Iron Guard insurrection. Certain of the outrages committed against the Jewish population have been mentioned in my various telegrams (see especially Nos. 89 and 96<sup>5</sup> of January 30, 5 p. m., and January 31, 12 noon), but I feel that Mr. White's articles may be of value to the Department in forming a more complete picture of the full extent and incredible horror of the bloodthirsty vengeance wreaked on the Jews, "the enemies of the country", by lawless and irresponsible elements of the Iron Guard during the uprising.

It must be remarked that, while no authoritatively accurate figures are available, Mr. White's estimates of the numbers of dead and

<sup>4</sup> Not reprinted.

<sup>5</sup> Latter not printed.

wounded are, as my other reports have indicated, substantially higher than my best information would serve to support. Similarly, many passages in his account may be suspected of journalistic coloring or exaggeration, although I have sufficient confirmation of many points—there is no doubt, for example, that hundreds of dead were seen lying naked and, in many instances, mutilated at the morgue and near the Jilava road—that it is impossible to say just where he has over-elaborated and where he has under-stated his story. Generally speaking, it may be taken as a reasonably good account of these appalling events, although he was not informed of some of the massacres, notably that at Baneasa, the wood near Bucharest.

Obviously, the local censorship would not pass such articles out of Rumania. For this reason, Mr. White, a roving representative of the *New York Post* and Columbia Broadcasting Corporation for several countries of Southeastern Europe, carried his stories out of Rumania and despatched them from Sofia. When he returned to Bucharest last week, he was confronted with notification from an irate Under Secretary for National Propaganda that he no longer enjoyed the right of radio, telephone, and telegraph facilities in this country, the Rumanian Legation in Washington having telegraphed the first two of his series back to the Foreign Office. I shall endeavor to exercise my good offices on his behalf.

Respectfully yours,

FRANKLIN MOTT GUNTHER

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371.115/8: Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, April 2, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received April 3—8:35 a. m.]

303. By decree law of March 27—published in the *Monitorul Oficial* of March 28 but only received at the Legation on March 31—the Rumanian Government declared that on that date all urban real property owned by Jews passed into possession of the Rumanian State. All Jewish owners must declare such property within 30 days. Owners will be compensated by 3% bonds which will apparently be negotiable and valuation will be based on the most recent tax on assessment. Certain categories of Jews such as those with military records in the army, those naturalized prior to 1916, those who have been baptized as Christians for various periods, et cetera, are exempt from the application of the decree law.

The definition of a Jew for the purposes of this decree law is taken from decree law No. 3347 of April 4, 1940, as follows: "Jews are defined for the purpose of the present law as those both of whose parents or one parent no matter which is Jewish whether they or their

parents have or have not been baptized in a religion other than Hebrew whether they are or are not Rumanian citizens or whether they reside or not in the country."

A literal interpretation of the decree law of March 27 establishes the confiscation of all urban properties in Rumania held by Jews irrespective of their nationality. However, it remains to be seen whether in practice the Rumanian authorities will interpret this decree law so as to include the properties of American citizens of Jewish race. As an indication of a possible trend I may observe that word has just reached the Legation that the local general manager of REF<sup>6</sup> Oil has requested through the courts the Rumanian representative of the American owner, Ralph Fair, to submit before April 7 proof that the latter is not a Jew (see Legation's telegram No. 778 of December 2, 1940<sup>7</sup>). This may conceivably indicate that confiscatory proceedings against REF Oil are being considered in the event that acceptable proof as to Mr. Fair's Aryan origin is not forthcoming.

I am endeavoring to secure an official interpretation as to the applicability of this decree law whether all Jews or only those of Rumanian nationality are included and if it should appear that the broader interpretation is intended I shall not hesitate to protest officially in the highest quarters pointing out that the American Government cannot permit the Rumanian Government to distinguish between American citizens on the basis of their ethnic origin and calling attention to the reaction that would result in the United States if the provisions of this decree law were made applicable to American citizens of the Jewish race. In the event that I should find it necessary to lodge an official protest I believe that my hands would be greatly strengthened were I able to make it clear that any infringement of American property rights under this decree law would be bound to call for retaliatory action on our part.

I should appreciate an expression of the Department's views in the premises as soon as possible. Further developments will be promptly reported by telegraph.

Please repeat to London portions of this pertaining to British and Belgian interests.

GUNTHER

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871.4016/264 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, July 1, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received July 2—11:30 a. m.]

599. An official announcement published today states that 500 Jews have been put to death in Iasi for having fired from buildings upon

<sup>6</sup> Ralph E. Fair.

<sup>7</sup> Not printed.

the German and Rumanian troops. It is also stated that Jews behind the Rumanian front are collaborating with Russian parachutists and that severe repressive measures are being adopted; also that persons who do not divulge information regarding strangers or other suspects to the authorities will be executed together with their families.

GUNTHER

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871.4016/265 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, July 3, 1941—11 p. m.

[Received July 4—11:35 a. m.]

610. My 599, July 1, 7 p. m. I yesterday asked Secretary General Tzianu <sup>7a</sup> whether he could acquaint me with any extenuating circumstances in connection with the wholesale shooting of Jews by the army at Jassy. He replied somewhat embarrassed that it was a military matter and he had no information other than that Jews had fired from houses upon the German and Rumanian forces. I have since learned that some or all of this firing was done by Communist legionnaires.

I asked him whether all 500 Jews had fired and also whether there had been a trial with an opportunity for the examination of evidence or whether this action was taken merely upon accusations and hearsay evidence. He had nothing to add and I remarked that the incident had attracted my attention especially since the executions were carried out by the armed forces of the Government in contradistinction to the program [*pogrom?*] in Bucharest in January last carried out by the unofficial legionary mobs.

I am reliably informed that over and above those mentioned, 23 Jewish families in or near Jassy were completely wiped out and that 2 days ago 5 or 6 heads of Jewish families in Ploesti were taken out and shot because slight cracks showing light during blackouts had been observed.

GUNTHER

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871.4016/271

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

No. 2015

BUCHAREST, August 19, 1941.

[Received September 23.]

SIR: I have the honor to enclose herewith a Memorandum <sup>a</sup> prepared by Mr. Cloyce K. Huston, Second Secretary of this Legation, setting

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<sup>7a</sup> Alexander Cretzianu, Secretary General of the Rumanian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>a</sup> Not printed.

forth the reports reaching the Legation in regard to the brutal measures taken in this country against the Jews during the six months period prior to the outbreak of war with Russia, as well as subsequently thereto.

The popular Rumanian reaction to the recent excesses committed against the Jews is difficult of assessment. The Rumanians have heretofore insisted upon being known as a tolerant people, and I do not doubt that the majority of them learn of the massacres and other atrocities with, possibly, a slight feeling of satisfaction, mixed with a stronger sense of surprise, shock and misgiving. It is undoubtedly true that the anti-Semitic campaign of the Legionary régime, the continual attacks of the press, the present military collaboration with anti-Semitic Germany, and the attitude of the Government during General Antonescu's absence at the front, during which time Mr. Mihai Antonescu has been Acting Premier, have all had their effect on popular opinion, tending to make it especially anti-Semitic, but I fail to believe that the country as a whole willingly countenances outright slaughter and brutality in the handling of the Jewish problem.

I have already reported by telegram (No. 716 of August 1, 1941, 9 a. m. [*p. m.*]<sup>o</sup>) the suggestion that General Antonescu was "sick at heart" because he had not been able to curb the bloody excesses committed against the Jews. The fact remains, however, that he issued the first order. (See page five of enclosed Memorandum.) You know from previous reports that National Peasant Leader Maniu and his henchmen, certain officials in the Foreign Office, Prince Barbu Stirbey, and many other important personalities, have openly deplored the extreme violence and drastic measures that have been employed against the country's Jewish population. And when I mentioned this subject to the Orthodox Archbishop and Metropolitane of Transylvania\* at Braşov, he professed likewise to be shocked at the carnage and maltreatment of the Jews. Even Mihai Antonescu, the Acting Premier, has set forth to me at length his own personal abhorrence of the acts of cruelty and violence committed against the Jews, claiming to have recommended the creation of a Governmental commission with a view to establishing a juridical basis for the liberation of Jews now in internment or labor camps against whom there are no definitive charges or evidence; and it is he who professes juridical reasons for deferring the application of the law expropriating the urban properties of Jews.

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<sup>o</sup> Not printed.

\*Incidentally both he and Mr. Mihai Popovitch, are strongly in favor of a new and enhanced homeland for the Jews somewhere in Africa, where they could be educated and the second or third generations be prepared to return to Europe. [Footnote in the original.]

Mr. Maniu, in a recent memorandum which he caused to reach me, claims that the Germans are provoking anti-Semitic disorders in order to divert public opinion from their aims of conquest and the subjugation of Rumanian economic life. The massacres of the Jews, he avers, are staged by them, and the responsibility is laid upon the Rumanians. I have often pointed out in conversations with officials and others here that German policy in this respect may quite well be based in part upon far-seeing plans to make room, by freeing business and other positions in Rumania held by the Jews, for German unemployed after the war.

But the fact remains that there has been no popular uprising or movement against all these cruelties. It may well be that the ethical sense of the Rumanian people has been somewhat dulled by recent miseries and disasters—the loss of Bessarabia, then of Transylvania and the Dobrodja, the dethronement of a King, a catastrophic earthquake, a bloody revolution, and, in this part of the world, war in all its most hideous aspects, including the reported butchery of prisoners and even of elements of the local Rumanian population suspected or popularly accused of Communist sympathies—, with the result that they are not fully conscious of the horrors of the Jewish phase. Whatever the cause, 1941 has thus far proved to be a black year for the Jews in Rumania.

My own experience is that the better class of Rumanians thoroughly disapproves of the methods resorted to from time to time against the Jews, the cruelty and the injustice. On general principles, I have lost no opportunity to indicate my own attitude of strong disapproval, apart from the pointed observations which I made to Mr. Alexandre Cretziano, the Secretary General of the Foreign Office, as outlined in my telegram No. 610 of July 3, 2 [11] p. m., and to intimate that the reaction in the Western World will be most unfavorable.

Rumanian officialdom and public opinion are well aware that the traditional American attitude carries an expectancy of humane and civilized treatment for the Jews, as for all other oppressed peoples, and thinking Rumanians are cognizant of the effects which the present rampant anti-Semitism must inevitably have on American sentiment. I have even availed myself of every suitable occasion to intimate to General Antonescu and other Rumanian officials how deeply my Government and the people of the United States deplore and abhor the exercise of wanton license in dealing with human lives, even in the liquidation of what this country may consider an internal problem. There is, I feel sure, no mistaking as to the American view of butchery and the brutal deprivation of human rights. I shall continue to hold this view up to the light, but, in the absence of specific instructions, I shall not seek further to trouble an already uncertain atmosphere by direct or specific representations.

The fact remains, however, that the lower-class Jew who has filtered into Rumania since the War from Galicia, Russia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, or elsewhere, and fastened upon village and small-town life is, by and large, not assimilable. The Rumanian resents his presence, although it is largely due to his own *laissez faire* that this type of Jew is here, and, from time to time when things are not going well, sporadic examples of appalling cruelty occur. The Jew is always the convenient butt. Frank Rumanians will admit that robbery is often the real leitmotif.

I have frequently discussed with Colleagues these recent outrages. They one and all are as appalled by the hideousness of it as I am. The Papal Nuncio, for example, claims to have made some pertinent observations on this subject at the Foreign Office, although he has not divulged to me the exact nature thereof. Others, such as the Brazilian and Portuguese Ministers—who have in their blood the abhorrence of cruelty common to their gentle race—, and also the Swiss, have urged me to recommend to my Government that a joint international protest be made. I am not in a position from this angle to make a recommendation one way or the other. Facts would have to be better documented than is as yet possible. A far-reaching investigation should be made—which would be far from simple—and statements taken under oath—which would be impracticable. One hears locally that the Hungarian newspapers are about to launch a campaign against Rumania on this score. That will serve at least to bring circumstances to the attention of the Western World, there being no American correspondents in Rumania. Stories of the massacres also are filtering through to Ankara, whence, undoubtedly, various and sundry versions thereof will be reported to the American press.

Respectfully yours,

FRANKLIN MOTT GUNTHER

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871.4016/272 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, October 3, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 10:47 p. m.]

866. In connection with the Jewish pogrom at Iasi reported in my 599, July 1, 7 p. m., and 610, July 3, 2 [11] p. m., Rebecca M., wife of Joseph M. [Hirsch?], a naturalized American citizen who resided at 22 Stradamarzesu, has just informed the Legation that her husband died on July 2 last of suffocation in a sealed freight car in which he was being transported with other Jews to a college [*village?*].

Bela Spitzer, wife of Nathan Spitzer, a native American citizen of Iasi, likewise reports the death of her husband under similar circum-

stances; and Jacob Nimovitz, a naturalized American of Iasi, has been reported as missing.

The Foreign Office in a note of October 1 has confirmed the deaths of Joseph M. [Hirsch?] and of Jacob Nimovitz but without mentioning the causes thereof.

Official reports of death will be submitted to the Department and relatives of the deceased in the United States provided the Legation obtains the required documentary evidence.

Inasmuch as the aforementioned citizens were entitled to passports for immediate return to the United States only and could not claim protection during their continued residence in Rumania the Legation will make no official protest unless instructed to do so.

GUNTHER

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871.4016/273 : Telegram

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

[Extract]

BUCHAREST, October 3, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received October 4—6:30 a. m.]

874. My despatch 2015, August 19, and telegram 831, September 15.<sup>10</sup> Last night Mr. Mihai Antonescu, the Acting Prime Minister, spoke to me of his efforts to bring to an end the oppressive and cruel measures employed against the Jews. He complained that the excesses had been instigated by the military authorities and taken advantage of by subordinate and irresponsible people. I pointed out, however, that the sinister ball had been started rolling by the original decree providing for the execution of Jews without benefit of legal processes on mere suspicion of sabotage or sniping. He said that both he and Marshal Antonescu regretted what has been done and were doing their utmost to set matters right.

GUNTHER

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871.4016/273 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, October 23, 1941—11 p. m.

458. Your 866, October 3. Please endeavor to obtain full information and report regarding the causes of deaths of the American citizens named.

<sup>10</sup> Latter not printed.



With reference to your 874, October 3, 9 p. m. and related mail and telegraphic reports, the Department wishes to commend you for the position you have taken in voicing to prominent Rumanian officials the concern and horror felt by persons in this country over the brutal treatment being accorded Jewish minorities in Rumania.

HULL

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871.4016/280 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, November 1, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received November 2—11 : 48 a. m.]

931. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. (Please see my letter of August 5, 1941, to the President, pages 2, 3 and 4, copy of which I sent to Mr. Under Secretary Welles on the same day.<sup>11</sup>) Your No. 458, October 23, 11 a. m. [*p. m.*]. The worst elements of the population emulating the Germans have them biting their teeth on this matter and I doubt if any public or private condemnation or objurgation on our part would do good any more and might make matters worse. However, if the solution suggested in the above letter as a postwar solution only were by any chance so far advanced in wartime that the British Government is in a position to announce, which I doubt, the definite allocation now of a large territory in Africa available immediately as a homeland for the unwanted Jews of Europe such an announcement would go far to deter this Government from the prosecution of the diabolical measure now being applied to Jews in Bucovina and Bessarabia of forced emigration with a totally inadequate minimum of possessions to Transylvania. I realize that even so the solution would present great technical difficulties. I have frequently counseled patience here and averred that a world solution of the Jewish problem would be reached at the time of the peace conference. This, however, is too remote to outweigh present exigencies.

The head of the Jewish community in Bucharest has told a member of my staff that the Jews in Rumania due to their peril would actually welcome segregation in a foreign homeland and that Marshal Antonescu had promised him that no such measures as the above [apparent omission] Transylvania and the Old Kingdom. The Marshal likes to salve his conscience with the claim that the measures taken are merely reprisals for the hostile action of the Jews toward the Rumanian forces when retreating before the Russian occupation in the summer of 1940, the denunciations by the Jews during the Russian occupation and executions allegedly allotted by the Russians exclusively to them and for the sniping and sabotage upon the triumphant return of the

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<sup>11</sup> Not found in Department files.

Rumanian Army. The Marshal's promise moreover like others is subject to pressure and amendment and it is reported that the Germans desire to divert attention from a similar forced exodus into territory formerly Russian of German Jews from southern Germany.

Reports of indescribable horror continue to reach us and will be covered by despatch with reserves as to possible future confirmation.

GUNTHER

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871.4016/287

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

No. 2108

BUCHAREST, November 4, 1941.

[Received December 10.]

SIR: With reference to my telegrams Nos. 931 and 934<sup>12</sup> of November 1, 6 p. m., and November 4, 10 a. m., respectively, indicating that the Jewish question in Rumania is again passing through a critical stage—previous despatches, in particular No. 2015, of August 19, 1941, and telegrams from the Legation have related to the various atrocities visited on the Jewish population of Rumania during recent years, more especially during the violently anti-Semitic Goga régime of early 1938, the Legionary rebellion of last January and the outbreak of hostilities with Soviet Russia this summer—I have the honor to submit certain background information which should facilitate a clear understanding of developments.

During this time of sanguinary conflict, when mounting lists of Rumanian dead, wounded and missing have become a relative commonplace, when accounts of terror and ruthlessness resound throughout Europe, it may be felt that the prosecution of a program of extermination of the Jews, by shootings here and massacres there, not to mention mass deportations and general spoliation, will draw less attention from the public opinion of the world than in normal times. However that may be, it is becoming more and more evident that the Rumanians, obviously with the moral support of the Germans, are utilizing the present period for handling the Jewish problem in their own way. I have it on good authority that Marshal Antonescu has stated to, or within the hearing of the Spanish Minister (who is particularly interested in the problem because of the Spanish Jews in Rumania) that "this is wartime, and a good time to settle the Jewish problem once and for all".

The Department is already aware that the military occupation of Bessarabia and northern Bucovina was followed by the establishment of Jews in ghettos in the larger cities, and that large numbers, particularly from Bessarabia, were gradually evacuated into the territory

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<sup>12</sup> Latter not printed.

lying beyond the Dniester River. These measures were carried out under appalling conditions and accompanied by innumerable kinds of frightfulness, including robbery, starvation, killings and other brutalities. Only a relatively small number of Jews are believed now to be left in Bessarabia—estimates vary from ten to thirty thousand out of a total of just over two hundred thousand residing there prior to the Russian seizure of Bessarabia in June 1940—while in Bucovina there are, according to reliable Jews, some fifteen to twenty thousand Jews now awaiting deportation eastward to Transnistria and other parts of the Ukraine. A great many, undoubtedly tens of thousands, have already been thus evacuated.

During the past three weeks evidence has been accumulating—first in the form of vague rumors and unconfirmed reports, then through increasingly substantial sources of information and finally in an exchange of letters between Marshal Antonescu and the head of the local Jewish Community—that such as remains of the Jewish population in Bucovina and Bessarabia is being evacuated eastward into the war-devastated territory of the Ukraine under conditions so appalling that they would seem to afford a substantial share of the evacuees little chance to survive. Persistent reports have reached me daily regarding these unfortunate people—men, women and children, including the old and ill—who, given only a few hours notice with the right to take with them only a meager ten kilograms of belongings and the equivalent of two dollars in money—the stories almost invariably add that these belongings and the money are taken from them en route—have been herded eastward on foot or in carts or box-cars, to war-swept regions where buildings have been razed and food and other supplies destroyed or removed and where winter weather will soon prevail. This modern Captivity would seem deliberately calculated to serve a program of virtual extermination and, even if the persistent rumors that the evacuees in numberless cases are plundered of their belongings, that dozens and hundreds are shot en route, pushed off bridges or dead of exhaustion, are greatly exaggerated or untrue, it seems certain that many thousands will perish. Of course, as suggested in the last paragraph of my telegram first cited above, many of these reports and rumors are unconfirmed and must be classified as hearsay, or even propaganda by interested persons—for example one individual passed on to me an “authentic” story to the effect that five thousand Jews had been drowned in the Dniester—but I am bound to say that even the minimum of truth that I am sure lies in these stories is sufficient to give grave concern to the civilized world.

Dr. Fildermann, head of the Jewish Communities in Rumania, has addressed several letters to Marshal Antonescu protesting these atrocities against the Jews. Copies of his first three letters, as well as of Marshal Antonescu’s reply thereto and a fourth letter from Dr. Filder-

mann are enclosed herewith.<sup>13</sup> It will be noted that Dr. Fildermann speaks of 1,500 Jews having been sent away from Chisinau "naked", without food, with only the few belongings they could carry in their hands, the majority going on foot for a journey of at least eight days in the cold, rain and snow, to unknown destinations of desolation, and, in another instance, of the road between Orhai and Rezina having been strewn with the bodies of those who have fallen by the way. In his reply, which was published in all newspapers, Marshal Antonescu charges Dr. Fildermann with endeavoring to transform the accused into accusers, pointing out that the Jews of Bucovina and Bessarabia merit their fate for having turned upon and attacked the Rumanian Army both at the time of the Russian occupation and when the Rumanians launched their attack on Russia. "Even before the appearance of the Soviet troops", writes General Antonescu, "the Jews of Bessarabia and Bucovina, whom you are defending, spat upon our officers, tore off their epaulets and, when they could, killed our soldiers and beat them".

Dr. Fildermann, in a conversation with a Secretary of the Legation, referred to the fifteen or twenty thousand Jews now awaiting deportation, and stated that there was no doubt whatever that all of these people were faced with death in case they were sent to Transnistria. He said he had received assurances from Marshal Antonescu that the Jews in Transylvania and the Old Kingdom would not be deported, although he expressed his personal fears that the Marshal's hand might be forced in this connection and that, as many Jews now fear, similar evacuation measures will be taken against all of the Jews of the country. (Incidentally, Dr. Fildermann estimates the number of Jews in Transylvania at present at thirty thousand and those in the Old Kingdom at two hundred forty thousand). Dr. Fildermann also mentioned that he had received full information from Rumanian friends regarding a decree which is being prepared requiring all Jews to submit an inventory of their valuable movable property, including jewels, pictures, furs and objects of art, as a basis for later confiscation. He also mentioned another point of interest, which I have heard vaguely from other sources, namely, that the northern Bucovina is being cleared of Jews in preparation for the settling of German colonists in that region, and that the settlers are actually beginning to arrive. The general subject of Zionism was also touched upon, Dr. Fildermann expressing the opinion that the only possible way of saving the lives of the thousands of people who are now immediately threatened in Bucovina was to find some shelter or home to which they might go. While scarcely so optimistic as to betray a hope that by some magic a territory could suddenly be opened up to provide a

<sup>13</sup> None printed.

refuge for the Jews immediately threatened in Rumania, he indicated that nothing less could save the lives of thousands of his fellow religionists in Rumania today.

On October 20 last, a decree law was published in the Rumanian newspapers calling upon all Jews under penalty of heavy fines and imprisonment to "contribute" to the Rumanian authorities within thirty days, for distribution to the needy, exorbitant quantities of clothing and other articles in proportion to their incomes. Thus, a Jew with an effective income of approximately twenty dollars monthly is required to provide twelve each of shirts, undershirts, drawers, handkerchiefs, towels and pairs of socks, and four each of suits, overcoats, hats, pairs of shoes, woolen blankets, pillow-cases, pillow-case covers and bed sheets, and one mattress cover. Naturally, these unconscionable demands have panicked anew the Jewish population, shocked all sober observers, and even drawn the sharp and ashamed criticism of thinking and intelligent Rumanians. A translation of this decree law forms an enclosure to this despatch.<sup>14</sup>

As you know, I have constantly and persistently held before the attention of the highest Rumanian officials the inevitable reaction of my Government and the American people to such inhumane treatment, and even outright slaughter, of innocent and defenceless people, citing at length the atrocities committed against the Jews of Rumania. My observations have elicited from Marshal Antonescu, and from Acting Premier Mihai Antonescu, voluble protestations of regrets for past excesses committed "through error" or by "irresponsible elements", and of moderation in the future (please see my telegram No. 874, of October 3, 9 p. m.). The program of systematic extermination is continuing none the less, and I see little hope for the Rumanian Jews as long as the present German controlled régime continues in power. Its policy is admittedly to drive from the reconquered provinces of northern Bucovina and Bessarabia, and perhaps also from Transylvania and the Old Kingdom as well, every Jew, excepting, of course, those that are or may be useful to it, after taking from them practically all their worldly possessions; and this policy will undoubtedly be implemented provided the requisite time is not lacking, unless, as seems highly unlikely—please see my telegram No. 931, of November 1, 6 p. m.—a refuge somewhere abroad is found to which these unfortunate people would be able to emigrate, probably with no worldly possessions whatever.

Respectfully yours,

FRANKLIN MOTT GUNTHER

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<sup>14</sup> Not printed.

871.4016/2811

*Memorandum by Mr. Cavendish W. Cannon of the Division of  
European Affairs* <sup>14a</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] November 12, 1941.

The Minister at Bucharest reports that the Turkish Minister there has now suggested that his Government discuss with the British and French Embassies at Ankara a plan for transporting some 300,000 Rumanian Jews across Turkey to Syria or Palestine for temporary cantonment, pending a radical solution of the Jewish problem. The Turkish Minister requested American support of this plan, and Mr. Gunther has forwarded to MacMurray <sup>15</sup> some background material, and has suggested that the Department cable instructions to him.

This project suggests the following considerations:

1. Assuming that Jews or others elsewhere in the world would be willing to provide clothing, housing, medical attention, and food for these 300,000 refugees, there would still remain the problem of shipping to supply this colony. I doubt if ships are available for such service;

2. The project would at once reopen the Arab question, notwithstanding the announcement that the sojourn of the colony is "temporary";

3. The argument regarding the temporary nature of the project loses force in view of the lack of progress in plans for a permanent settlement (the allocation of territory in Africa or in Russia has been hardly more than a suggestion put forward in the press);

4. Endorsement of such a plan is likely to bring about new pressure for an asylum in the western hemisphere;

5. By removing from Rumania the remaining Jews the plan would relieve the Rumanian Government of all responsibility for participation in a general settlement of the question, and in a backhand fashion would demonstrate that the brutal policy of the Rumanian authorities had been effective and realistic;

6. An almost identical situation prevails in Hungary, though there has been less publicity of the atrocities. A migration of the Rumanian Jews would therefore open the question of similar treatment for Jews in Hungary and, by extension, all countries where there has been intense persecution.

I suppose that these factors and probably others will occur to the Turkish Government, and I wonder whether it will accept with any enthusiasm the plan worked up by its Minister in Bucharest. I think, however, that the Department should be prepared for the representations on the part of American Jewish leaders, which I have been expecting since the alarming reports from Rumania and Hungary have become current. I have therefore drafted two telegrams (to Bucha-

<sup>14a</sup> Addressed to the Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Atherton) and the Adviser on Political Relations (Dunn).

<sup>15</sup> John Van A. MacMurray, American Minister in Turkey.

rest and to Ankara) which are attached.<sup>16</sup> We have already informed Mr. Gunther of the Department's approval of his personal conversations, and it may now be in order to give an official endorsement of his representations and an indication that he might say that his remarks are made by instruction of his Government.

The question now arises whether, in order to indicate a positive position on our part, we should communicate with the British on the matter. At the present stage a formal note would not contribute very much to the general problem, and would more or less leave the initiative to us for the next step. So far as I know we are not ready to tackle the whole Jewish problem. I have therefore prepared a memorandum for our use, with the idea that a copy of it might be handed to someone in the British Embassy for their information.

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871.4016/284 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, November 14, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received November 15—2:48 a. m.]

956. With reference to my 866, October 3, 10 a. m.; and to the Department's 458, October 23, 11 p. m., regarding the deaths of Joseph Hirsch, Jacob Nimovitz and Nathan Spitzer, I have received a note dated November 12 from the Foreign Office requesting the Legation to give the necessary assurances before further investigations are continued that the aforementioned persons "actually had at the time of their deaths the right to American citizenship since naturalized American citizens who have returned to their native country lose this status after a certain time".

Inasmuch as the Foreign Office will undoubtedly discontinue its investigations if, in reply to the note in question the answer called for by the citizenship regulations is given; namely, that these individuals were citizens but not entitled to protection or passports for residence in Rumania, I shall withhold my answer pending instructions from the Department.

In this connection I also refer to my 938, November 5, 5 p. m.,<sup>17</sup> concerning the deportation of certain American citizens to Mhilev in the Ukraine the release and safety of whom has not been confirmed by the Foreign Office in spite of reported representations, the mass deportations of Rumanian and *heimatlose* Jews to the Ukraine principally from the reconquered provinces where, according to reports, they are living under the most primitive conditions without sufficient food and shelter is continuing. If naturalized citizens against whom

<sup>16</sup> Not printed. The telegrams were not sent.

<sup>17</sup> Not printed.

the presumption of having ceased to be American citizens has arisen and native Americans for whom passports have been approved for immediate return only are unable to identify themselves with American passports as required by Rumanian regulations there are no means of preventing their deportation to the Ukraine where their continued existence is uncertain to say the least.

I should therefore appreciate an early expression of the Department's views as to whether, in view of the exceptional circumstances outlined above and the recent decision of Congress to grant naturalized citizens residing abroad until October 14, 1942 (Department's circular telegraphic instruction October 14 to Bern<sup>18</sup>) to complete arrangements for their repatriation, the Legation should continue to deny passports and protection to citizens in the two categories mentioned in the last paragraph who number approximately 100.

GUNTHER

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871.4016/283 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, November 15, 1941—9 a. m.

[Received November 16—12:02 a. m.]

960. In the course of a recent conversation with Maniu, the National peasant leader, Benton<sup>19</sup> requested an expression of his views in connection with the atrocities being committed against the Jews in Rumania. Maniu replied that he had on three separate occasions, twice through one of his principal lieutenants, Lupu, and once through George Bratianu, leader of the dissident Liberal Party, lodged protests with Marshal Antonescu concerning the treatment being meted out to the Jews, expressing his own and his party's horror and revulsion at the Government's attitude towards these unfortunate people.

Maniu repeatedly expressed his disgust at the excesses committed against the Jews, remarking that the Marshal was really no longer "in his right mind" and entirely incapable of putting an end to these atrocities. He mentioned that the Marshal had through Lupu promised to draft a Jewish statute for Transylvania and the Old Kingdom but indicated that the Marshal was not in a position to carry out his promise; and in this connection referred to the continued promulgation of new decrees such as the one recently announced making it a crime for a Jew to purchase food in a public market place before 11 a. m. The truth, he concluded, was that the Germans, particularly the German Army, were responsible for the present anti-Jewish measures;

<sup>18</sup> Not printed.

<sup>19</sup> James Webb Benton, First Secretary of Legation in Rumania.



of this he asserted he had abundant and convincing proof. This latter assertion, which is in close agreement with what Marshal Antonescu told a friend (please see paragraph 3 of my 959, November 15, 8 a. m.<sup>20</sup>) supports the opinion I have held for some time that the measures taken in the formerly Russian occupied provinces though participated in with fiendish glee by the worst elements of the population were insisted upon by the German military authorities while themselves setting the pace. In all justice to decent Rumanians, however, I must emphasize that although they are subject to many annoyances—usually for the purpose of extortion—and various measures of confiscation, deprivation of rights and confinement to forced labor, the Jews of Bucharest or Moldavia and Transylvania have not generally been made the object of persecution of a violent character. In Bucharest at least many Jews such as dentists and oculists are still exercising their profession.

GUNTHER

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871.4016/284 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, December 1, 1941—9 p. m.

502. Your 956, November 14, 4 p. m. You may advise Foreign Office there is no statutory provision under which citizenship is lost merely by reason of protracted foreign residence although naturalization treaties between United States and foreign states usually provide that naturalization shall be held to have been renounced if residence in former state of allegiance is renewed without the intent to return to United States. There is no such treaty between United States and Rumania. Under opinions of Attorneys General of the United States and preponderance of decisions of Federal Courts citizenship was not lost under second paragraph of Section 2 of Act of March 2, 1907.<sup>21</sup> In consequence Joseph Hirsch, Jacob Nimovitz and Nathan Spitzer must be deemed upon basis of all records known to the Department to have had status of citizens of the United States at death. Documentation as citizens of Jacob Nimovitz and Nathan Spitzer could properly have been authorized by Department. Joseph Hirsch had technical status of citizen. Department considers it unnecessary to discuss whether decedents were entitled to protection.

Department considers that when naturalized American citizen resting under un rebutted presumption arising under Act of March 2, 1907, is molested because of his race or religion, you should exercise your discretion in the matter of extending unofficial good offices to him with

<sup>20</sup> Not printed.

<sup>21</sup> An Act in Reference to the Expatriation of Citizens and Their Protection Abroad; 34 Stat. 1228.

a view to discontinuance of such molestation. Exigencies of present situation would seem to dictate your exercise of such discretion to fullest extent. Person whose status as native-born American citizen has been established should in present situation be given protection and if necessary issued passports limited to short periods. Necessity for deviation from policy followed in normal times required out of humanitarian considerations. In order that it may not be considered as having been overlooked, Department points out that Section 404 of Nationality Act<sup>22</sup> will not become effective until October 14, 1942.

HULL

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<sup>22</sup> 54 Stat. 1137.

## SPAIN

### CONCERN OF THE UNITED STATES OVER THE MAINTENANCE OF NEUTRALITY BY SPAIN<sup>1</sup>

852.48/901 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, January 29, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received January 31—7:20 a. m.]

76. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My number 239, June 24, noon, 1940.<sup>2</sup>

[Here follows an analysis of existing conditions in Spain.]

Conclusions: In a final analysis of the situation confronting our country in our relation to Spain in relation to our common humanity as well as to the general cause of British victory to which we are committed there should be kept in mind:

(1) That under existing circumstances Spain is not a free agent but is striving to preserve as much independence of action as is possible.

(2) That the food situation is serious and is becoming worse.

(3) That this hunger may sooner or later provoke an upheaval.

(4) That the result of this will be still further human suffering.

(5) That Spain might under the stress of hunger engage in a mad African adventure hoping at one and the same time to secure food from French Morocco and also to gratify a territorial ambition.

(6) That while the threat of German occupation will continue so long as large bodies of troops are held at the northern border Germany would be more greatly benefited by Spain's voluntary adhesion to the Axis—hence German pressure is increasing. The insufficiency of aid from Britain to meet foodstuff needs and lack of aid from the United States bureaus enables the Germans to recall that their early predictions that only promises could be expected from the Federal Reserve Board are being borne out.

(7) That precious time in which to attempt to secure foodstuffs has been lost.

(8) That it flows from this that it is too late (even if these leaders did not still manifest a measure of indifference to dealing with us) to undertake ordinary negotiations since if these discussions were suc-

<sup>1</sup> Continued from *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, pp. 794-802.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

cessfully concluded it would be months before the relief might well be effective.

(9) That our policy at this time—a new policy it would be—should be a careful weighing of what Spanish neutrality is worth to us and to the common cause and that we should make a flat offer of foodstuffs with the sole condition and understanding that the spaced deliveries would cease the moment Spain entered the war or Germany occupied the peninsula.

(10) That reward for this help would be not alone that which flows from benevolence but practically of keeping the country a nonbelligerent with many if imponderable values given to the general cause. The Department may be assured that there is not the remotest possibility that such action would permit an accumulation of food stocks sufficient to be of advantage to an invading force.

(11) That we should clearly realize that the foregoing would not be appeasement but a calculated policy of supporting the Spanish Government to resist German pressure in its efforts to continue as a nonbelligerent and to create a popular attitude likely to provoke at least passive resistance should the Germans invade, equally realizing that the value of say half a million tons of wheat—the minimum need of this country until the next harvest—would be less than a fourth of the cost of a battleship (in this general connection an alternative offer might be a quantity of wheat equal in value to the amounts Spain has thus far paid to us under the cotton credits amounting to 4 million dollars).

(12) That while appreciated the maximum quantity of foodstuffs which could be supplied under the auspices of the Red Cross cannot be sufficient to relieve existing distress.

WEDDELL

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740.00118 European War 1939/142 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, March 1, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received March 3—2 a. m.]

162. I yesterday accompanied Colonel Donovan<sup>3</sup> to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs where we spent more than 2 hours with the Foreign Minister.<sup>4</sup> At my request an interpreter was present and a double check was thus had on what was said.

Presenting Colonel Donovan I said that as the Minister was doubtless aware he had recently visited a number of Mediterranean and contiguous countries where he had talked to heads of governments,

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<sup>3</sup> William J. Donovan, personal representative of the Secretary of the Navy on special mission in Europe.

<sup>4</sup> Ramón Serrano Suñer.

Foreign Ministers, and other authorized spokesmen; that he was now nearing the conclusion of his European visit and was desirous of discussing matters with the Minister with a view to making an appropriate report on his return to the United States. I added that this distinguished visitor was familiar in general also with our relations with Spain and the desire of our country to learn more fully what its situation and needs were.

Prior to responding to specific questions from Colonel Donovan, the Minister gave a background of the recent civil war, emphasizing the point that in this conflict the democracies of the world had been in opposition to Spain, and that his country had been delivered from a period of disorder and violence (under which democratic principles were nullified), by so-called totalitarian countries and that naturally and as a result the gratitude of Spain flowed toward those countries. The arch enemies of Spain in this conflict, he continued, had been France and England whose Governments had entirely failed to recognize the basic principles involved and had encouraged in every way in their power the so-called Republican Government. The Minister then recalled with indignation and bitterness the failure of Ambassadors and other Chiefs of Mission during the civil war to mitigate by their physical presence and effort the reign of blood and terror which had existed in the capital and elsewhere, recalling cases where asylum had been refused to people who shortly thereafter were assassinated.

Colonel Donovan in pointing out that he had visited the Franco <sup>4a</sup> troops at the front, and was himself a Catholic, emphasized that there were 20 million and more of the same creed in the United States, equally made clear that the Franco leaders had entirely ignored the rise of propaganda as a result of which that public opinion in the United States which would have been favorable to the cause was left bewildered through lack of information—all this in sharp contrast to the activities of Republican representatives.

The most significant statement made by the Minister was a textual declaration that "we hope for and believe in the victory of Germany in the present conflict". He added this was the opinion of his Government as well as of the youth of Spain, the latter feeling convinced that a German victory would be to the best interests of the country. (The Minister under cross-examination here said that by the word "youth" he meant those who were young in their attitude toward the object of the present situation!)

The Minister was then asked why he desired a German victory. He replied that first of all it was because of gratitude arising from its contribution to Spain's present independence referred to above and equally in resentment of England's and France's attitude in the Spanish Civil War and further that he felt that Spain's legitimate

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<sup>4a</sup> Gen. Francisco Franco, Spanish Chief of State.

aspirations based on her "natural rights" would be safeguarded if the hoped for event became a fact.

Colonel Donovan inquired what would become of the other countries of Europe under a dominate [*sic*] Germany. The Minister replied that France and Belgium would receive special consideration and that there would be a general control of other countries in accordance with German ideas. He could not see any danger to the United States or to other American countries arising out of this situation. It was British propaganda that provoked uneasiness. He also remarked here that a nation of 80 million Germans was sufficiently large to impose its will on all Europe as well as to protect greater component states from the horrors of communism coming from the East. Being further queried along this same line as to what Spain would gain, he said it would surely receive Gibraltar together with a further recognition of Spain's "natural rights" in Africa.

Colonel Donovan then asked what he thought would happen in the event of a British victory. The Minister answered that in such a contingency it was out of the question to expect a country of the limited population of the British Isles to "impose a bourgeois government" on the rest of Europe. Furthermore in such a case Europe would be an impoverished congeries of peoples too weak to resist the Red attack referred to.

Pressing the matter further Colonel Donovan inquired how Britain's defeat was to be brought about. The Minister declared that the issue would be settled in British waters and within the British Isles. Admitting the apparent success in Great Britain and Greece, in Albania and in Africa he said that only "prestige" was affected thereby; that were conditions reversed the final result would not be altered. While admitting the wonderful spirit shown by the British people, the Minister added there was a limit to this form of human endurance and that hunger plus incessant bombing would effectively end all resistance. (The Minister seemed to leave Japan entirely out of the picture as he did equally the United States!)

Pursuing his examination Colonel Donovan asked the flat question whether Spain intended to remain out of the conflict. The reply to this was that it would remain aloof until Spain's "honor or interests or dignity" were in question.

Asked concerning activities of foreign governments in Spain, the Minister declared that England and France had always intervened in the affairs of the country and that England is intervening today. He followed this with the astonishing declaration that stories of German infiltration and intervention in Spain were part of British propaganda; that there was nothing of the kind nor was any diplomatic pressure being applied against Spain by the German Government. Colonel Donovan countered this vigorously, declaring that while he

did not pretend to speak of Spain he was thoroughly informed regarding German propaganda and pressure of various kinds in the United States and in every country he had visited, and that it was only reasonable to suppose that something of the same kind went on here. This, together with other information which he had acquired confirmed his belief, Colonel Donovan said, that the instinct of the American people had led them aright in causing them to envisage a German victory not alone as a menace to them but to their liberties. Colonel Donovan continued by remarking that undoubtedly the Minister had read the speeches of President Roosevelt, and emphasized that these speeches not alone represented the views of the President and the Administration but were also the expression of the conviction of the great majority of the American people.

Colonel Donovan then spoke at some length of the gigantic material program now going on in the United States which would soon be well into its stride, of the huge army thoroughly armed and equipped now being molded, with other significant points emphasizing what this meant in the scales of victory for Britain.

Colonel Donovan also told the Minister that he had learned from his own observation and otherwise of the general economic needs of Spain; that he was aware that I had made these generally known to our Government; that he was desirous of contributing in any way he could to a sympathetic consideration of these necessities; that he proposed discussing this subject with the British Ambassador here and perhaps with the British Government in London; and that on his return to the United States, now fixed for an early date, he would equally make these needs known. This gave the Minister the opportunity to speak of the terrific destruction in field and forest and factory, in transportation, et cetera, in Spain pointing out that other countries which had engaged only in wars beyond their boundaries had secured loans for their rehabilitation while Spain of today was not alone suffering from the destruction of the past but on every frontier was feeling the repercussion of the present conflict.

In conclusion Colonel Donovan told the Minister of his satisfaction in having been able to see him and to have this frank discussion, having delayed his visit to Portugal to confer with a high personality there in order to do so. The Minister interrupted him here to express his pleasure in the visit. Continuing, the Colonel said that he was disappointed, however, that despite my efforts it has not been found possible to secure an interview with the Caudillo<sup>5</sup> whom he desired to see, having in mind the interest of Spain and nothing involving him personally. The Minister mumbled something intended to be consolatory but which was entirely indefinite.

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<sup>5</sup> Gen. Francisco Franco.

As a postscript to the foregoing it should be stated that I telephoned to the Minister about 8 o'clock in the evening, recalled my two notes and our conversation relative to the desire of Colonel Donovan to be received by the Caudillo, and inquired if this could be arranged: The Minister replied that he feared this would be impossible since the Caudillo was "very busy".

While nothing that is reported above is startlingly new, and certainly it is not at variance with reports submitted by this Mission in recent months, perhaps at no time have the views of the Spanish Government in the matter of the present conflict, expressed through its official spokesman been stated with such clarity and directness. However, it does not alter the opinions which I expressed in my telegram No. 76, January 29, 5 p. m. (more especially the recommendations in the four last paragraphs), and I would reiterate that our policy in dealing with this Government should be one of bald realism dictated by a careful determination of what Spanish neutrality is worth to the general cause and how it should be secured.

WEDDELL

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811.20 (D) Regulations/1344: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, March 3, 1941—2 p. m.

103. Your despatch no. 776, February 3, and your telegram no. 142, February 25, 5 p. m.<sup>6</sup> The policy of this Government in respect to the control of exports is based primarily upon the needs of our own industry in carrying out our own defense program. There is a deficiency or a threatened deficiency of the great majority of the articles and materials subject to export control. When an exportable surplus is available, preference is given to the needs of Great Britain, of other countries engaged in resisting aggression, and of the American Republics. Exports to other countries, including Spain, are permitted with as great liberality as the situation warrants after the needs of the foregoing have been met.

In respect to machine tools, it should be noted that the most stringent restrictions are required in order that American industry may proceed with our defense program. There is a slight exportable surplus of sulphate of ammonia but this surplus is not nearly sufficient to meet in full the needs of the several countries which are endeavoring to purchase it here. We have, however, endeavored to allocate the surplus as fairly as possible and have licensed for export to Spain 4,200 long tons within the last 3 months. The Spanish Ambassador here<sup>6a</sup> has

<sup>6</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>6a</sup> Juan Francisco de Cárdenas.



been informed that we hope to be able to issue licenses for additional quantities in the near future.

HULL

852.51/546

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] March 20, 1941.

The British Ambassador<sup>7</sup> called to see me this afternoon.

The Ambassador gave me a message from the British Government on the question of the policy which might be pursued by the British and the American Governments regarding economic assistance to Spain which reads as follows:

"His Majesty's Government are anxious to put forward more strongly than hitherto the case for joint Anglo-American (and perhaps Portuguese) help for Spain. They feel that in present state of Spanish affairs it is essential to strengthen their friends and isolate Minister for Foreign Affairs in every possible way and as soon as possible and they feel that everything practicable should be done to create an economic bloc in the Western Mediterranean independent of the German continental system.

His Majesty's Government are about to conclude agreement to provide Spain with credit of £2½ million and this agreement will also make some £2¼ million available to Spain from Anglo-Spanish clearing. Taken together these two sums should enable Spain to buy all the requirements she needs from sterling area or can buy with sterling in other countries during the next three months. But to cover her urgent requirements of raw materials Spain will need at least £3½ million (plus £1¼ million for oil) to spend in the United States.

His Majesty's Government feel that the most useful help the United States could give would be to facilitate the supply of raw materials such as cotton, to send out a number of American experts and businessmen to counteract German influence and hold out hopes of future economic cooperation, and to grant Spain a credit. His Majesty's Government make the following suggestions as to the practical methods whereby the United States Government might implement such a policy:—

(a) Make a public declaration that the United States Government are ready to join His Majesty's Government in making food and raw materials available for Spain (it is hoped that Portugal would also make a similar declaration).

(b) A credit to be offered confidentially to Minister of Industry and Commerce<sup>8</sup> (not to Minister of Foreign Affairs) to finance purchases in United States.

(c) 100,000 tons of wheat to be made available at once in United States ports.

<sup>7</sup> Viscount Halifax.

<sup>8</sup> Demetrio Carceller Segura.

(d) Up to 200,000 tons of sulphate of ammonia to be made available for Spain.

(e) United States experts and purchasers to visit Spain.

His Majesty's Government have also various other suggestions to make, such as that Spain should be encouraged to trade with French North Africa (if a rationing agreement is made with that area) and everything is of course conditional on guarantee that Spain is not to re-export these supplies."

I told the Ambassador that I would be glad to give consideration to this message which was along the lines of conversations which Ambassador Weddell had had with Sir Samuel Hoare<sup>9</sup> in Madrid, and that I would be glad to let him know as soon as the Department of State had crystallized its opinion on this subject.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.0011 European War 1939/9877a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)* <sup>10</sup>

WASHINGTON, April 10, 1941—6 p. m

184. At this crucial period in the struggle against totalitarian world aggression, I wish to emphasize the obligation resting upon every representative of this Government abroad to contribute in every way within his power to the success of that struggle. The Government and people of the United States have made it abundantly clear that we do not intend to stand on the sidelines, but that on the contrary we do intend to play our part in resisting the forces of aggression. It is therefore incumbent upon every representative of this Government, and in fact upon every American citizen abroad, to reflect in his own bearing and in his conversation with whomever he may come in contact the absolute determination of his Government and country to see this thing through to a successful conclusion.

The President relies upon you to make clear the scope of our national effort and determination to resist aggression to the civil and military leaders of the Government and of public opinion in Spain. I am confident that you will lose no opportunity in conversation with these leaders, and by every other means within your power, repeatedly to bring home the significance of our position and to stress our absolute

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<sup>9</sup> British Ambassador in Spain.

<sup>10</sup> Similar telegrams were sent to heads of diplomatic missions in Italy (No. 317, April 29), Finland (No. 64, April 25), Sweden (No. 147, April 25), Rumania (No. 235, May 6), and Portugal (No. 197, April 10). The telegram to the Minister in Portugal (No. 197, April 10) is identical except for the last paragraph which reads: "I desire to emphasize the particular importance of developing as close and friendly personal relations with Dr. Salazar as possible. It is our understanding that Dr. Salazar would welcome frequent contacts with you." (740.0011 European War 1939/9955b)

conviction that the forces of aggression will be checked and defeated. You need have no hesitancy in expressing our determination and our convictions in the strongest terms.

I desire you to bring these considerations immediately to the attention of the members of your staff and of all our consular officers under your jurisdiction. At the same time every effort should be made to see that authoritative statements of our position, such as the declarations of the President in his speech of March 15 and my statement of April 24,<sup>11</sup> are given the widest possible circulation. We are convinced that a continuous, forceful presentation of our position and of the scope of our national effort to resist aggression at this time will have a salutary effect upon official and public opinion in countries such as Spain which have not yet been drawn directly into the conflict, and will help greatly to counteract the cumulative effect of totalitarian propaganda.

I shall appreciate continuing suggestions from you looking toward the most effective presentation and dissemination of our position in Spain.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/10142 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, April 19, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received April 20—3:20 p. m.]

337. Department's 184, April 10, 6 p. m.; my telegram No. 162, March 1, 1 p. m. I today called on the Foreign Minister by appointment. He had just returned from a conference with Franco and seemed depressed and irritable. I first remarked smilingly that it was inconceivable to me that Spain had renounced its sovereignty as would seem to be indicated by two air mail envelopes addressed to Americans which I handed him, each bearing a German censor's stamp. While showing no surprise he said that he knew nothing of the matter and asked for one of the envelopes, promising to have an investigation made.

I then said that the real object of my visit, which was by order of my Government, was to make clear to him the general attitude of the American Government and people in the present struggle against the forces of aggression. I here repeated to him the essential portions of the Department's telegram under acknowledgment. I added that we thought general attitude was more extensively set forth in the President's speech of March 15, a copy of which I handed him. He received this as well as my remarks in silence.

<sup>11</sup> For texts of speech of President Roosevelt on March 15 and speech of Secretary Hull on April 24, 1941, see Department of State *Bulletin*, March 15, 1941, p. 277, and *ibid.*, April 26, 1941, p. 491, respectively.

I then told the Minister that the increasingly violent editorial and news tone of the local press in the past few days could hardly have escaped his notice; that their attacks were against both my own country and Great Britain. He interrupted me to say that with regard to this latter, that if this were so it was doubtless provoked by matter coming out by radio by London which was offensive to Spain and in which the British seemed inclined to treat Spain "like a colony".

When the Minister ended, I said that my 2 years' residence in Spain had rather accustomed and hardened me to the appearance in the Spanish press of disagreeable matter concerning my country, although I had learned with regret from his recent speech at the German press exposition here that he accepted full responsibility for this press over several years. I added that, however, I had drawn a measure of comfort in the past from the remark of a former member of the Spanish Cabinet that the Spanish press represented neither the opinion of the Government nor public opinion. He bridled at this and inquired the name of this ex-Minister. "Your predecessor"<sup>12</sup> I answered, a reply which was followed by a glacial silence. I said further that a careful reading of these recent editorials and news stories rather gave me the feeling that they had been originally drafted in some foreign language, perhaps German. He seemed to wince at this and said that Spain contained many persons capable of writing editorials and that my suggestion was a disagreeable one. I replied that this inference must have sprung from my limited knowledge of Spanish; and that after all it was merely an impression. I said, however, that he was doubtless familiar with the activities of Lazar and Company (by this I meant the German Embassy Press Bureau here and its chief) and that a Spanish friend had sent me from time to time the text of numerous articles attacking the United States which he informed me had been sent to newspapers here by the bureau named. In one case the transmitting letter was a command to publish from Lazar; I continued remarking that I had no proof of the authenticity of these articles but that the matter [would?] without doubt be of interest to him. It appeared not to be!

Returning to the charge I remarked that the tone of recent editorial and news pages of Spanish papers seemed to point to a preparing of public opinion for something and that wild rumors were going around of important impending changes in his Government's policy. He asked what these were. I said that they were to the effect that Spain would shortly sign the Tripartite Pact<sup>13</sup> and that he himself was soon to leave for the frontier to meet the German Foreign Minister.<sup>13a</sup> The Minister replied that he too had heard these stories, that he was unable

<sup>12</sup> Juan Beigbeder.

<sup>13</sup> German-Italian-Japanese Pact signed September 27, 1940; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cciv, p. 386.

<sup>13a</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop.

to gauge the motive inspiring them but that the present situation with regard to Spain was exactly as it was at the time of my interview when I accompanied Colonel Donovan reported in my telegram under reference.

I then told him that my pointed inquiries were due to American Government's interests in Spain and in the general situation, and that I would, of course, be glad to transmit any comments he might make. He again replied "the situation is unchanged."

Following this I referred to the fact that some day peace would come to the world and that it would be interesting to see in what direction countries represented at the peace table or interested in its results would turn to secure the necessary help for their general rehabilitation. This seemed to fall on deaf ears and elicited no comment.

During the interview, a telegram was brought to the Minister which he said reported the surrender of the Greek Army. I said that if it were from the S. E. T., I would wish to have it verified. He answered that it was from his Minister in Athens. This I countered by observing that as he had remarked to Colonel Donovan and to me at the time of our interview, such apparent successes only affected prestige and that were conditions reversed the final result would not be altered. To this he offered no comment.

WEDDELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/10133 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, April 20, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received April 21—6:10 a. m.]

340. Department's 184, April 10, 6 p. m., my 337, April 19, 6 p. m. Further careful weighing of the instruction under reference together with the attitude of the Foreign Minister at yesterday's conference made me feel that our Government's attitude should be stressed by me personally to the Chief of State since I am uneasy lest if communicated to him at all, which I incline to doubt, it may be in a diluted or garbled form. Please instruct.

WEDDELL

740.0011 European War 1939/10175 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, April 21, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received April 22—1 a. m.]

341. My 340, April 20, 2 p. m. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My opinion of the gravity of the situation here, allied to the information transmitted in my several recent telegrams, inclines me to think that the visit suggested in my telegram under reference could only have practical results if in addition to the authorized declaration of our policy I were also authorized to inform the Caudillo:

(1) That save in the event of the adoption of an unfriendly attitude by Spain to the British and Allied cause, the United States Government is prepared to give sympathetic consideration to Spain's import needs for materials now subject to American embargo such as for scrap iron, et cetera; (2) and that we are also prepared to collaborate with the appropriate Spanish authorities in drawing up a program for the supply of goods for which Spain may have adequate exchange and which are now subject to licenses or other delaying controls, so as to accelerate the handling of applications covering Spain's most urgent requirements. In this connection I refer to my 142, February 25, 5 p. m.<sup>14</sup>

WEDDELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/10138 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, April 22, 1941—7 p. m.

200. Your 340, April 20, 2 p. m. We feel that it would be most desirable that you should find an early opportunity to stress our position personally to the Chief of State. At the same time we wish again to emphasize the basic purpose of the instructions in our No. 184,<sup>15</sup> which is that every officer of this Government should take every occasion to bring home repeatedly, in his conversations and by all other available means, the significance of our position, stressing our national determination to resist the forces of aggression and the scope of our effort to that end. We trust that you have not failed to impress this fact upon all the officers under your jurisdiction.

As stated in our No. 184, we are convinced that repeated, forceful presentation of our position will help greatly to counteract the effect of Axis propaganda in countries such as Spain which have not yet been drawn directly into the conflict.

HULL

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<sup>14</sup> Not printed.

<sup>15</sup> Dated April 10, 6 p. m., p. 887.

740.0011 European War 1939/10284 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, April 24, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received 9:33 p. m.]

350. The Department's 200, April 22, 7 p. m., is receiving careful attention as is its 184, April 10, 6 p. m. On receipt of the latter I took steps to bring its essential contents to the attention of the Embassy staff and all our consular officers in Spain. I have also discussed the general subject with every one of my American colleagues and with various other Ambassadors and Ministers. I have also, in various conversations with Spanish officials and others in a position to affect public opinion here, stressed the attitude and viewpoint laid down by the Department.

I again invite attention to my No. 341, April 21, 7 p. m., since I fear a merely informative visit to the Caudillo would fail of practical result.

WEDDELL

740.0011 European War 1939/10340 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, April 25, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 11:50 p. m.]

353. Barcelona's 37, April 24, 6 p. m.<sup>16</sup> In the last 36 hours I have made a rather careful canvass of colleagues, Spanish officials and others in a position to correctly gauge the course of events here; a synthesis of this would indicate the following:

1. German preparation—pressure looking to a linking of Spain's fortune to the Axis—is strong at the present time.
2. Military opinion, including Franco, if strongly affected by recent German successes, is still of opinion that Spain should remain aloof;
3. The Foreign Minister in his strong conviction of entire German success favors closer ties;
4. However, no specific act looking to a closer alliance is anticipated until victory is achieved in the Balkans, even including an extension of this success to the Suez Canal;
5. While signature of the 3-party pact may precede direct action by Germany here, this may well include clauses permitting entry into and through Spain by German forces.

A large majority opinion indicates a crisis arriving before the end of June which would coincide with completion of military works of importance in the neighborhood of the Straits.

WEDDELL

<sup>16</sup> Not printed.

740.0011 European War 1939/10175 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, April 26, 1941—8 p. m.

208. Your 341, April 21, 7 p. m. We are preparing a cable of instructions to you dealing with economic negotiations with Spain. Should your appointment with Franco envisaged in my 200 of April 22, 7 p. m. take place before the receipt of the above instructions you may indicate to him that you are awaiting such a cable from your Government and that immediately upon its receipt you will seek to open economic discussions on the instructions therein.

You may indicate to Franco that the Ministers of Industry and Commerce <sup>16a</sup> and of Finance <sup>16b</sup> will presumably take part in these discussions and add you further hope that the Caudillo will be prepared to support with them a program of American-Spanish cooperation.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/10175 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, April 30, 1941—8 p. m.

214. Reference Department's no. 208, April 26, 8 p. m. You are authorized to inform General Franco orally and in person that you now have authority from your Government to initiate discussions with the competent Ministers of the Spanish Government with a view to broadening and liberalizing the basis of mutual trade between Spain and the United States. You may state that your Government is prepared to give immediate and careful consideration to the means whereby it may be possible for the Government of Spain to obtain surplus commodities in the United States of which it is in need, such as wheat, corn and cotton.

In first examination of the situation as a whole we have come to the conclusion that it may be possible to take some immediate, effective steps toward the mutual development of trade between Spain and the United States, and at the same time to assist in a large measure to meet the immediate foodstuffs requirements of Spain, through an exchange of commodities without resort to credit transactions. In this connection we have in mind the possibility of an arrangement whereby a substantial quantity, say 25,000 tons, of Spanish olive oil would be exchanged for an equal quantity of peanut oil from the United States, plus the large quantity of wheat representing the difference in the market price of olive and peanut oils. We believe

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<sup>16a</sup> Demetrio Carceller Segura.

<sup>16b</sup> José Larráz Lopez.



that it would be possible in a transaction of this kind to make available to Spain a very substantial quantity of wheat, perhaps amounting to over 200,000 tons.

As you are aware, the Olive Oil Association of America, Incorporated, and individual American importers of olive oil, have been endeavoring for some months to obtain fulfillment of existing contracts for shipment of large amounts of olive oil from Spain; the Spanish Government has stated that it would only permit the exportation of olive oil to the United States in return for an equal amount of substitute oils; and it has not been possible to obtain the olive oil on this basis because of the refusal of the British Government to permit the importation of substitute oils into Spain so long as the Spanish Government continues to export olive oil to Germany and Italy. We are now informed that the British Government may be prepared to lift its restrictions on importation of substitute oils into Spain to permit the realization of this proposed exchange of commodities since it would have the effect of making available from the United States a substantial quantity of urgently needed foodstuffs to Spain.

It is believed that if the suggestion outlined meets with the approval of the Spanish Government, and if definite assurances are received from the British Government that the contemplated exchange of commodities will not be interfered with, it may be possible through the cooperation of the American Olive Oil Association to put this proposal into effect within a short time. We have in mind also that it may be possible to expand this proposed transaction to include other commodities in which the Spanish Government is interested and in which there exist available surpluses in the United States, in view of previous indications from the Spanish authorities that upward of 50,000 tons of olive oil might be made available for exportation to the United States. Similar transactions might subsequently prove feasible with respect to other commodities of mutual interest to Spain and the United States.

With respect to the articles and materials subject to export control mentioned in your no. 340, April 20, 2 p. m., it may be observed that in view of the fundamental and necessary policy set forth in our no. 103, March 3, 2 p. m., it may not be possible to make available any substantial quantities at this time. With respect to scrap iron, in which it appears that the Spanish Government is particularly interested, it may be observed that our policy is based upon the President's statement of September 26, 1940<sup>17</sup> in which he said that the exportation of scrap iron from the United States would hereafter be limited to the amounts required by Great Britain and the other countries of this hemisphere. With respect to the other principal items under

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<sup>17</sup> See Department of State *Bulletin*, September 28, 1940, p. 250.

export control in which the Spanish Government is interested, it may be observed that we have now approved the issuance of licenses for the exportation of approximately 7,000 tons of Sulphate of Ammonia since January 1, and may be able to authorize some additional quantities despite the fact that the total exportable quantity available has become increasingly restricted. The situation with respect to machine tools remains as stated in our no. 103 of March 3, 2 p. m. We may, however, find it possible to issue licenses for the exportation of some machinery. It may also be possible to approve exportation of a moderate amount of tin plate for which numerous applications have been received.

In the event that the Spanish Government is prepared to initiate discussions along the lines indicated we shall, of course, wish to bear in mind the four numbered points set forth in our no. 350 of December 19, 7 p. m.<sup>18</sup> relative to the attitude and intentions of the Spanish Government. Upon the initiation of such discussions we should wish to make public the statement, or a statement similar to that, quoted in the last paragraph of our no. 350. We should, of course, wish to have such a statement of our position given the fullest possible publicity in Spain in order that the Spanish people as a whole may be fully aware of our attitude and intentions with respect to Spain.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/10595 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, May 3, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received May 4—7: 15 a. m.]

375. Department's 214, April 30, 8 p. m. The purpose of my number 341, April 21, 7 p.m., was to emphasize that I felt that some more concrete result might be attained if at the time of communicating to the Chief of State a message of the gravity and importance of the one in question I were further authorized to make known by some definite gesture our good will towards Spain so long as its policies did not run counter to our interests in the present conflict. This, I believed, might be accomplished by a statement to the effect that this Government would be disposed to collaborate in a careful and sympathetic consideration of Spanish needs for goods now affected by American embargoes or by export restrictions.

It should be emphasized here that thus far our effective aid to Spain has been limited during the past 2 years since the recognition of the Franco Government to the granting of a cotton credit of which per-

<sup>18</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 848.

haps one-third has been repaid and the remainder is in process of repayment, and the present aid being distributed by the Red Cross.

As background, the following should be kept in mind :

(1) Since I was first authorized a year ago to inform the Caudillo of our then disposition to give sympathetic consideration to Spanish needs the immediate food situation here on which the earlier recommendations of the Embassy have been based has at least potentially altered through the arrangement in process of conclusion, whereby grains and cotton will be received from Argentina. For the next several months Spain's foodstuffs needs up to its transport capacities can be supplied from Argentina. In this connection, the British Embassy informs me that only the lack of available shipping is preventing Spain from taking early delivery of 100,000 tons of British-owned wheat available in Argentina. Chief advantage of purchasing wheat from the United States would be quicker transportation.

(2) Spain has, however, recently formally requested in various communications from the Foreign Office the bald privilege of purchasing in the United States with the dollar exchange available certain products including scrap iron, sulphate ammonia, machinery and parts, electrodes, et cetera, and informally has made known its needs for other American products, exports of which are now controlled. It is my belief, therefore, that an assurance to the Caudillo that the United States Government will sympathetically examine Spanish needs with the appropriate Spanish authorities with the view to avoiding insofar as possible the shutoff or curtailment of urgent requirements in spite of our existing embargo and our control regulations would clearly demonstrate our good will and desire for greater economic cooperation.

(3) To inform Spain that we are disposed to make available surplus commodities for the funds derived from Spanish sale of olive oil in the United States would, in effect, be to limit the disposition of such funds and would be contrary to the information in the third from last paragraph of the Department's telegram 24, January 13, 9 a. m. [*p. m.*]<sup>19</sup> which was fully conveyed to the Spanish Government. Since in these circumstances there does not arise at the present time a question of credits I do not think the present moment is propitious to lay down more than the first of the four conditions outlined in the Department's telegram 350, December 19, 7 p. m.,<sup>20</sup> which conditions were predicated on the possibility of a credit arrangement.

In the event that my proposed visit takes place before the receipt of the Department's further instructions I shall venture to limit myself to the declarations suggested in the Department's 208, April 26, 8 p. m.

WEDDELL

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<sup>19</sup> Not printed; the paragraph referred to contains this sentence: "You should immediately point out to the appropriate Spanish officials that free exchange can be obtained for shipments of olive oil to this market which could be utilized, in whole or in part, to purchase through ordinary trade channels substitute products here or in other markets." (611.529/295)

<sup>20</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1940, vol. II, p. 848.

740.0011 European War 1939/10595 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, May 6, 1941—7 p. m.

220. Your 375, May 3, 4 p. m. Procedure suggested in your last paragraph approved. What we particularly desire to do at this moment is to impress upon the Caudillo the fact that we are prepared to discuss ways and means of improving our economic relations with Spain. The action that we might find it possible to take to assist Spain would naturally depend primarily upon the attitude and intentions of Spain with respect to the first of the four points mentioned in our no. 350 of December 19, 7 p. m.

You will be informed in more detail later of our position with respect to the products under export license control in which the Spanish Government is interested. You will also be advised of developments in connection with the suggested exchange of commodities involving olive oil from Spain in return for peanut oil and wheat from the United States. For your information, British Embassy here has taken up this proposal with London and is communicating with Sir Samuel Hoare on certain points.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/10819 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, May 11, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received 7 p. m.]

396. Department's Nos. 200, April 22, 7 p. m., and 220, May 6, 7 p. m. The Chief of Protocol of the Foreign Office after soliciting appointment called on me this morning saying that he did so by instruction of the Foreign Minister to say that the Chief of State had been so engrossed recently with matters connected with internal administration, ministerial changes, et cetera, that the Minister has been unable as yet to fix an appointment for me to be received but that this he would endeavor to do at an early date. I told my caller that I was naturally surprised and disappointed at the delay since my Government had instructed me to hold the interview at the earliest possible date and that in the circumstances I could only report the matter to Washington.

In reply to my inquiry the Chief of Protocol said that he personally thought my call on the Caudillo would be fixed for this week.

I asked the Chief of Protocol if he thought other ministerial changes were impending. He replied in the negative save to add that, as

I had doubtless heard, there was much talk of the retirement of the Minister of Finance.

WEDDELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/11060 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, May 17, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received May 18—4: 47 p. m.]

421. As you are giving further consideration to Spanish problems arising from export control mentioned in your 220, May 6, 7 p. m., I venture to point out that our restrictions against exports of petroleum products are also causing grave concern here. This has been mentioned informally several times by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Under British navicert control stocks of lubricating oils have shrunk to less than a 3 months' supply. CAMPSA<sup>21</sup> stocks on March 31 amounting to less than 9,000 tons and the quota of imports for the April-June period is limited to 12,000 tons considered to represent actual consumption. Stock of cylinder and other high grade oils are reported negligible. Delays or reductions affecting this quantity it is feared will seriously impede the operation of transportation and industry.

At the suggestion of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce the head of CAMPSA has requested my intercession for reconsideration of an application for 900 tons cylinder oil for locomotives from Cities Service which has been denied; various pending applications from Texas Company for high viscosity index oils for blending purposes and 44 tons of red petrolatum from the latter company. These all are scheduled to be shipped on tankers due to arrive about May 20 to 25.

The Manager of Socony Vacuum informs me that export license has been refused his concern for 4,500 tons of high grade lubricating oils. This is the only American-owned company having its own lubricating oils distributing organization selling direct to consumers and controls about 35 percent of the total of high grade oils. It is the only American organization which has been able to secure import permits from the Spanish Government and by an arrangement with British and Spanish authorities whereby this quantity will be deducted from the 12,000-ton quota mentioned above it has been granted British navicerts. As high grade oils are indispensable the Department might wish to give consideration to the desirability of permitting Socony Vacuum to continue supplying Spain with this type of oil so as to permit it to maintain its selling organization and avoid this market from being diverted to other interests.

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<sup>21</sup> Compañía Arrendataria del Monopolio de Petróleos, Sociedad Anónima.

The Minister of Industry and Commerce has also requested my friendly intervention for expediting export permit requested through Ernest S. Kuhn, New York, for 5,000 tons sulphate of ammonia for shipment to Canary Islands.

WEDDELL

740.0011 European War 1939/11329 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, May 25, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received May 26—10:45 a. m.]

445. Department's 220, May 6, 7 p. m. Despite the despatch of several notes to the Foreign Minister and other informal efforts, nearly a month has elapsed since I sought an interview with the Caudillo as authorized in the Department's 200, April 22, 7 p. m., and I have not yet been informed when the desired meeting will take place. Apart from any possible disinclination to see me this delay may be ascribed in part to the characteristic sluggishness of the Ministry in question but more to the Cabinet crisis which has prevailed here including uncertainty in many lines as to whether the Foreign Minister himself would remain in office; added to this is a tension in official circles which still persists. I am vigorously pressing the matter, however, and I am informed that the Minister of Industry and Commerce has himself spoken to the Caudillo on the subject. I believe that the desired interview will not be long postponed.

In this general connection and having especially in mind the Department's desire to inform the Caudillo of our readiness to discuss ways and means of improving our economic relations with Spain, I wish to inform the Department that the British Ambassador yesterday handed me an *aide-mémoire* which he said contained the substance of a telegram just received from the British Ambassador in Washington and urged that I make recommendations to Washington along the lines of the *aide-mémoire*.

This document states that discussions have been going on between the Department and Halifax which indicate that the Department is prepared to proceed with assistance to Spain and that accordingly the Department would welcome practical suggestions for such assistance from me. The Washington Embassy suggested that the following proposals might form the basis for my recommendation:

- (1) An increase in purchases in this peninsula especially of olive oils, wines, cork and zinc.
- (2) The liberal granting of export licenses.
- (3) The initiation of negotiations perhaps necessitating credits, the latter depending on amounts available through increased purchases to cover imports of cotton, scrap iron, agricultural machinery and

fertilizers here, emphasis to be laid on actual purchases rather than on the fixing of a quota.

(4) Our Government to be prepared to consider requests to finance Portuguese colonial purchases for consumption here.

(5) A continuance of distribution of material by the American Red Cross.

(6) The consideration of some method of reinforcing British activities here through our own propaganda.

The manner of handling this matter—its initiation with me by the British Ambassador here—causes me some surprise since, as will be observed, several of the matters touched on have been already the subject of correspondence with the Department. I am also a little regretful that the British here have been able on the basis of their representatives' reports to indicate and to their advantage in informal ways to the Spanish authorities our views and ideas rather than have these made known by this Embassy at the appropriate time.

Considering the foregoing seriatim the following comments and recommendations relating to the several points listed are submitted :

1. This suggestion parallels recommendations I have previously made but I believe a broader range of products should be considered. The Embassy will submit further recommendations in this connection.

2. This likewise follows the line of recommendations already submitted.

3. I still believe that the extension of credits to Spain may have a strong influence in strengthening its resistance to German diplomatic pressure and that we should be prepared to enter negotiations for such a credit. However, for reasons of strategy I feel that we should maneuver to have the request for them come from the Spanish authorities at which time we should suggest that they reexamine their requirements especially in the light of increased purchases by the United States.

4. I do not feel that the triangular arrangement suggested is of primary importance at this time but it may grow out of the discussions. Without further exploration I am not convinced that such an arrangement would serve our immediate aims.

5. The American Red Cross is doing a valuable and effective work among the masses but its propaganda value with the Government is as yet problematical. However, so long as this humanitarian work can be continued, I believe that it is politically and psychologically inadvisable that it be stopped.

6. This point will be more fully covered in a subsequent telegram.

In the event the Department is giving consideration along the lines mentioned I should like to be authorized to convey to the Caudillo in general terms that we are prepared to discuss with his Ministers questions related to points 1 and 2 if your instructions can be received prior to that interview.

WEDDELL

740.0011 European War 1939/11857 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, May 26, 1941—3 p. m.

[Received May 27—3:23 p. m.]

456. With reference to point 6 of my No. 445, May 25, 6 p. m., in dealing with a totalitarian regime like that of Spain propaganda must be directed primarily at the Government itself rather than to the general public if it is to accomplish its immediate purpose. Cultural or mass propaganda undoubtedly would be of ultimate and cumulative benefit but the present problem is to make clear to the small and skeptical group comprising the Spanish Government the extent of our resources and economic power and to convince them that this cannot fail to bring about British victory. Politically the sympathy of the Spanish Government undoubtedly lies with Germany and recent military developments in Europe have strengthened the conviction of general military invincibility. Economically, on the other hand, Spain realizes that for the present its needs for goods from non-European sources makes it inadvisable definitely to ally itself with the Axis Powers. However, as German development of the economic resources of occupied territories becomes more effective it is almost certain that German diplomatic pressure will be implemented by assurances to Spain of increased economic aid in return for closer collaboration.

The object of our economic aid to Spain would be to emphasize to the Spanish Government the extent of Spain's dependence upon Western Hemisphere and British Empire resources. To do this we must constantly keep before the Government the benefits to be derived from collaboration with the United States.

To drive home this conviction economic negotiations could be effectively employed. In such negotiations we could make use of the powerful instrument which we have now in export control. Through appropriate exercise of this control we could make Spain realize that concessions granted were real. The concessions which Spain would be required to make in return could be as flexible as circumstances might dictate. It is also probable that through such negotiations we might be able to have removed existing obstacles to such propaganda devices as motion picture films, periodicals and other printed matter. It is believed that concessions obtained from us by Spain through negotiations would have a greater propaganda effect on the Spanish Government itself than gifts or other voluntary gestures such as Red Cross supplies which latter, however, unquestionably do affect the attitude of the powerless mass.



Obviously if we are to obtain the desired propaganda effect such negotiations should be conducted in Madrid. Typical of the feeling among Spanish Government and party authorities which our propaganda must combat are the statements now being widely featured in the press of Salvador Merino, Chief of the Spanish Syndicalist organization following his recent return from Germany. "Entire Germany" says S. Merino "is a prodigious machine for making war which functions with extraordinary precision. Three million foreign workmen and six million prisoners at [of] war are working today in Germany. The German labor front has achieved solidarity of the human element in the enterprise and the entire German people feels itself united in a common destiny."

WEDDELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/11470 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, May 29, 1941—11 p. m.

[Received May 30—1:09 p. m.]

479. Personal for the Secretary and Under Secretary. I am venturing to address you personally in order to bring to your direct notice that in spite of the firm notes I have sent to the Foreign Minister and the further fact that some 5 weeks have elapsed since my first formal request, I am still awaiting an interview with the Caudillo. As I have learned through informal official sources that he is advised of my wish to see him, I can only interpret this silence as indicating increasing indifference to the views of our President and Government, quite apart from the Spanish Government's habitual disregard of diplomatic usage. I now have a certain hesitation in pressing for this interview beyond the steps taken, in the continuing expectation that I may have amplifying instructions from the Department concerning subjects which I might initiate.

In all these circumstances therefore I would be grateful for your counsel as to whether I should become even more insistent that I be received or let the application drift.

In this general connection I would be remiss if I failed to emphasize what I consider to be the gravity of the existing situation and the sharp repercussions which world events are having here. The loss of Crete to the Germans is already unfavorably discounted, with a resulting growing belief that Suez will be the next to fall; and all this despite the President's great speech<sup>22</sup> and all its implications.

<sup>22</sup> Speech of May 27, 1941, Department of State *Bulletin*, May 31, 1941, p. 647.

Quickly responding to events considered unfavorable to Great Britain, the Government-controlled press of Spain has returned with renewed violence to attacks on England and the United States. Further, Suñer's position in Franco party and Government circles appears stronger than ever.

While disposed to maintain my former opinion that Franco is disinclined to sign the Tripartite Pact I cannot but feel that the entry of German armed forces into the Peninsula, an entry which would not and could not be effectively resisted, is ostensibly nearer. I need hardly point out that the occupation of this peninsula by Axis forces would close the last Atlantic European ports and German domination would then extend from Narvik to Dakar.

I shall follow this telegram with a further message relating to certain personnel needs which are related to the implementing of our policies.

WEDDELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/11491 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, May 31, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received June 1—7:45 a. m.]

488. Personal for the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 479, May 29, 11 p. m., and my 480, May 30, noon [2 a. m.].<sup>23</sup> You will perhaps care to refer to your number 460 [46], April 13, 1940<sup>24</sup> relating to the unsuccessful effort of the then Foreign Minister to hinder my visit to the Chief of State. In this general connection I may mention that the British Ambassador told me this morning that Suñer had quite recently given three separate appointments and within an hour of each of these telephoned to say that he could not receive him. The Ambassador told me also that he was more disturbed over the Spanish situation than at any time since his arrival (and he is certainly more depressed than I have ever seen him) remarking that "Suñer is doing everything he can to provoke us". He equally feels that the next 6 weeks will be of heightening critical character with Suñer making every effort in his power to bring Spain squarely in with the Axis and to this end blocking every influence which might affect the Chief of State in a contrary sense from reach-

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<sup>23</sup> Latter not printed. In this telegram the Ambassador quoted a note of May 27 from the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs saying that the "concession" of an audience with the Chief of State could not be granted because of the many matters with which the latter was occupied. The Ambassador was told he would be informed as soon as an audience was possible. The note added that if the object of this visit was to make some special communication it could be transmitted to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. (740.0011 European War 1939/11474)

<sup>24</sup> *Foreign Relations, 1940*, vol. II, p. 872.

ing him. My colleague agrees with me in thinking that Suñer, despite the loss of direct control over the police and civil guard, is more firmly seated than before.

WEDDELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/11474 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, June 4, 1941—8 p. m.

284. Your 480, May 31 [30], 2 a. m.<sup>25</sup> You should reply in writing to the communication of May 27 from the Foreign Minister in language which, while polite, should at the same time be vigorous and firm.

The reply should refer to the fact that in past months the Spanish Government has repeatedly indicated a desire to obtain economic assistance from the United States, chiefly in the form of credits for the purchase of needed foodstuffs and raw materials. Recently we have also received frequent requests from the Spanish Government to relax existing export controls in order to make available certain products which the Spanish Government has been particularly interested in acquiring. You should point out that you have sought to see General Franco several times within the past few weeks primarily to discuss with him the possibility of initiating discussions with a view to broadening and liberalizing the basis of mutual trade between Spain and the United States. You should add that you have reason to believe that the outcome of such discussions would have been favorable and mutually beneficial.

Your reply should refer to the extraordinary language of the Foreign Minister's note which seems a deliberate attempt to disregard the right of an Ambassador, immemorially recognized in the relations between States and the Heads of States, to be received by the Chief of the State to whom he is accredited at any time. If the position taken in this note is to be accepted as indicating a change in the views and procedure of the Spanish Government on this subject, we shall naturally be forced to reconsider our own policy in view of that development.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/11474 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, June 5, 1941—9 p. m.

289. Department's 284, June 3 [4], 8 p. m. Please telegraph the text of reply you are making to the communication from the Minister

<sup>25</sup> See footnote 23, p. 903.

of Foreign Affairs of May 27. I am particularly interested that the tone of your reply shall be strong and vigorous and that you cannot believe that if the Chief of State were cognizant of your request to see him he would sanction any undue delay in the arrangements, particularly as your desire to see him is based upon an initiative of the Spanish Government with a view to obtaining economic assistance from this country.

I feel that you should not permit yourself to be subjected to undue delays in responses to requests to be received by the Chief of State without adequate and justifiable reasons for such delays.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/11831 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, June 9, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 8:10 p. m.]

531. Department's 289, June 5, 9 p. m. The following is submitted for the Department's approval:<sup>20</sup>

Excellency: I have the honor to recall to Your Excellency that as long ago as April 25, in my note No. 1001, I informed you, at the specific request of my Government, of my desire to be received by His Excellency, the Chief of the Spanish State "at the earliest date possible, to make known to him personally certain aspects of my Government's policy" and requested that you take appropriate steps to arrange this interview.

It was with growing astonishment that I observed that my notes of May 3 and May 9, reemphasizing my wish, remained without result, and in a final effort to press home to you the desires of my Government in the matter, I addressed you for the fourth time on May 19, repeating my original request. It was only on May 30 that I received your note of May 27 in which appears the surprising statement that it would not be possible for me to see His Excellency, the Chief of State. You further informed me that if the object of my visit was to make some special communication you would receive me and that I might transmit through you the communication in question.

I am now under the disagreeable necessity of informing you that the position taken in Your Excellency's note is not satisfactory to my Government which instructs me to recall to you the right of an Ambassador—a right immemorially recognized in the relations of states—to be received by the Chief of State to whom he is accredited whenever such an interview is sought. I am also instructed to make clear to you the reluctance of my Government to believe that the Chief of State, were he cognizant of my request, would willingly sanction any undue delay in arranging an interview.

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<sup>20</sup> The Department approved the note and authorized the Ambassador to send it.

If I am to conclude that the position taken in your note under reference is to be accepted as indicating a change in the views and procedure of the Spanish Government on this subject it will naturally become necessary for my Government to reconsider its policy in the light of this extraordinary development.

In response to your suggestion I should say further that I have no hesitation in informing you that my request for this interview, made at the specific direction of my Government, was for the purpose of making known to the Chief of the Spanish State the policy and intentions of my Government in the present world conflict of which your own Government despite its attitude of non-belligerency should be informed.

I also proposed to recall to him the fact that in recent months your Government has in formal and in informal ways indicated a desire to obtain economic assistance from the United States: and that equally frequent requests have been made by representatives of your Government looking to a relaxation of existing export controls in order to make available products which the Spanish Government appear to have been particularly interested in acquiring in the United States.

It had been my further hope and intention, had I not been prevented from seeing the Chief of State, to discuss with him again the possibility of initiating discussions with a view to broadening and liberalizing the basis of mutual trade between Spain and the United States. I had anticipated that the outcome of such discussions could have been favorable and beneficial both to Spain and to the United States.

I now have the honor under explicit instructions of my Government to request that Your Excellency bring the foregoing to the notice of His Excellency the Chief of State, at the same time apprising him of my Government's and my own astonishment that my desire to see him should, without adequate or justifiable reasons being offered, have been thwarted.

I shall be obliged by Your Excellency's prompt reply to this communication. Accept Excellency, etc.

WEDDELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/12124 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, June 15, 1941—10 p. m.

[Received 11 : 35 p. m.]

551. With reference to my telegram 549, June 15, 8 p. m.,<sup>26a</sup> there is transmitted a translation of a note dated May 1, 1941 (received May 10) from the Foreign Minister:

"My dear Mr. Ambassador: I am in receipt of your letter of yesterday relative to the airmail letter addressed to the International General Electric Company of Bilbao to which Your Excellency referred in our conversation of April 19 which you recall to my attention, and in reply thereto I am pleased to inform you that an investigation is being made concerning the case in point, the result of which I shall inform you, it pleases me to anticipate to you that everything would

<sup>26a</sup> Not printed.

make it appear from what can now be seen that the report will be completely vindicated from the Spanish point of view which will constitute a real satisfaction for me and I trust for Your Excellency as well.

I avail myself of this occasion to reiterate to you, my Mr. Ambassador, the assurance of my high consideration and my personal friendship."

WEDDELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/12213 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, June 17, 1941—7 p. m.  
[Received June 19—5:15 a. m.]

562. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My No. 549, June 15, 8 p. m.<sup>27</sup> The British Ambassador called on me this morning immediately following a long interview which he had had with the Minister of Industry and Commerce with whom he conferred alone.

In the course of the conversation the Minister said that he had seen the Caudillo within the last few days and had gained the following impressions: That the latter was aware of my efforts to see him but that he did not wish an interview to be granted just now for two reasons:

1. In the first place the Caudillo understands there is a quarrel between the Foreign Minister and the Ambassador which he does not wish to have to undertake to settle. (The foregoing is completely in line with tactics employed by Suñer in trying to give the impression of personal differences between us as set forth in his note quoted in my No. 550, June 15, 9 p. m.,<sup>27</sup> and strengthens my conviction that he is scheming to bring about the withdrawal of the American Ambassador.)

2. That the Caudillo has recently been under terrific pressure from Mussolini to enter into the Three-Power Pact which he has resisted and he does not wish to receive me in a period shortly following this since this would suggest that he was drawing away in a sense from his friends of the Axis.

In this connection I suggest that the prompt recognition of Croatia (see my telegram No. 558, June 17, 3 p. m.<sup>27</sup>) is a mild sop to Mussolini. The Minister in question also said he asked the Caudillo why he did not get rid of Suñer to which Franco replied that he would like to do so but that Germany and Italy interfered.

The Minister of Industry and Commerce further remarked that the Caudillo had not been deceived "by the African mirage" created by Mussolini, apparently referring in this connection to Mussolini's

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<sup>27</sup> Not printed.

speech of June 10 in which he is reported to have said that Spain is not asked to make a decision but that Spain must know where its true friends and its proven enemies are to be found.

WEDDELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/12122 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, June 18, 1941—10 p. m.

315. Your telegrams nos. 549, 550<sup>27a</sup> and 551.<sup>27b</sup> You are authorized to address the following reply in writing to the Foreign Minister's note quoted in your no. 550:

"With reference to your note of June 13, 1941, I have the honor by instruction of my Government to inform Your Excellency that each step that I have taken during the past 2 months to obtain an interview with the Chief of the Spanish State for the purpose of discussing the matters of outstanding importance and interest to our two countries of which Your Excellency is aware, has been taken with the full knowledge and approval of my Government."

HULL

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852.00/9701 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, July 18, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 10:25 p. m.]

650. Last evening at the customary annual assembly in commemoration of the outbreak of the revolution of 1936 Franco addressed the National Council of the Falange in the presence of the members of the Government and the Diplomatic Corps in extraordinarily violent terms emphasizing even more strongly than heretofore his contempt for the "plutocratic democracies", his conviction that Germany has already won the war, and that the intervention of the United States can lead only to a useless prolongation of the conflict.

The Caudillo's characterization of the motives of the democracies in offering economic assistance to Spain was particularly interesting. After praising the efforts of his Government to overcome the economic difficulties of the country he declared that "the Council should know how others have attempted to hinder the provisionment of our fatherland. In the moments of greatest crisis of the past year when bread was short in our territory and the inevitable delays of the long journey

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<sup>27a</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>27b</sup> June 15, 10 p. m., p. 906.

from South America caused a shortage of grain, it was attempted to bring from North America 100,000 tons already purchased and ready for embarkation but the efforts of our representatives were shattered by the dispositions of that nation which prohibited this and the grain remained upon the wharves of the friendly country. And when there seemed to be offered to Spain prospect of aid and economic collaboration in its reconstruction, behind the generous appearance of the credit operation always appeared an attempt at political mediatization incompatible with our sovereignty and with our dignity as a free people.["]

[“I would speak to you” he continued “with this crudity because the time has come to take steps against these snares, pretexts, and maneuvers and for every one to realize that nations must save themselves by their own effort and their own work and sacrifice. It is allusory [*illusory*] to believe that the plutocracies will make use of their gold for generous or noble enterprises. Gold ends by debasing nations as well as individuals. The exchange of 50 old destroyers for various remnants of an empire is eloquent in this regard.”

Concerning the outcome of the European conflict the Caudillo declared that he had no doubt. “The die is already cast” he said. “The first battles were fought and won in our own fields. In the various regions of Europe the battles decisive for our Continent have taken place and the terrible nightmare of our generation, the destruction of Russian Communism, is now inevitable.”

The Caudillo followed this assertion by an attack on those nations who wish to extend the conflict, and addressed especially to the nations of South America a declaration that Europe had no ambitions in America and that the intervention of the Western Hemisphere could lead only to an interminable and mutually destructive conflict.

“No human force exists which is capable of diverting this destiny. But we should none the less not dismiss from our minds the possibility that the madness which directs the policy of other countries may attempt to thrust new miseries upon Europe. Against this we must prepare ourselves, offering to the world the serene example of a united people disposed to defend its independence and its right.

No one is more authorized than ourselves to say that Europe has no ambitions in America. A contest between the two continents is an impossible thing. It would mean only a long war at sea without results; fabulous business for a few and unsuspected miseries for many; prodigious losses of ships and goods; a war of submarines and high speed vessels striking blows at the hitherto peaceful commerce of the world.

Coasts confronting one another strong and unapproachable by the enemy; a sea divided into zones of influence European and Amer-



ican from which the vessels of world commerce are barred . . .<sup>28</sup> The American Continent cannot dream of intervention in Europe without exposing itself to catastrophe nor can it say without prejudice to the truth that the American coasts are in danger from the attacks of European powers.

Thus neither the liberty of the seas, monstrous sarcasm for the [apparent omission] who suffer the consequences of the war nor international law outraged by the inhuman blockade of a continent nor the defense of invaded peoples who are dragged into hunger and misery are now more than a grandiose farce in which nobody believes.

In this situation, to say that the course of the war can be changed by the entry into action of a third country is criminal madness, is to kindle a world war without horizon which may last years and which would definitely ruin the nations whose eclipse of life is based on their legitimate commerce with the countries of Europe.

These are facts which nobody can dispute. The blockade of Europe is contributing to the building up of an autarchy prejudicial to South America. The continuance of the war will complete the work.

The war was badly planned and the Allies have lost it. So all the peoples of continental Europe including even France have recognized; the solution of their differences confided to the fate of arms and the outcome has been adverse. They expect nothing from their own efforts, the very government[s] themselves declare this clearly and definitely. What is proposed is a new war between the continents which by prolonging their agony will give them an appearance of life and in the face of this we who love America feel the anxiety of the moment and pray that the evil of which we have a foreboding may not reach them."

WEDDELL

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852.00/9703 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, July 19, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received July 20—9:03 a. m.]

655. In my telegram 650, July 18, 5 p. m., are quoted essential remarks made by the Caudillo in his speech to the National Council of the Falange Party on July 17th.

A partial canvass of my Pan-American colleagues indicates that they consider the speech as one of extreme violence; as a verdict I can testify that it lost nothing in its delivery. The Brazilian Ambassador remarked to me that he supposed of course a protest would be made concerning it. To another colleague the speech itself was "the most violent" he had ever heard from a Chief of State.

<sup>28</sup> Omission indicated in the original telegram.

In paragraph 2 of the telegram under reference appears a statement concerning 100,000 tons of wheat bought and paid for in North America by the Spanish Government, delivery of which was prevented by our [apparent omission]. It is clear therefore that "North America" can mean only the United States. The files of this Embassy furnish no warrant for such a declaration. On the other hand its records do reveal large Red Cross gifts.

In all the circumstances I suggest for the Department's consideration and appropriate instruction whether I should not lodge a formal protest and denial concerning this coupled with a clear statement of the value of the American Red Cross gifts to the Spanish people concerning which Franco was silent. This had [*help?*], if I am not vitally mistaken, about equals the value of the wheat alleged to have been sold to the Spanish Government and then withheld [*?*] I suggest also that the text of the note be made public in the United States and that I be authorized to give publicity to it here. While the Spanish press would probably decline to publish it I can make it available in mimeograph form to a large number of persons including officials of the Spanish Government.

WEDELL

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711.52/183

*Memorandum by Mr. Perry George of the Division of European Affairs* <sup>28a</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] August 14, 1941.

Despatch no. 1099 of August 6, 1941 from Madrid encloses a memorandum <sup>29</sup> of an extremely interesting conversation between Mr. Beaulac <sup>30</sup> and the Spanish Minister of Industry and Commerce. Mr. Beaulac called informally on Carceller, solely to establish contact. He mentioned that when recently in Washington he was hopeful that some arrangement could be arrived at to promote a greater interchange of products between Spain and this country, but that his hopes had waned owing to Franco's public attitude and continued unfriendliness toward our Ambassador. The United States is a democracy and Spain's attitude has had publicity here, tending to create an impression that Spain is determinedly unfriendly to us while cooperating with the Axis. The United States has made the irrevocable decision that Hitler will not be permitted to control the Atlantic, and our military and naval authorities are convinced that without such

<sup>28a</sup> Addressed to the Acting Chief (Atherton) and the Assistant Chief (Culbertson) of the Division of European Affairs, and to the Under Secretary of State (Welles).

<sup>29</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>30</sup> Willard L. Beaulac, Counselor of Embassy in Spain.

control Hitler will lose the war. The American people are behind our Government in this determination.

Carceller asked America to be practical and examine the acts of the Spanish Government rather than the words of its leaders. Practical cooperation with the Axis was insignificant, German forces were on the Spanish frontier, Spain was impoverished—lacking airplanes and artillery, and in no position to resist the Germans. The Spanish policy was to prevent the contingency from arising. This policy, of giving Germany an impression of cooperation while denying effective cooperation, should be supported by the democracies.

Had Franco shown himself less friendly to Germany and more friendly to the democracies he would have done us the greatest possible dis-service.

He suggested the wisdom of a policy on the part of the democracies of cooperating with Spain in organizing a system of smuggling imported commodities into Germany, to strengthen the impression of sincere cooperation with Germany. He said there was not an intelligent man in the German Embassy and that he was fooling the Embassy, for example, in agreeing to make 12,000 tons of olive oil available to Germany at the rate of a thousand tons monthly. In a year many things might happen. Similarly the matter of Spanish volunteers against Russia was a cheap gesture.

Mr. Beaulac did not minimize the influence of German troops on the frontier but felt that an unnecessary feature in the picture was Franco's refusal to see our Ambassador. Carceller regretted this situation and said that he was endeavoring to arrange matters. He was optimistic. Serrano Suñer was solely responsible. Serrano hated the United States and the Ambassador. He was an evil man with unbounded ambition, using the Axis for increasing his own power. Serrano Suñer believed that if Franco delayed long enough, our Ambassador would be replaced. The Cabinet was against Serrano in this and felt that a better idea would be to replace Serrano.

Much as Franco's speech of July 17 was displeasing to Americans, it displeased Serrano more, as an apparent effort to transfer the Axis banner from the Foreign Minister.

Asked why Serrano Suñer was less offensive to the British than to us, Carceller said that the Foreign Minister basically admired the type of "English Lord." He would like to be one himself. He detested the type of American businessman. Mr. Beaulac thought Spain had gone too far in permitting certain things to happen and to be said. There was a close relationship between national dignity and national security, and when a country went out of its way to offend the dignity of a friendly country it imperiled its own people. Spanish interests would be better protected by an attitude of greater dignity.

Carceller said that Franco had strong democratic instincts and was not sold on totalitarianism. He was not dictator in Spain, but the "presiding officer of the Council of Ministers."

Carceller himself had the friendliest feeling toward the United States and hoped he could contribute something to keeping Spain and the United States friendly and furthering common interests.

Mr. Beaulac asked if he did not think that the Germans had stayed out of Spain because this seemed desirable from a military viewpoint. Carceller replied affirmatively but said a different attitude on Spain's part might have made invasion appear desirable. He added that an American attempt at military measures in North Africa or the Islands off the Peninsula might precipitate German action in Spain, and that the Spanish Government was fearful of this.

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811.20 (D) Regulations/4372: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, September 10, 1941—6 p. m.

492. Your 793, September 4, 5 p. m.<sup>31</sup> Licenses are not being granted for the export, except to the Western Hemisphere and countries resisting aggression, of gasoline and lubricating oil of aviation quality as defined in the current United States regulations. The gasoline to which you refer was of aviation quality. The supplier has been informed that, if he applies for license to export gasoline of other quality, his application will receive consideration.

Applications for the export of other navicerted petroleum products in the case of these particular vessels appear to be receiving favorable consideration except that the quantity of asphalt applied for was found excessive and has been reduced.

HULL

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711.52/193

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] September 13, 1941.

The Spanish Ambassador<sup>32</sup> called at his request. He said that he was returning to Spain for a visit of about two weeks and that he came to see if I had anything in mind that would be of interest for him to discuss with his own Government. I said in reply that this country, including myself, have warm feelings of friendliness toward the Spanish people; that we have sympathized deeply with them in their

<sup>31</sup> Not printed.

<sup>32</sup> Juan Francisco de Cárdenas.

unfortunate experiences of recent years and have been thoroughly disposed to offer them any aid that would be helpful in their very great distress. I then said that with the view to aiding them in various ways in connection with their extreme privation and suffering, this Government has approached them many times, especially through Ambassador Weddell, with a view to discussing ways and means of assistance. I then said that I was familiar with the statement Mr. Ray Atherton of the European Division had made to the Ambassador yesterday and that I would not here repeat it but would consider it a part of our conversation.

I then proceeded to say that while it was most disagreeable even to recall our experiences in dealing with the Spanish Government, I must state that in all of the relations of this Government with the most backward and ignorant governments in the world, this Government has not experienced such a lack of ordinary courtesy or consideration, which customarily prevails between friendly nations, as it has at the hands of the Spanish Government. Its course has been one of aggravated discourtesy and contempt in the very face of our offers to be of aid. I said, of course, we could not think of embarrassing, not to say humiliating, ourselves by further approaches of this nature, bearing in mind the coarse and extremely offensive methods and conduct of Suñer in particular and in some instances of General Franco. I said that when I thought back about the details of the conduct of the Spanish Government towards this Government what had happened was really inconceivable. I remarked that I had little hope that the Ambassador could make the slightest impression on Franco and Suñer for the reason that if they are capable of adopting such an unworthy and contemptible attitude toward this Government with no cause whatever, when they should in fact have been thankful, I seriously doubted whether the Ambassador can appeal to any sense of reason or courteous conduct.

The Ambassador did not undertake to defend the course of his Government except to say that there must be some misunderstanding between our Ambassador and Suñer, the Foreign Minister. He said that in any event he would do his best to bring about better relations.

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811.20 (D) Regulations/4564 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, September 15, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received September 16—8:03 a. m.]

831. Your 492, September 10, 6 p. m. CAMPSA contends that the new gasoline restrictions are in effect an actual embargo against the supplying of gasoline to Spain as all gasoline known to them suited to

general transportation uses are included within the restrictions imposed. They have informed Minister of Industry and Commerce to this effect. As the Department under navicert arrangements, CAMPSA established a quarterly quota of 75,000 tons of gasoline from the United States. It would be helpful to the Embassy in its talks with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to be informed whether quantities and qualities of gasoline permitted to be exported can be acquired by CAMPSA at port to which its tankers have access.

Effort to bring about an improvement in Spanish-American commercial relations would be seriously affected if Spain is denied access to a reasonable quantity of American gasoline.

WEDDELL

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711.52/191 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, September 16, 1941—5 p. m.  
[Received September 17—9:35 a. m.]

834. My No. 831, September 15, 5 p. m. Personal for the Secretary and Under Secretary. I interpret our present policy toward Spain to be to avoid taking steps whose effect might be to push Spain into the arms of the Axis, not alone because of its strategic geographical position but also having in mind the detrimental effect on our own interests in Spanish America if the impression were created there that we were attempting to throttle Spain.

However, present delays and difficulties in obtaining from United States many products urgently needed by this country make me fearful lest we provoke the belief here and perhaps elsewhere that we are acting along unnecessarily restrictive and retaliatory lines; the apparently ever-increasing restrictions against exports are seemingly only fully applied against Spain and a few other countries. The importance of Spain as a non-belligerent with its present pseudo-neutrality is recognized, I am assured, by local British diplomatic, military and naval experts as worth a serious effort to maintain. The British have therefore adopted a policy of providing such limited economic aid as will encourage existing strong non-interventionist elements to withstand the pressure of the small jingoist group who believe that Spain's future is linked with German success. Confidence in the invincibility of Germany has been seriously shaken by developments of recent months, not alone by the Russian campaign but also by the ever-increasing aid being given by the United States together with the recognition that we are rapidly reaching a stage where our effort will even more powerfully influence the outcome.

These considerations have led to my repeated suggestions that we examine the Spanish situation in the light of its political and military

significance, and that by following a procedure which will strengthen the conviction of those elements in the Government that more is to be gained from obtaining supplies from the democracies than by collaboration with the Axis, we have time working on our side. The friendly reception given by the Minister of Industry and Commerce to the idea of mutual sympathetic consideration of economic requirements by the two Governments, reported in my telegram No. 819, September 11, 7 p. m.,<sup>33</sup> leads me to hope that some basis may be found for improving the commercial and ultimately the political relations between our two countries.

Unfavorable politics, economic effect here of the strict application of restrictions against exports to Spain of gasoline, cylinder oil and other petroleum products, far outweighs any disadvantages to the United States which the withdrawal of such commodities from our stocks and supply to Spain may occasion. Contrary to the fear lest small quantities of this might at some remote time benefit the Axis, I am convinced that the control we and the British can exercise can prevent any appreciable stocks from falling into the hands of the Axis even in the event of an invasion, and meanwhile they would contribute to the desirable ends indicated above.

In conclusion I give as my considered opinion that our ability to supply and to withhold such petroleum products represent the trump cards in our political and economic relations with Spain; but I do not consider this the psychological moment to play the latter.

In view of the apparent intervention of various agencies of our Government in the application of control measures I venture to suggest: "(1) That the tremendous implications of our policy toward Spain be given consideration by the economic defense board; (2) that in such a study the necessity of the coordination of export license and navicerts be equally kept in mind."

WEDELL

811.20 (D) Regulations/4564: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, September 18, 1941—6 p. m.

508. Your 831, September 15, 5 p. m. The Department has checked with the Industry in this country and is assured that gasoline of a type within the new definition "G" designated in the control regulations as "other motor fuel" is obtainable in this market. Moreover the Department's records fail to show that any application for export license for Spain for gasoline within this definition has been rejected since the new restrictions became effective, and as you are

<sup>33</sup> Not printed.

aware we have been able to give Spain licenses so far for as much petroleum and gasoline as Spain was able to import with its tanker capacity. The Department has been in constant contact with the Spanish Embassy in this connection and fails to understand the contention of CAMPSA that in effect an embargo has been placed upon gasoline for Spain.

The Department is very much interested in your reports looking to the improvement of our economic relations with Spain. These reports come very aptly at this time in as much as licenses are just now being issued for the gasoline and kerosene cargoes of the tankers *Campoamor* and *Campuzano*, which are the only Spanish tankers known to be in American waters at present.

Despite a free access to this market in the past and a constant disposition of this Government to cooperate with Spain in the solution of its economic problems, the Franco Government has shown no desire to reciprocate and indeed has furnished no evidence of any wish to extend or improve relations with the United States. On the contrary, its whole policy has been to exclude in so far as possible American enterprise and investment and to restrict its purchases in this country to an irreducible minimum of necessities not available in any other market or only available at great cost. In view of this experience in the recent past and of our Government's continued disposition to give sympathetic consideration to Spain's requirements, subject only to the limitations imposed by the present international situation and of our defense needs, the Department will be glad to have from you an immediate report in detail upon the nature of the contributions which Spain may now be prepared to make toward cooperating with us in our efforts to improve mutual relations. It must be understood that our task of supplying Spain's needs will become increasingly difficult and that if we are to continue to make the effort, it will be necessary for the Spanish Government to demonstrate concretely now a willingness to cooperate with us and to adopt a more normal attitude toward you personally.

Ambassador Cárdenas is scheduled to leave by Clipper today under instructions to consult with his Government.

HULL

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711.52/194 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, September 23, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received September 24—4:05 p. m.]

855. Cárdenas after requesting an appointment called this morning. He told me that he had just had two talks with Suñer and was preparing to see the Caudillo with the Foreign Minister.



He said that he returned from Washington with a certain feeling of discouragement because of the general attitude of our Government which he could not but feel was linked up with the situation here, laying special emphasis on my unsatisfactory relations with the Foreign Minister. He had discussed with Suñer these unfortunate relations and the latter had iterated and reiterated my "offensive conduct" in the course of my interview reported in my No. 337, April 19, 6 p. m. My remarks at that time concerning Spain's sovereignty, the Ambassador said, seemed to be the crux of the entire matter, that in accusing Spain of having lost her sovereignty I had inflicted a deep moral wound.

I assured the Ambassador that I found it difficult to believe this latter was the case, that it seemed an obvious afterthought for as late as May 1, the Minister had written me in terms of such friendliness and cordiality as to provoke comment in my Chancery (for text of this note see my 551, June 15, 10 p. m.).

The Ambassador then referred to his 40 years in diplomacy in which he said he had constantly "sacrificed" himself for the sake of harmony and that I should show a conciliatory spirit.

I remarked that I thought I had consistently demonstrated such a spirit and that on various occasions I had "swallowed" gross rudenesses on the part of the Foreign Minister while the outstanding fact in all my relations with him was that he had thus far successfully thwarted my desire, acting under instructions of my Government, to see the Chief of State.

To this Cárdenas replied that my note of June 11<sup>33a</sup> was a very severe one and that it had inspired the offensive terms used by the Foreign Minister in his reply.

I remarked that the text of my note had been approved by my Government while Suñer's communication went beyond diplomatic usage.

The Ambassador then remarked that perhaps I would be willing to inform Suñer who, he assured me, had no ill feeling against me but regarded me as most *simpatíco* that I meant no offense by my remarks in reporting an apparent case of German censorship.

I replied that I would do nothing of the sort, that it took the Minister apparently several weeks to learn that he had been offended and that bringing up that matter was, and to repeat, an obvious afterthought.

The Ambassador then suggested that both the notes be withdrawn.

I replied that if Suñer made such a suggestion to me it would receive consideration but that I wished to make it perfectly clear that my Government would not initiate any such possible solution, one which

<sup>33a</sup> See telegram No. 531, June 9, 7 p. m., from the Ambassador in Spain, p. 905.

in any event left the underlying subject of my request for an interview unsettled.

The Ambassador then adopted an almost pleading tone saying that he had been called here by Suñer to post him fully concerning our attitude and that he felt sure and had so told Suñer that no real progress would be made in the matter of improving relations until the present situation was cleared up. He then drew a tragic picture of what would happen if Spain were not helped, the population would go hungry, transportation would be crippled, et cetera. He pointed out that it would also have the effect of throwing Spain into the arms of Germany and that this would be a blow to the British cause.

To the foregoing I observed that in the nearly 12 months that Suñer has been in office he had never mentioned to me Spain's desire for commercial cooperation with the United States but that the Ministry of Industry and Commerce had initiated repeatedly the subject and that at the moment the Commercial Attaché<sup>34</sup> was discussing informally with the Ministry names [*sic*] what Spain would like to buy in the United States and what we would like to buy here and that because of my sincere friendship for Spain I wished to contribute to some satisfactory arrangement but that Spain must show a conciliatory attitude. He returned to the charge by saying that he felt sure that nothing could be accomplished until my relations with this Government were straightened out, begged me to be conciliatory and drew again his gloomy picture of what would happen in ensuing months unless Spain were assisted.

I remarked to the Ambassador that there were rumors current of impending changes in various Ministries and Departments. He replied immediately that as regards the Foreign Minister that seemed highly improbable since the whole tone and manner of Suñer in talking to him was one of a man who was firmly in the saddle.

The Ambassador's tone in concluding his visit became even more pleading and he implored me to again weigh the matter of my relations with Suñer and see if I could not suggest some solution; he also asked permission to call again tomorrow morning to learn my considered view adding that he himself would further study the matter.

I told Cárdenas when leaving that I wished to make it clear that it was I who had suffered an offense and that in these circumstances it was hardly incumbent upon me as the aggrieved to take the first step toward clearing up the situation which, as he insisted, was fraught with unfortunate consequences for his own country.

Meanwhile, rumors persist of an impending change in the office of Foreign Minister.

WEDDELL

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<sup>34</sup> Ralph H. Ackerman.

811.20 (D) Regulations/4714: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, September 24, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 11:55 p. m.]

857. Department's 508, September 18, 6 p. m. The Embassy has submitted all the considerations contained in the Department's telegram to the Spanish Government and will do so again.

The Spanish Government is showing more interest than ever in carrying out an economic program with the United States which of necessity would require contributions on the part of Spain comparable to contributions which the United States may be able to make.

The Embassy's purpose in suggesting to the Department a plan of cooperation is of course to improve our general position in Spain while taking care to ensure that any contribution we make will not result in making supplies available to Germany; and all aspects of our situation in Spain, many of which as the Department knows are very unfavorable, will receive the Embassy's attention in the carrying out of such a plan.

The Embassy is now awaiting the submission by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of a list of materials which Spain would like to obtain from the United States.

Meanwhile, as I pointed out in my telegram No. 819, September 11, 3 [7] p. m.,<sup>35</sup> the Ministry of Industry and Commerce has in general offered to make available to the United States in addition to a large number of ships it is willing to place in service between the United States and Spain, those commodities of which Spain has an exportable surplus which the United States may wish to acquire.

It is suggested that the Department furnish the Embassy for submission to the Spanish Government a list of the materials it wishes to acquire in Spain together with a list of commodities it wishes to export to Spain (which I suggest include moving pictures, news print and radios even though the exportation of the latter is subject to control) and also outline the other steps which the Department believes Spain should take vis-à-vis the United States. Such steps would presumably include:

- (1) the placing of the Spanish Government's relations with me personally on a normal basis;
- (2) modification of the Government-inspired attitude of hostility against the United States reflected by the public press;
- (3) strict compliance by the Spanish Government with the terms of the Treaty of Friendship and General Relations of 1902 between the United States and Spain<sup>36</sup> including those provisions exempting the Foreign Service from taxation;

<sup>35</sup> Not printed.

<sup>36</sup> Signed July 3, 1902, *Foreign Relations*, 1903, p. 721.

(4) assurances by the Spanish Government that the Foreign Service in Spain will be supplied with the amounts of gasoline and other materials and facilities required for the efficient carrying out of its functions.

WEDDELL

711.52/195 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, September 24, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 11 : 55 p. m.]

858. My 855, September 23, 6 p. m. Cárdenas called this morning and we went over much the same ground as yesterday save that I told him that until his previous visit I had no official information from his Government that the Foreign Minister had been offended by my remarks concerning Spain's sovereignty, especially having in mind his note of May 1, reported in my 551, June 15, 10 p. m. After considerable duplicating conversation he said he would draft a memorandum or note "informing" me of Suñer's attitude and would submit the draft to me. I told him I would be interested to see this and would acknowledge it. He inquired if in my acknowledgment I would be willing to suggest a cancellation of the last two notes exchanged between me and the Foreign Minister. I declined this. I added that even with his proposed memorandum and my reply this brought us no nearer to a solution of the basic difficulty, my continued inability to see the Chief of State. He then inquired if I would not suggest in my acknowledgment a visit to Suñer. I replied that I saw no immediate reason for this. At this point he brought up the telegram reported in my 857, September 24, 10 a. m.

I think there can be no doubt that this Government is now seriously concerned over the situation arising through Suñer's attitude toward this Embassy and its repercussion in Washington.

WEDDELL

852.111/190

*The Minister in Portugal (Fish) to the Secretary of State*

No. 206

LISBON, September 26, 1941.

[Received October 2.]

SIR: I have the honor to inform the Department that Mr. Paul H. Appleby, Under Secretary of Agriculture, and Mr. R. M. Evans, Director of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, arrived in Lisbon on September 17 from London with the intention of proceeding to Spain and Unoccupied France for the purpose of making a study of agricultural and economic conditions in those two countries.

Mr. Appleby informed the Legation that he and Mr. Evans had made application for Spanish visas on September 12 through the American Embassy in London and that the Spanish Embassy in London had referred their application to the Spanish Foreign Office with the request that the latter authorize the issuance of the visas in Lisbon. Mr. Appleby and Mr. Evans visited the Legation on September 18 and the Legation communicated immediately with the Spanish Embassy here. The latter advised the Legation that no authorization for the visas had been received and accordingly the Embassy in Madrid was immediately informed by telephone and was asked to support their application at the Foreign Office. Later in the day the Spanish Foreign Office advised the Madrid Embassy, which in turn informed this Legation, that it was aware of the application of these individuals but that before it could issue instructions to the Spanish Embassy at Lisbon authorizing the visas it required information concerning the motives for their travel to Spain.

As a result of this information a note was addressed by the Legation to the Spanish Embassy on September 18 (a copy of which is enclosed <sup>37</sup>) and on the following day the Embassy at Madrid was also advised of the motives of their visit and was requested to communicate directly with the Foreign Office on this subject. The Madrid Embassy was again informed that this was an urgent matter since Messrs. Appleby and Evans held reservations on the Clipper scheduled to depart from Lisbon on September 27 and that although, due to lack of time, they would probably not be able to visit France, they were still anxious to proceed to Madrid and Barcelona before returning to the United States.

Although the Legation has since communicated many times with the Spanish Embassy in Lisbon and the American Embassy at Madrid the authorization for these two visas has not been forthcoming, and accordingly Messrs. Appleby and Evans have given up their proposed visit to Spain and will return to the United States by the first available Clipper.

It is believed that this information will be of interest to the Department as reflecting the attitude of the Spanish authorities toward the United States and American Government officials. Every effort was made both by this Legation and by the Embassy at Madrid to obtain the necessary authorization from the Spanish Foreign Office for the issuance of these visas, and it can only be inferred that the Spanish Government's delay in making a decision in this case was deliberate and that it had no intention of authorizing the visit to Spain of the persons in question.

Respectfully yours,

BERT FISH

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<sup>37</sup> Not printed.

711.52/195 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, September 27, 1941—8 p. m.

524. Your 858, September 24, 5 p. m. The Department is convinced that Cardenas is honestly trying to clear up this unsatisfactory situation in the hope of improving general relations. His presence in Madrid may offer a satisfactory opportunity of withdrawing these notes, of which the Department feels we should not hesitate to take advantage. If, therefore, Cardenas should offer to return to you your note, the Department is of the opinion that you should reciprocate.

HULL

711.52/198 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, September 28, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 6:28 p. m.]

866. My 858, September 24, 5 p. m., and Department's 524, September 27, 8 p. m. Cárdenas called yesterday afternoon and told me he had just seen Franco and Suñer and that the latter purposes inviting me to call, most probably Tuesday,<sup>38</sup> to discuss general relations between our respective Governments and that following this meeting which he, Cárdenas, hoped and earnestly believes would and could be carried out in an agreeable atmosphere I would be immediately notified of Franco's intention to promptly receive me; Cárdenas thinks this would be the second or third proximo.

I told Cárdenas that I would await Suñer's invitation and hoped the interview would be a harmonious one.

Cárdenas then informed me that he had had long conversations with his people and that the need for help to Spain from the United States was "desperate", mentioning especially gasoline. In this connection he said an impression existed in certain official circles that we were at least inclined to procrastinate in granting export licenses for the commodity mentioned with a view to exercising pressure here. He referred specifically to the case of the steamships *Campomanes* and *Badalona*; see my 859, September 24, 6 p. m.<sup>39</sup> He himself did not share the feeling mentioned and had so informed his Government.

In stressing Spain's needs my visitor laid equal emphasis on Spain's helpless position vis-à-vis Germany.

The Ambassador further said he had talked at length concerning the hostility of the local press to the United States and had urged a more

<sup>38</sup> September 30.<sup>39</sup> Not printed.

moderate tone. The reply to this was that if American newspapers attacked Spain the Spanish press would strike back.

He had countered this by urging that at least *Arriba*, the official organ of the party, abstain from publishing offensive matter.

Continuing his remarks, the Ambassador said in strictest confidence that I must realize that in my conversations I was dealing with young and inexperienced men, men unversed in international relations, and that he hoped I would not overlook this in my approaching talks.

In conclusion, Cárdenas counseled me to say nothing to Suñer relative to withdrawing the two notes exchanged between the Minister and myself as suggested by the Nuncio. I replied that I would follow his suggestion.

WEDDELL

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711.52/199 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, September 30, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received October 1—8:05 a. m.]

868. Department's 525, September 27, 9 p. m.<sup>40</sup> My 866, September 28, 4 p. m. On his invitation I called on the Foreign Minister this morning. His attitude throughout the visit of nearly an hour was cordial and I endeavored to reciprocate.

After exchanging the usual civilities I told Suñer that I had learned authoritatively for the first time and from Cárdenas of his being offended by remarks made by me in the course of my interview of April 19 (reported in my 337, April 19, 6 p. m.) concerning Spain's sovereignty and that this offense could only have been provoked through misunderstanding as I certainly had no such intention. After much talk back and forth it was the joint sentiment that the matter be treated as liquidated. The Minister made no reference to the withdrawal of the two notes and I, having in mind Cárdenas' remarks, said nothing on this point.

I then told them [apparent omission] on the general subject of economic cooperation between our two countries and of augmenting this. The Minister observed that he wished to see these improved and augmented. I then referred to Spain's need of American products and of our desires to purchase certain Spanish products mentioning cork, zinc, mercury, possibly olive oil, et cetera.

The Minister said that Spain's needs fell into two categories:

First, those of a pressing nature and second, those concerning which discussions might be conducted. He said that gasoline which was

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<sup>40</sup> Not printed.

in the first category was not alone a need but a vital political matter, that delays in receiving this commodity had provoked disappointment and bad feeling not alone in the Government but among the people and that if Spain's nonbelligerency meant anything to the British cause Spain must not be "strangled" in respect to motor fuel. Continuing, he said that Spain's needs had been fixed by an agreement with Great Britain and the United States and he could not understand why deliveries were not made. To this I countered by remarking that I knew of no "agreement" on this subject to which the United States was a party; that over a long period we had allowed gasoline to be exported freely; that subsequently regulations had of necessity been imposed; and that as a matter of fact there was a great shortage of this fluid on the Eastern seaboard of the United States. Furthermore, I said, it seemed extraordinary to me that I should only have learned of Spain's gasoline needs through informal and indirect sources, never from the Ministry, his own, authoritatively concerning the needs of the country.

Following this I spoke at some length of our commercial relations, pointing out that while the Sub-secretary of Industry and Commerce had frequently discussed these with the Counselor <sup>40a</sup> and the Commercial Attaché, <sup>40b</sup> nothing had come from the Foreign Ministry and that what my Government desired to learn was whether Spain desired to cooperate in improving relations.

The Minister interrupted me here to say that these conversations on the part of the representative of the Ministry of Commerce had been "indiscreet" and unwarranted and that discussions of this kind might lead to confusion. He seemed to have no answer to my observation about his own failure to initiate economic discussions with me, save to leave the impression that the abnormal situation existing between the Embassy and his Ministry had been responsible. (The foregoing argument, however, does not hold water, for Suñer had been Foreign Minister for a full 6 months before the "sovereignty" incident occurred. It is, therefore, obvious to me that it is only increasing economic pressure that has brought about the present attempt through the instrumentality of Cárdenas to normalize relations.)

The Minister then referred to my desire to see the Chief of State and said that this would be arranged within a few days. He said further that with regard to gasoline which was a matter of such pressing and vital importance for Spain he would send me a memorandum thereon, setting forth the Spanish viewpoint concerning delays in deliveries.

I took occasion here to point out that if the two Governments arrived at any arrangement relative to economic matters, an increase in Em-

<sup>40a</sup> Joseph Flack.

<sup>40b</sup> Ralph H. Ackerman.



bassy and consular personnel would become necessary and that I would, therefore, request him to instruct the proper functionary of his Ministry with a view for having such increases ratified, at the same time pointing out that our Embassy staff was small in comparison with that of Germany, Great Britain and other European countries while the number of our Consulates showed a sharp decline from former years.

On leaving I referred to my visit to the Ministry, accompanying Colonel Donovan, and asked if he cared to make any comment on Spain's present policy in the world conflict. To this he replied textually, "There has been no change in our policy."

WEDDELL

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711.52/200: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, October 1, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 9:04 p. m.]

873. My 868, September 30, 7 p. m. If the Department approves I intend at my approaching interview with General Franco to talk with him concerning economic cooperation along the lines set forth in my following telegram No. 874<sup>41</sup> and to leave a memorandum with him to that effect.

Following this I propose to inform him verbally that in my interview with the Foreign Minister on Tuesday when the question of gasoline supplies from the United States was mentioned he had remarked that if Spain's non-belligerency meant anything to the British cause Spain must not be "strangled" in respect to motor fuel. And that further in this connection I wished to suggest to him in the most friendly way that a threat of belligerency on the part of his Government would automatically render it impossible for the United States to continue to discuss economic cooperation.

As I may see the Caudillo on Friday<sup>42</sup> but probably on Saturday the Department's early reply is requested.

WEDDELL

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<sup>41</sup> *Infra.*

<sup>42</sup> October 3.

711.52/201 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, October 1, 1941—8 p. m.  
[Received October 1—7:50 p. m.]

874. My 873, October 1, 7 p. m. The following is the text of the proposed memorandum:

In connection with informal representations made to this Embassy indicating a desire on the part of the Spanish Government to improve trade relations with the United States, I wish to inform Your Excellency that my Government has been and is still prepared to use its efforts to increase American purchases of Spanish products and thus give Spain additional purchasing power in the United States. In turn it is prepared to sell to Spain freely those products of which it has an exportable surplus. If certain products cannot be supplied or can be supplied only in limited amounts it is because of its shortages of such products in the United States due to our enormous defense effort. I might add that shortages of materials are becoming more acute daily and that the longer we delay in placing Spanish-American economic relations on an equitable basis the more difficult it will become for the United States to make available many of the products which Spain desires.

In my recent conversation with the Foreign Minister, he referred to gasoline. I wish to point out that the United States has over a long period of time sold to Spain all the gasoline which Spain was able to transport with its existing tanker capacity and that whatever delays have occurred in issuing export permits have become administrative delays due to the fact that exportation of gasoline is restricted in the United States for reasons of military defense.

Moreover my Government has continued to supply Spain with petroleum products and other urgently needed products in the face of a public attitude of increasing hostility on the part of Spain and despite the fact that Spain has excluded from its markets also American products except those which it could obtain only in the United States or which were obtainable elsewhere only at inordinately high prices. These products have been supplied to Spain in the face also of obstacles which the Spanish Government has placed in the way of the export to the United States of products of which Spain has had an exportable surplus.

In brief, the Government of the United States is prepared to examine the possibility of maintaining and in certain cases of increasing its exports to Spain of products which Spain requires, but it must know what the Spanish Government is prepared to contribute in order to place this trade on a reciprocal, friendly basis.

WEDDELL

711.52/201 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, October 3, 1941—midnight.

538. Your 874, October 1, 8 p. m. It is suggested that the opening words of paragraph 3 be modified to read as follows:

“Moreover my government has continued to supply Spain with petroleum products and other urgently needed products despite the fact that the Spanish Government has excluded” et cetera.

HULL

711.52/203 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, October 6, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 11 : 10 p. m.]

879. My 873, October 1, 7 p. m. I called on the Chief of State this morning. He received me with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The atmosphere was affable.

My remarks followed exactly the line of those contemplated in my 874, October 1, 8 p. m., as amended.

When I finished the Caudillo spoke at some length of Spain's present difficulties in obtaining supplies easily available prior to the war referring specifically to wheat, cotton and gasoline as absolute necessities for his country.

He also mentioned Spain's concurrent difficulties in securing the necessary exchange to pay for these. I interrupted here to again point out that my country had been hindered in its desire to purchase certain Spanish products of which there was an exportable surplus the acquisition of which would have provided foreign exchange, mentioning by way of illustration, zinc. To this the Caudillo seemed to have no reply. I added that the commodities he had mentioned were such as Spain could normally obtain in the United States but that if trade between our countries were to be on an equitable basis we must sell other products. I mentioned here to illustrate the exclusion of American typewriting and calculating machines and radios. Continuing I referred to the fact that over a full year no official statement concerning Spain's economic needs had ever been made to me although with regard to gasoline I had of course learned of this from CAMPSA and through other informal channels.

The Caudillo remarked here that there were two channels open for communicating with my Government, my Embassy and his representative in Washington, and that the Department was informed through the latter. To this I could only reply that I was uninformed and added that it was to be regretted that having in mind this Embassy's ex-

pressed desire to cooperate no use has been made by this Foreign Office of its service.

In discussing the general economic situation the Caudillo emphasized that if exporting countries such as the United States abandoned their usual export markets it would mean that in the long run substitutes would be found for many products and export outlets eventually closed forever. I answered that it was this sort of thing that made the contemplation of postwar peace problems so disturbing.

I then told the Caudillo I had another matter, one of some delicacy, to mention and that in this connection I was glad of the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs since it concerned an observation of his. I then recalled his statement of last Tuesday reported in my 873 of October 1, 7 p. m.,<sup>43</sup> and made the statement proposed therein.

The Caudillo turned as if to answer me when the Minister stopped him with a deprecatory gesture and said that his remark was "not a threat but a reflection"; that the situation here resulting from the gasoline lack was extremely bad and was not alone provoking hostility but crippling transportation and that he thought my Government should be fully advised of this. I answered this by recalling my previous statements made to him on Tuesday and repeating those made at the beginning of the interview stressing especially that delays in supplying gasoline were due to administrative adjustments owing to restrictions on the exportation of gasoline for reasons of military defense.

In conclusion I asked the Caudillo if my assumption based on the informal statements and inquiries of his Minister of Industry and Commerce that the Spanish Government was interested in examining the possibility of improving commercial relations was correct to which he specifically answered in the affirmative. I then said that to give practical effect to this wish he would doubtless issue necessary instructions to the appropriate Ministry adding that since technical matters would have to be considered this would perhaps be the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Replying, Franco said that instruction would go to the Foreign Ministry and be handled by its technicians.

WEDDELL

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711.52/191 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, October 6, 1941—8 p. m.

539. The Department is disturbed by persistence of reports to the effect that petroleum products and particularly gasoline supplied by

<sup>43</sup> *Ante*, p. 926; for report of the conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, see the Ambassador's telegram No. 868, September 30, 7 p. m., p. 924.

this country to Spanish tankers are transferred at sea to Axis ships or reexported to Axis destinations from Spain. These reports are in part based upon statements made by officers and seamen of Spanish tankers.

In view of the assurances contained in your telegram no. 834 of September 16, 5 p. m., you are requested to reconsider this matter in the light of the above and report your findings by telegraph for the information of high authorities in this country.

HULL

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711.52/205 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, October 7, 1941—9 p. m.  
[Received October 8—5:38 a. m.]

886. Reference Department's 539, October 6, 8 p. m. A petroleum expert of the Ministry of Economic Warfare recently arrived from London in order to investigate similar reports. During the last 4 days he has made an intensive study of petroleum figures furnished by CAMPSA. He reports that he has found no hesitation on the part of CAMPSA in furnishing him with the figures he has required or in showing him the books and other records of the company and he has found no discrepancies among these figures and records. He has already suggested to CAMPSA that the British authorities be permitted to check the amount of petroleum products unloaded in Spain in order to make comparisons with cargoes loaded and CAMPSA immediately agreed to this procedure. The British authorities are proceeding to establish a system for carrying out such checking of cargoes both on the peninsula and in the Canary Islands.

It is the opinion of this expert of the British Embassy that refueling of Axis vessels by Spanish vessels is not being carried on in any systematic way or with the consent or knowledge of the Spanish Government or CAMPSA. He said it was conceivable that there might be isolated cases of individual masters of tankers supplying small quantities but the acute shortage of petroleum products in Spain, due principally to delays on the part of the United States Government in issuing export licenses makes extremely improbable any systematic supplying of Axis vessels on the high seas.

With reference to possible shipments from Spain to Axis destinations, he has found no evidence yet of any such shipments and believes that there is no systematic shipment of petroleum products to the Axis countries. Again he and the British Embassy recognize that there are probably isolated cases of small quantities of petroleum products disposed of clandestinely but they consider that the aggregate amounts involved would be insignificant.

This Embassy has no information which would lead it to reach other conclusions than those set forth above. In this connection it would be of interest to this Embassy to know whether the officers and men of Spanish tankers referred to in the Department's telegram mentioned, allege that they actually witnessed the transfer of petroleum from Spanish tankers to Axis vessels.

WEDDELL

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740.0011 European War 1939/16928

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

[WASHINGTON,] November 19, 1941.

The Spanish Ambassador called to see me this afternoon at his request.

The Ambassador spoke with the greatest concern regarding the news that has come from France today<sup>44</sup> and expressed the fear that the giving in by France to Germany with regard to North Africa would make the situation of the Spanish Government far more difficult. He said that only a miracle had saved them from invasion by Germany so far and that he could only hope against hope that they might still be spared. He expressed the belief that opinion in the last two months in Spain had veered considerably against Germany and that even the Falange itself was now by no means convinced that a German victory was even possible or desirable from the Spanish point of view.

The Ambassador complained in regard to continued press attacks against Spain, particularly with reference to the shipment of certain raw materials from the United States to Spain. I said that in my judgment this kind of press attack would undoubtedly continue until and unless the public in the United States were convinced the Spanish Government was not, in reality, playing on Germany's side. He said that I knew well what his own personal feelings were and what his own convictions were, and that he sincerely believed the policy of his own Government had been modified considerably in recent months, and that both General Franco and his Foreign Minister were playing for time in order to prevent actual occupation. I said that in that connection we could only make the earnest plea that the Spanish Government, should Germany undertake measures to expansion in North Africa, would not be tempted by German offers to extend their own sphere of occupation in North Africa. I said that if such a step were taken it could only be regarded by this Government as an overt and definite indication that

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<sup>44</sup> News concerning the recall of Gen. Maxime Weygand from North Africa, where he was French Delegate General; for correspondence, see pp. 455 ff.

Spain was definitely pursuing Hitler's strategy and was thereby greatly endangering legitimate interests of the United States. The Ambassador said he understood this fully and had already made his views clear to his own Government in regard to this possibility.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

762.9411/329 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, December 2, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 9 : 55 p. m.]

1009. The Foreign Minister returned to Madrid yesterday. I called on him this morning. He received me affably.

After conventional inquiries concerning his visit to Berlin I said that I had read his speech and various statements with interest and that as regards the [apparent omission] and as I had told his Senior Aide I regretted the reference to my own country as it seemed not altogether in harmony with the tenor of our conversations on October 6 with the Caudillo. I also remarked that his allusions linking communism in Russia with that [*sic*] communism in the United States had no basis that I could see and although there was a Communist Party in my [country?] its voting strength in recent elections was one-tenth of one percent; further that communism was as offensive to us as to Spaniards although there were probably more Communists in this country.

The Minister said that his speech was delivered just following the receipt in Berlin of news that because of "his visit to the German capital and the dismissal of Weygand there had followed Under Secretary Welles' announcement of the cancellation of permits for exports to Spain". I immediately countered this by saying that I thought he had been misinformed and he then admitted that communications from Cárdenas had clarified the matter. Continuing, the Minister said that he had endeavored in his speech to give it an historical setting and then added that it was unthinkable that a government should not be free on a solemn occasion such as the recent gathering to make its views and sentiments plainly known. To this I remarked that what I regretted was the utterance of statements which did not correspond to my information; that as a matter of fact the Franco movement had been favored by the passage of our Embargo Act,<sup>45</sup> since the Republicans had the money and could have made payment had this been permitted. I added that I realized that there was a measure of sentiment in the United States favorable to the Republic due certainly in part to the

<sup>45</sup> Approved January 8, 1937 ; 50 Stat. 3.

active propaganda carried on by Republican leaders who were able to spend money freely for these purposes; that there was at least a slight analogy between this and the situation existing here where German gold seemed to exercise a powerful influence on the newspapers. (Much to my surprise he accepted this without wincing.)

The Minister then said that if the bases of our relations with the United States are [“] precarious” the fault lies with the United States. I replied that I could not accept this but that I desired to make quite clear that our general policy in the world struggle was to give every support to Great Britain as in fact to every country fighting Hitler; that our relations with Spain were primarily if not exclusively political and had their bases in the statement just made.

The Minister then returned to the subject of our relations remarking that he was, of course, aware of the negotiations which had been going on and that he was rather expecting something from Cárdenas. I replied that I too was awaiting a communication from Washington and that when received I would doubtless have occasion to again call on him.

I then recalled to the Minister his statement to Donovan in February in which he expressed conviction of German victory and asked if his recent trip had altered his views in any way. This gave him the opportunity for a monologue in which it was difficult to determine if his statements represented whistling in the dark or real conviction. In enthusiastic terms he described Germany as a solid military unit with the will to triumph. I interrupted him here to ask what had become of the 5 million Communists of 1932 who had to sacrifice some 80 delegates to the Reichstag adding that it was inconceivable that they were all converted. He answered airily that they were dead, in exile working in labor camps or lodged in concentration camps.

Continuing, the Minister said that he had extensive conversations with the various Foreign Ministers and everywhere found complete unity of purpose while from Russia came news of atrocious conditions there in which even cannibalism was practiced.

Following this I inquired of the Minister what would be the status of the various countries of Europe in the event of German victory and what would become of the sovereignty of Spain. He answered that the sovereignty of Spain would be greatly strengthened adding that Europe had always had one powerful country, that Great Britain exercised this hegemony during three centuries and was always “very hard on Spain” and now it is Germany’s turn to lead. Smaller countries, citing Holland, he said, would naturally have an “incomplete” sovereignty. In exchange for all this the menace of communism would be removed. I said here to the Minister that judging by declarations of Germany’s rulers and by their recent acts, English hegemony was a far different thing from anything that Germany would offer and



that even small Nordic, certainly non-Nordic countries would find this out to their cost. He seemed unaffected by this.

WEDDELL

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711.52/214: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

MADRID, December 8, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received December 9—9: 15 a. m.]

1024. For the Secretary and the Under Secretary. I am constrained to bring to your notice that I am being really embarrassed through failure to be more fully informed concerning negotiations being conducted by the Department with the Spanish Government through Ambassador Cárdenas.

I equally feel it my duty to report that the general impression here is that in effect, if not in declaration, we are applying an embargo on exports to Spain especially in the matter of petroleum products. The effect of this on public opinion is highly adverse especially in the case of those elements who are otherwise inclined to be favorable to our policies and ideals.

Returning to the question of petroleum products the suspension of exports from the United States until such time as an understanding can be reached with Spain may take weeks. Meanwhile the scarcity of these products here is daily more acute and threatens the entire economic structure. Franco himself is reliably reported to be closely following petroleum developments and the matter thus takes on an added political significance at this time.

In these circumstances I think it my duty to recommend that favorable consideration be given to the prompt release of at least 1 if not 2 of the Spanish tankers now lying in the United States. I do not overlook the critical international situation but in the case of any vessels proceeding to a Spanish port, control over them can be applied almost up to their entry. I also think that action in the above sense would incline the Spanish Government to accept the control which the Department is suggesting.

In a previous telegram I suggested that the Spanish situation should be studied in the light of boldest realism carefully weighing what the maintenance of existing non-belligerency means to the general cause. Reiterate this recommendation.

WEDDELL

811.20 (D) Regulations/5316 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)*

WASHINGTON, December 13, 1941—7 p. m.

662. Your 974, November 21, 7 p. m.,<sup>46</sup> and 1024, December 8, 8 p. m. The Embassy is under a misapprehension in assuming that the Department has been conducting negotiations with the Spanish Government through Ambassador Cárdenas. There have been no negotiations at this end thus far and the Embassy may rest assured that it will be informed of any negotiations undertaken hereafter.

No embargo has been applied on exports to Spain and it is understood that some commodities are being licensed in the ordinary routine. On the other hand, it is true that certain licenses are being rejected or held in abeyance pending settlement of the basic question of the petroleum supply.

In this connection a study of the figures in the hands of the Department, which are understood to be CAMPSA's figures, has revealed apparent discrepancies and created serious doubts as to their accuracy. The tankers now off Port Arthur applied for gas oil, whereas our figures indicate that Spain's gas oil inventory including Canary Islands is already at a relatively high level.

If the situation with regard to any specific product is acute consideration may be given to an adequately supported request, upon receiving assurance that our proposed plan of control will be agreed to and without awaiting the fully detailed information on all products. Meanwhile it is understood that the Spanish Embassy has requested its Government to furnish the preliminary data outlined in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Department's telegram 618 of November 26, 3 p. m.,<sup>46</sup> and the Department is awaiting these data, which the Embassy states have not yet been received.

HULL

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<sup>46</sup> Not printed.

**UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS**

(See Volume I, pages 1-339 and 597-1024.)

## YUGOSLAVIA

### EFFORTS OF THE UNITED STATES TO ENCOURAGE YUGOSLAV RESISTANCE TO NAZI AGGRESSION; INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA BY GERMANY

740.0011 European War 1939/7530 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, January 9, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received January 9—5:28 p. m.]

13. A responsible Foreign Office official told us this morning that we "could have no idea" of the effect of the President's speeches of December 29<sup>1</sup> and January 3 [6]<sup>2</sup> in this part of the world, particularly in Bulgaria which at the moment was in such an exposed position. He felt that the former conviction in that country that Germany was certain to be victorious had now given way to the belief that Germany cannot win. He hoped that we would "follow it up" since the President's speeches were very "salutary" in Sofia.

In the absence of reliable information concerning Filoff's<sup>3</sup> visit to Vienna, he personally believed that if the Bulgarian Prime Minister did see Nazi leaders it was for the purpose of resisting German demands and explaining why they could not be met.

He considered the Balkan situation dangerous. With reference to Germany's former assurances that she wanted peace in this region he said that German policy had completely changed and that she was now prepared to strike the moment she considered her vital interests in the Balkans were being jeopardized. Events in Rumania had shown what the German concept of "peace" was. In reply to a question he said that Yugoslavia has received no assurances from Germany for about a month.

LANE

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<sup>1</sup> Department of State *Bulletin*, January 4, 1941, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Documents on American Foreign Relations* (Boston, World Peace Foundation, 1941), vol. III, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Bogdan Filoff, Bulgarian Prime Minister.

740.0011 European War 1939/7566 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, January 11, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received January 11—4:38 p. m.]

16. My 609, December 31, 11 a. m., 1940,<sup>5</sup> and 13, January 9, 6 p. m., 1941. I complained to the Prime Minister<sup>6</sup> this morning that some of the strongest passages of the President's speech of December 29 had been omitted in official Avala news agency reports. I referred specifically to the portions mentioning Germany's invasion of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Holland, Belgium and France, regardless of non-aggression pacts with those countries and to the passage referring to concentration camps and chains as being the altars of dictatorships. The Prime Minister said that he had twice given orders all of the President's speeches were to be published in full. In my presence he telephoned to the Chief of the Press Bureau which is responsible only to the Presidency and demanded an explanation. The Prime Minister then informed me that according to the Press Bureau, the Foreign Office had eliminated passages which they thought might be offensive to Hitler.

As to the President's speech of January 6, the official text of which has just been received, I left a copy with the Prime Minister who said that he had assurances that this had been published in full. We are checking this and will telegraph a report on Monday.<sup>7</sup>

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/7906 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, January 25, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received 2:05 p. m.]

52. Personal for the Secretary. My 42, 46,<sup>8</sup> and 51.<sup>9</sup> From remarks made by Prince Paul,<sup>10</sup> Cvetkovic, and Maček<sup>11</sup> to Donovan<sup>12</sup> and me, it is clear that Yugoslav Government is today determined to protect its territory against attack. Opinion here is that if Turkey and Bulgaria should make known similar general attitude, three countries

<sup>5</sup> Not printed.<sup>6</sup> Dragiša Cvetković.<sup>7</sup> January 13.<sup>8</sup> Neither printed.<sup>9</sup> *Infra*.<sup>10</sup> Prince Regent of Yugoslavia.<sup>11</sup> Vlada Maček, Yugoslav Vice President of the Council of Ministers, and President of the Croatian Peasant Party.<sup>12</sup> William J. Donovan, personal representative of the Secretary of the Navy on special mission in Europe.

could probably protect their integrity. While Prince distrusts Bulgaria, Cvetkovic's apparent willingness to improve relations with Bulgaria suggests possibility of agreement on policy. Reported improved relations between Turkey and Bulgaria also a favorable sign.

In harmony with President's message of January 6 and your statement before House Foreign Affairs Committee on January 15,<sup>13</sup> it seems in interest of Turkey, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia to resist aggression but mutual distrust may prevent their initiating joint policy.

If you feel suggestion could informally be made regarding advisability joint defense policy, I believe action should be taken in Washington to allay distrust of one another. Present moment propitious due Italian reverses. Even if our advice disregarded, nothing would be lost.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/7905 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, January 25, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received January 25—1:02 p. m.]

51. My 50, January 25, noon.<sup>14</sup> He<sup>15</sup> believed there should be Balkan unity and had done his best to obtain it, but throughout expressed distrust of Bulgaria. He felt sure that Bulgaria would permit passage of German troops, but thought that Donovan's explanation of our position in Sofia may do some good and make Boris<sup>16</sup> hesitate.

He stated flatly Yugoslavia would refuse consent of the passage of German troops and would resist attack. In reply to question as to what this country would do if German troops entered Bulgaria he said, "It is most difficult. I believe we will attack. It encircles us. But my people are not all agreed. The time has come to act on principle, to abandon expediency".

He still felt that Germany did not wish trouble in the Balkans. After discussion he said that the establishment of a Balkan line was necessary in order finally to defeat Germany.

LANE

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<sup>13</sup> For the Secretary's statement, see Department of State *Bulletin*, January 15, 1941, p. 85.

<sup>14</sup> Not printed.

<sup>15</sup> Prince Paul.

<sup>16</sup> King of Bulgaria.

740.0011 European War 1939/7906 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, January 29, 1941—9 p. m.

15. Your 52, January 25, 2 p. m. Although it is not the practice of the Department to initiate directly such a policy as suggested in the last paragraph of your telegram under reference, no occasion is lost to bring to the attention of the chiefs of mission in Washington of the southeastern European countries the position of the United States Government with regard to the present European conflict. Particular emphasis is laid on American aid to Great Britain and Greece. Furthermore, the Department is well aware that its position is emphasized by the use made by you and other American chiefs of mission of the contents of the radio bulletins which, of course, always contain the texts of important statements made by the President, the Secretary, and others.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/8354

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*

## AIDE-MÉMOIRE

His Majesty's Ambassador<sup>27</sup> has been instructed to inform the United States Government in confidence that the Turkish Government have recently invited the Yugoslav Government to start conversations with a view to deciding on common action in the face of possibilities arising from German troop concentrations in Roumania or of German pressure, infiltration or attack on one or more of the Balkan States. The Yugoslav Government have as yet only made a very half-hearted response to this invitation and His Majesty's Minister at Belgrade has been instructed to try to induce them to send satisfactory instructions to their Ambassador at Angora so as to enable conversations to proceed.

His Majesty's Government feel that it would be most helpful if the United States Government could see their way to instructing their representatives at Belgrade and Angora to encourage the Yugoslav and Turkish Governments to follow up this initial effort.

WASHINGTON, February 4, 1941.

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<sup>27</sup> Viscount Halifax.

740.0011 European War 1939/8354

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] February 5, 1941.

The British Ambassador called at his request and handed me an *aide-mémoire* (copy attached).<sup>18</sup> He said that his Government hoped that this Government, through its representatives at Ankara and Belgrade, might see its way clear to encourage Turkey and Yugoslavia to work together in resisting outside aggression. I replied that we were closely observing the situation to which he referred, together with related conditions in that area from day to day, and that we would continue to keep every phase of the matter in mind and to give it such attention and consideration as might be practicable from the standpoint of promoting and preserving peace and opposing further military activities in that area.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

740.0011 European War 1939/8214 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, February 8, 1941—noon.

[Received 12:28 p. m.]

78. Informed by reliable source that Military Attaché of the Soviet Legation spontaneously informed Minister of War a few days ago that Germany did not intend to invade Bulgaria or Yugoslavia but would attack Turkey in order to gain possession of Istanbul and the Straits. When asked what attitude Soviet Russia would assume he answered, "We will do nothing."

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/8231a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, February 9, 1941—10 p. m.

21. In view of recent discussions of this Government's position with regard to the developing world situation we desire you to make clear to the Yugoslav Government just what our position is as outlined below.

In a recent statement to the nation the President said "we are planning our own defense with the utmost urgency and in its vast scale we must integrate the war needs of Britain."

<sup>18</sup> *Supra.*



This continues to be the keystone of American National defense policy and the developing situation has intensified this effort. We are convinced that Britain will win. Production of war material in America has already been undertaken on the vast scale indicated and the providing of facilities to meet British requirements will continue ever increasingly until the final victory. The President has pointed out on several occasions there can be no deviation from this policy as in his own words "we know now that a nation can have peace with the Nazis only at the price of total surrender."

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/8283 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, February 11, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received 10:45 p. m.]

86. Department's 119, December 10, 3 p. m.<sup>19</sup> We are informed by a Government source<sup>20</sup> that the program of the Communist Party in Yugoslavia has since the war been one of peace and neutrality as opposed to its former advocacy of nationalism and anti-fascism. Thus the slogan of defending the frontiers has been changed to one of keeping out of the imperialist war started by the pluto-democracies. Our informant stressed the activity in Yugoslavia of the Communist Party amongst all classes despite the efforts of the police to suppress it and maintained that if free elections were held the party would win in Serbia. He attributed the success of Communist propaganda in part to the use of the prevalent hatred of Germany to encourage the people to turn to Russia as the only hope of the Slavs. He mentioned the wide dissemination of propaganda leaflets, riots, and struggles with police, and pointed out that the present policy of the party was to embarrass the Government by demands for impossible liberal reforms and demobilization.

From another Government source<sup>21</sup> I am told that a month ago a meeting of Communists from all parts of Yugoslavia took place in Belgrade at which dissatisfaction of Moscow was expressed regarding failure of the Communist Party to penetrate through official circles. Informant said that popularity of Soviet Russia in Yugoslavia greatly diminished following conclusion of nonaggression pact with Germany and partition of Poland. Comintern realizing unpopularity of Soviet Union has now decided on change of policy and is endeavoring to persuade Yugoslavs that present aim of Communists is to further pan-Slavism. I was cautioned not to believe that this change represents

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<sup>19</sup> Not printed.

<sup>20</sup> Apparently Fran Kulovec, Minister without Portfolio.

<sup>21</sup> Apparently Miho Krek, Minister of Education.

general policy of Soviet Government but is merely for the consumption of Yugoslavs and perhaps Bulgars. In Greece for instance Communist propaganda is anti-German and anti-Italian as this line would find more sympathy with Greek people because of Italian attack on Greece.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/8273 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, February 11, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 8 : 30 p. m.]

89. Department's 21, February 9, 10 p. m. I explained our attitude to Foreign Minister <sup>22</sup> today.

In addition I expressed my personal opinion that countries which do not resist aggression are not worthy of independence and need not count on our support when political and geographical readjustments are made after the war. If Department could see its way clear to making similar statement to Fotić <sup>23</sup> as a corollary to President's statement in message of January 6th that we are committed to full support of all people who resist aggression I believe even at this late hour in present critical situation in Balkans the result would be salutary.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/8298 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, February 12, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received February 12—1:02 p.m.]

93. Am advised by high Government source that Cvetkovic is going to Berlin this week. Same source indicates rising disinclination of Army leaders to resist in event of German demands. He said "it is by no means certain that Yugoslav Government will resist aggression."

Fears are borne out by silence of Prince Paul, who promised to communicate with me early this week, and by my inability to see Cvetkovic. See my 81 and 83.<sup>24</sup>

LANE

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<sup>22</sup> Aleksandar Cincar-Markovic.

<sup>23</sup> Constantin Fotitch, Yugoslav Minister in the United States.

<sup>24</sup> Neither printed.

740.0011 European War 1939/8361 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, February 13, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received February 14—6:30 a. m.]

96. Department's 21.<sup>25</sup> In talks today with officials I learned that our position as stated by Department to Bulgarian Minister and by MacMurray<sup>26</sup> and me in Ankara and here had made strong impression.

One very important official said that our action might yet dissuade Bulgaria provided that Bulgaria wished to be dissuaded. As to Yugoslavia and Turkey he said that our attitude is discouraging: Officially we say that we do not intend to enter war, yet unofficially we advise small countries to resist. I replied that if United States were threatened with invasion we would certainly resist and that we are not suggesting to Yugoslavia or any other country to take offensive action. Again I emphasized reasons for helping Britain, China and Greece. He said Bulgarian situation is still critical but worst may still be averted. Further comments in my 97.<sup>27</sup>

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/8392a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, February 14, 1941—7 p. m.

24. My 21, February 9, 10 p. m. In conformity with the desire of the President I conveyed the following message to the Yugoslav Minister for transmission to his Government:

"The President at this moment when peaceful nations are seeking a policy to insure their own integrity is convinced that any victory on behalf of the predatory powers even if it only be in the diplomatic field would but pave the way for fresh demands accompanied by threats of force against the very independence of the nation thus menaced. The President also desires it to be realized that the so-called Lend-Lease Bill<sup>28</sup> now before the Congress and which has been passed by the House of Representatives and by the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate permits in its present form for the President to supply the materials of war to those nations that are now the victims of aggression or which might be threatened with aggression."

HULL.

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<sup>25</sup> Dated February 9, 10 p. m., p. 941.

<sup>26</sup> John Van A. MacMurray, Ambassador in Turkey.

<sup>27</sup> Not printed.

<sup>28</sup> Enacted March 11, 1941; 55 Stat. 31.

740.0011 European War 1939/8450 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, February 18, 1941—1 p. m.  
 [Received February 18—12: 35 p. m.]

110. I received your 24, February 14, 7 p. m., on Saturday evening<sup>29</sup> during the course of an official concert at which the Prime Minister and other members of the Government were present. During the intermission I requested to have a brief interview with the Prime Minister but this request was refused without reference to Cvetkovic. Undoubtedly he had given orders to grant no interviews to foreign diplomatic representatives.

On Sunday morning I spoke personally to the Minister of the Court requesting an interview with the Prince Regent in order to acquaint him with the text of an important telegram containing a message from the President of the United States. I was told that a message from the Yugoslav Minister at Washington had already been received but that my request for an audience would be submitted to the Prince. Yesterday I was informed by a court official that the Prince was "so busy" as to make it almost impossible for him to receive me. I replied that I considered it vital to have an audience with the Prince especially as I had not been able to see the Prime Minister and I hoped that I would not be obliged to telegraph my Government that it was not possible to approach the Chief of State. Last evening I was informed that the Prince would "do the impossible" and receive me today.

I mention the foregoing in such detail so as to give the Department an idea of the great secrecy with which present diplomatic activities of the Yugoslav Government are shrouded and their obvious reluctance to be questioned regarding the visit of Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to Germany. I shall of course telegraph further as soon as I have been received by the Prince.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/8460 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, February 18, 1941—8 p. m.  
 [Received 9: 14 p. m.]

115. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. Prince Paul said to me today very privately that trip to Berghof was made at suggestion of Germany but that situation has not been changed in any way. Only

<sup>29</sup> February 15.

request made by Germany was regarding adherence to Tripartite Pact.<sup>30</sup> Yugoslavia refused.

He expressed great appreciation for President's message and manner in which it was delivered to Fotić.<sup>31</sup> He assumed message meant we hoped Yugoslavia would resist German aggression. This he will do if Yugoslavia is attacked but he cannot attack Bulgaria in the event that German troops enter Bulgaria as this would put Yugoslavia in the wrong before the world. Yugoslavia's military position however will become untenable if German troops enter Bulgaria. Germany could then attack Yugoslavia either through Temisvar or through Bulgaria and resistance here would not last more than 2 weeks at outside. Yugoslav frontier opposite Temisvar is only unfortified part. For political reasons troops must be retained in Croatia and Slovenia. He hoped we would realize very great difficulty confronting him. General Fotić explained to him yesterday great difficulty of resisting with a million men against united German and Italian and perhaps Bulgarian and Hungarian Armies.

He said to me that I found him in a very pessimistic mood and he repeated twice "I wish that I were dead". He said that as Prince Regent, he had responsibility for acting as trustee for a minor and consequently he expected to be blamed for anything he did. He asked me "What do you expect me to do?" He said even if the United States helped him, Yugoslavia would be finished before our assistance arrived and the country would be destroyed in the meantime. He said Germans had made their plans with fiendish cunning as they are continually assuring Yugoslavia there is no danger of attack. He, of course, does not believe assurances but can make no complaint as things are at present. He said that Hitler and Ribbentrop<sup>32</sup> had been "frightfully amiable" and gave signs of greatest friendship.

He was depressed over Bulgarian-Turkish Pact.<sup>33</sup> He blames Rendel<sup>34</sup> for believing Boris and allowing him to surround himself with pro-German advisers. Now it is too late.

He expressed belief that Germany will shortly move in Balkans as the Axis now requires victories.

Despite his pessimism as to immediate future he expressed confidence in ultimate victory of Britain.

LANE

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<sup>30</sup> Signed September 27, 1940, between Japan, Germany, and Italy; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CCIV, p. 386.

<sup>31</sup> Secretary Hull delivered this message personally to the Yugoslav Legation, giving it to Minister Fotitch for transmittal to his Government.

<sup>32</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister.

<sup>33</sup> Signed at Ankara, February 17, 1941, reaffirming policies of friendship and nonaggression; for text, see Martens, *Nouveau recueil général de traités*, 3e sér., tome 39 (Leipzig, 1941), p. 357.

<sup>34</sup> George W. Rendel, British Minister in Bulgaria.

740.0011 European War 1939/8580 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, February 22, 1941—1 p. m.

30. Having read your 115, February 18, 8 p. m., the President wishes you to seek an immediate audience with the Prince Regent and to state the following:

"I am addressing this message to Your Royal Highness with a view to emphasizing the interest of the United States in the outcome of the war. I fully appreciate the difficult and vital problems facing you and the Yugoslav Government, but I most earnestly wish to point out that the United States is looking not merely to the present but to the future. I wish to convey to you my feeling that the world in general regards with very real sympathy any nation which resists attack, both military or diplomatic, by the predatory powers.

The examples of Abyssinia, China and Greece are in point. Abyssinia won world sympathy by a brief though unsuccessful resistance—and Abyssinia will be restored.

China seemed capable of making no resistance in the modern sense of the word—but after 4 years China is still resisting and has the sympathy of the world—with an excellent chance of being reconstituted in her independence in some way at some date.

The Greek cause looked completely hopeless in view of an Italian army and air force of overwhelming proportions. The cause of Greek independence will win in the end.

The rear guard action fought by Norway for 2 or 3 months means that all of us will work for the restoration of Norwegian independence.

I am convinced that our type of civilization and the war in whose outcome we are vitally interested will be definitely helped by resistance on the part of the nations which suffer from aggression."

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/8574 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, February 23, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received February 24—10:25 a. m.]

123. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. Department's 30.<sup>34a</sup> After I had read President's message to Prince Regent this evening Prince spoke bitterly of Bulgaria's perfidy and of stupidity of British diplomacy which until short time ago had failed to understand Boris' real intentions. He said that immediately after Donovan's visit here he had instructed his Minister at Sofia to initiate negotiations with Bulgaria hoping to arrive at some joint policy. No answer was ever received but Italian Minister was advised of *démarche* by

<sup>34a</sup> *Supra.*

Bulgaria. He then realized it was useless to try further. He was discouraged by Turkish attitude of allowing Bulgaria to checkmate Turkey by "stupid" pact.

He said he could not withdraw troops from Croatian and Slovenian frontiers as disunity of country would result. On other hand, Germans could in 2 days from Temisvar cut off northern Yugoslav Armies from Serbia and crush country.

I referred to defeatist attitude in country and to feeling that Government would not resist. He said this is true but Government will resist. He said his big problem is to know what to do. It would be folly to attack Germany yet within short time Yugoslavia will be entirely surrounded politically, militarily and economically.

If Germany should attack his problem would be easy to solve. That situation would be simpler than one now confronting him. Despite German assurances he knows he can expect demands at any time from now.

I asked him whether I could inform President that he will resist aggression and will not sign any political agreement with Germany derogatory to Yugoslav sovereignty. He authorized me with emphasis to do so. He said Yugoslavia would under no conditions sign Tripartite Pact nor would it join new order which is same thing. Germans know Yugoslavia would resist hence they proceeded via Bulgaria rather than through more logical and easier route via Yugoslavia. "We have always kept our flag flying." Confidentially he said that ammunition shortage is serious as only factory here at Kragujkvac could be demolished in 2 days and that British can not furnish caliber for Yugoslav guns.

He said he had no doubt of eventual outcome of war and that he shares President's views entirely. He had made it clear in his speech of December 1 that Yugoslavia would resist. He stands by that and by his assurances to me today.

Although certainly not optimistic he seemed in more determined mood today especially after hearing President's message.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/8701 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 1, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 11:27 p. m.]

135. My 128, February 27, 4 p. m., paragraph 3.<sup>35</sup> I left with the Prime Minister this morning a memorandum giving specific instances

<sup>35</sup> Not printed.

of publication in official Avala bulletin of D. N. B.<sup>36</sup> and Stefani <sup>36a</sup> despatches from the United States containing distorted and misleading accounts of conditions and especially with regard to the attitude toward Lend-Lease Bill.

The Prime Minister said that he would give instructions as far as Avala is concerned. As to public opinion in Yugoslavia he said that propaganda of any sort is useless as people well know our attitude toward Germany and that they are wholeheartedly pro-British and American and anti-German. Nothing the Germans can say will change this attitude. It is even necessary for the Yugoslav Government at times to curb this attitude because of danger of creating trouble with Germany.

I pointed out that my complaint was justified especially by the Yugoslav Government's having made complaints regarding news despatches sent from Yugoslavia by American correspondents despite fact that they were not published in any United States Government organ.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/8837 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 6, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received 7: 12 p. m.]

155. For the Under Secretary. I learn from a reliable source that Fotić who is one of the most highly regarded Yugoslav diplomatic representatives has been telegraphing fully his conversations with you and that these reports have had an excellent effect in fortifying attitude of high officials here. It has been suggested to me that the more ammunition you can give him the more efficacious the results will be here.

As I know that you are on close terms with Fotić I am not forwarding the foregoing as a suggestion, but merely for your information.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/8866 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 7, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received 11: 48 p. m.]

161. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. Prince Paul admitted to me this evening that he had not as yet made up his mind as to his

<sup>36</sup> Deutsches Nachrichten Büro.

<sup>36a</sup> Official Italian news agency.



decision in face of German encirclement. He said he is "wavering". He said he has definite proof that Germany intends to go to Salonika and will then make demands on Yugoslavia. There are two courses open to him: (1) To resist, at the cost of two or three hundred thousand lives and devastation of the country and the establishment of slavery as in Poland, until the end of the war and partition of the country between Germany, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria; or (2) to keep quiet and permit the country to be occupied with some conditions of slavery but without loss of life. He said he knew arguments about national honor, that he himself is honest but that decision is not for him but for country. When he referred to his acting as trustee I said that this was all the more reason he should turn over to the King a country of which the King would not be ashamed, one which had fought to preserve its freedom.

He said it was a question whether it was better to hand over a country intact or one in ruins but that there is no question of Yugoslavia following Bulgarian attitude of inviting Germans to pass. He said, "We will not capitulate. We will never be on our knees". He said difficulty of situation is that Germans have not yet attacked Yugoslavia. Once the Germans get to Salonika, however, Yugoslavia will be completely surrounded and then attack will be fatal. He said he did not think Greece would allow Yugoslavia to occupy Salonika hence only other action still open to Yugoslavia could be to attack Germany which would be suicide.

He expressed belief that primary reason for German advance in Balkans is to regain prestige for Mussolini<sup>37</sup> and second to drive British out of continental Europe. Once these aims are fulfilled no one can prophesy next German move whether against Turkey, Russia or elsewhere. He expressed feeling of despair that at moment when Europe is being sacked and Yugoslavia is faced with disaster long-winded speeches continue in our Senate on Lend-Lease Bill.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/8878 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 8, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received March 8—4: 30 p. m.]

166. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. The following is situation today as I see it:

Ribbentrop or some other high German perhaps saw Prince Paul at Brdo this week hoping to maintain Yugoslav neutrality and docility

<sup>37</sup> Benito Mussolini, Head of Government and Prime Minister of Italy since 1922.

but probably giving veiled threat of attack. Prince's positiveness about forthcoming German aggression is significant.

In Government itself there are three schools of thought: (1) The appeasers, (2) those who wish to occupy Salonika before the country is surrounded, and (3) those who favor a compromise between the two. The last represents majority opinion. The Government will in all probability resist military attack and refuse passage of troops. Prince expressed doubt whether attack would be made until Yugoslavia completely surrounded, when sudden invasion as in Denmark might render resistance useless.

Nothing definitely obtainable regarding possibility of adherence to some political instrument. Cvetkovic still denies they will join Tripartite Pact. Nevertheless some observers believe compromise document ensuring Yugoslav neutrality may be executed.

As stated in my 161,<sup>38</sup> Prince Paul, the person who will make ultimate decision, admits he is wavering. One Cabinet Minister told me privately that Prince is the person to convince. British Minister and I are doing all we can to strengthen his attitude but it is impossible because of his many other appointments for us to maintain steady pressure on him. His attitude last evening was distinctly discouraging. I am, however, doing all I can to acquaint leaders with the President's views in hope that they will be able to influence Prince's stand. One difficulty in situation is impossibility until now of ascertaining exactly what if any demands have been made by Germany.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/9220

*The British Prime Minister (Churchill) to President Roosevelt*<sup>39</sup>

I must now tell you what we have resolved about Greece. Although it was no doubt tempting to push on from Benghazi to Tripoli, and we may still use considerable forces in this direction, we have felt it our duty to stand with the Greeks who have declared to us their resolve, even alone, to resist the German invader. Our Generals Wavell and Dill,<sup>39a</sup> who have accompanied Mr. Eden<sup>40</sup> to Cairo, after heart-searching discussions with us, believe that we have a good fighting chance. We are therefore sending the greater part of the Army of the Nile to Greece, and are reinforcing to the utmost possible in the air. Smuts<sup>41</sup> is sending South Africans to the Delta. Mr. President,

<sup>38</sup> *Supra.*

<sup>39</sup> Transmitted to the President through the Secretary of State by the British Ambassador on March 10.

<sup>39a</sup> Gen. Sir Archibald P. Wavell, Commanding General of the British Forces in the Middle East, and Gen. Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial Staff.

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>41</sup> Jan Christian Smuts, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa.

you can judge these hazards for yourself. At this juncture the action of Yugoslavia is cardinal. No country ever had such a military chance. If they will fall on the Italian rear in Albania there is no measuring what might happen in a few weeks. The whole situation might be transformed, and the action of Turkey also decided in our favour. One has the feeling that Russia, though actuated mainly by fear, might at least give some reassurance to Turkey about not pressing her in the Caucasus or turning against her in the Black Sea. I need scarcely say that concerted influence of your Ambassadors in Turkey, Russia and above all in Yugoslavia, would be of enormous value at the moment, and indeed might possibly turn the scales.

In this connexion I must thank you for the magnificent work done by Donovan in his prolonged tour of the Balkans and the Middle East. He has carried with him throughout an animating heart-warming flame.

[File copy not signed]

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740.0011 European War 1939/8941 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 11, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received March 11—12:25 p. m.]

172. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 171, March 10.<sup>42</sup>

Antić<sup>43</sup> expressed regret at my action in talking to local leaders indicating that Germans had already protested. He seemed surprised when I told him that Prince Paul had, on March 7, expressed no objection to my course. In fact Prince said, "Go ahead."

I then complained regarding inability to give my Government official information as to what is transpiring here, being able to send only unconfirmed reports due to reticence of local officials. I referred to Department's frankness with Fotić and asked Antić to think over matter, emphasizing our interest in Yugoslavia's welfare. From his evasive promise to inform me "at appropriate moment" I inferred Government terrified by Germans and consequently afraid to discuss situation openly with us. Information in my 171 was most he would say although he spoke in general terms of determination not to sully Yugoslavia's historical and military traditions.

The report persists in diplomatic and some Government circles that non-aggression pact with Germany will be executed during weekend in Germany by Prime and Foreign Ministers. While Government may claim such a pact would not derogate sovereignty it would amount in reality to unilateral declaration of Yugoslavia not to oppose German

<sup>42</sup> Not printed.

<sup>43</sup> Milan Antić, Yugoslav Minister of the Court.

occupation of Salonika. Once occupation effected then Yugoslavia at German mercy as nobody would then expect Germany to observe its obligations under pact. Adherence to pact would be face-saving device in hope of persuading us and others that Government had not surrendered to German pressure.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/8979a

*The Secretary of State to President Roosevelt*

[WASHINGTON,] March 12, 1941.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: With reference to the letter from the British Ambassador to you of March 10,<sup>44</sup> enclosing a message from Mr. Churchill<sup>45</sup> on the situation in the Near East and suggesting certain approaches by our diplomatic missions in Ankara, Moscow, and Belgrade to the governments of those respective countries, I have closely canvassed the Near Eastern situation during the recent fast-developing weeks and have come to the following conclusions as far as concerns the attitude of this Government in the premises.

As you know, we have sent several messages personally from you to the Chiefs of State of the Balkan countries and Turkey, and also from this Department to the Chiefs of Government in those same countries, making clear our attitude of aid to Britain and the application of all the vast resources and production of this country to the assistance of Britain and those countries defending themselves against the attack of the forces of conquest. I am satisfied that we here, and our representatives in that area have done everything that could possibly be done to bolster up the resistance of the Balkan governments to penetration and occupation by the German forces. I, myself, and through my associates here, have been in constant touch with the representatives of the Balkan nations in this capital and have sought their advice and counsel as to any steps we might take to be helpful to them in this situation. I have been told by those representatives here, and I believe this to be true, that the only further step which can be of real help in these developments would be the promise on the part of the British Government to lend material military aid with air force and ground forces to the Yugoslav and the Turkish Governments in the event they find it necessary to resist the entrance or passage of German troops.

I have even taken the occasion of the visit of the British Ambassador on Monday afternoon<sup>46</sup> to transmit to him this final suggestion.

As I said before, I feel that we have done everything this Govern-

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<sup>44</sup> Not printed.

<sup>45</sup> *Ante*, p. 951.

<sup>46</sup> March 10.

ment can possibly do in the present circumstances, but I shall not fail to continue to study the situation with a view to making any further recommendations as developments arise.

Faithfully yours,

CORDELL HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/9075a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 15, 1941—3 p. m.

39. Last evening the Secretary of the Treasury<sup>47</sup> was considerably disturbed by a request from the National Bank of Yugoslavia to convert its gold here to the value of \$22,000,000 into dollar account and immediately transfer approximately one half of the dollars to its account in the Bank of Brazil.

We can see no reason for such large transfers of funds out of this country, particularly as within the previous few days transfers to Switzerland and Turkey had been requested to an amount approximating some \$3,000,000. We asked the Minister of Yugoslavia here to send a message to his Government last night in the following sense:

That we were not contemplating any freezing measure against Yugoslavian funds in general; that, however, Treasury was disturbed about this request for transfers of large amounts of funds out of the United States. We asked that the orders for these transfers be canceled and would be glad to have any explanation of legitimate financial transactions. We further asked the Minister to add that Yugoslavian interests here are in friendly hands and that we desire to give every consideration to their requirements. (End sense of message)

We wish to support in any way that we can the maintenance of the independence and integrity of Yugoslavia. In the face of an overwhelming of the Government or country by force we would, of course, desire to have the Yugoslav financial assets in this country protected against seizure or control by alien forces which could be accomplished by freezing the funds now here. Further until the situation is clarified, we would not wish these funds to get out of reach of our control. We would therefore want you to keep us closely informed of your opinion of the developing situation.

The gold conversion above referred to will not, because of technical impediments, come before the Treasury for action before Monday morning. If the report we receive from Fotitch is not satisfactory, however, we feel that in order to protect Yugoslav interests it may be necessary to consider a freezing order.

HULL

<sup>47</sup> Henry Morgenthau, Jr.

740.0011 European War 1939/9064 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 15, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 9:35 p. m.]

189. My 188, today.<sup>48</sup> Following based on talk with Campbell<sup>49</sup> today: Cvetkovic first indicated that nonaggression pact was to be signed with Germany similar to Turk-Bulgarian pact. He said Yugoslavia had definitely refused (1) passage of German troops; (2) use of Yugoslav communications system; and (3) Tripartite Pact with military clause. When Campbell suggested that Yugoslavia should take a positive stand he replied, "Do you want us to attack Germany?" Cvetkovic admitted he had explained to Hitler at Berghof, Yugoslavia's vital interest in Salonika, but gave no indication whether Government would regard German attack there as *casus belli*.

On ending interview Campbell asked whether Government had made any decision as to action to be taken. Cvetkovic shrugged shoulders and said, "Decision, no". Campbell evidently puzzled by inconsistencies of Cvetkovic's remarks.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/9077 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 16, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received 9:15 p. m.]

191. I discussed Department's 39<sup>50</sup> with Prince Paul today. He was apparently unfamiliar with situation and asked me to see Finance Minister.<sup>51</sup>

As to clarification of Yugoslav foreign policy Prince said he had three alternatives, [(1)] join Tripartite Pact and allow German troops to pass; (2) attack Germany or Italy; (3) do nothing and allow country to be surrounded.

As to (1) he said Yugoslavia would not sign pact with military clause permitting occupation of country. Yugoslavia will fight rather than accept such conditions. "We are not Rumania, Bulgaria, or Hungary." He agreed that signature of non-aggression pact would be first step to loss of independence.

As to (2) this would be folly, as apart from making Yugoslavia the aggressor, army leaders who are "soft" oppose taking offensive.

<sup>48</sup> Not printed.<sup>49</sup> Sir Ronald Campbell, British Minister in Yugoslavia.<sup>50</sup> Dated March 15, 3 p. m., p. 954.<sup>51</sup> Jure Sutej.

As to (3), this may be only possibility remaining as both Croats and Slovenes opposed to fighting for Salonika especially since no attack against Yugoslavia has yet been made.

He hopes President understands Prince's difficulties. He asked me what I would do if I were he. I replied, "Refuse every German demand". He said that no ultimatum had been received, but Germany is continually requesting adherence to Tripartite Pact.

When I asked him definitely what he would do he said he did not know as decision would depend on what Germany does. He realizes no German promise can be trusted.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/9078 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 16, 1941—10 p. m.

[Received 11:59 p. m.]

192. My 191.<sup>52</sup> Prime Minister claims to be ignorant of orders to convert \$22,000,000 gold to dollar account. Am asking Minister of Finance for explanation tomorrow; reported not in Belgrade today. Cvetkovic said that \$3,000,000 transferred to Switzerland and Turkey were to pay for cotton bought in Russia and Turkey. I recommend that Treasury defer decision until receipt of report of Sutej's explanation.

Cvetkovic was emphatic that no German troops or war material will be allowed in Yugoslavia. He said he explained to Hitler (1) Yugoslavia will not permit passage of troops, (2) Yugoslavia Army will resist attack, and (3) Yugoslavia has vital interests in Salonika. When I asked if point 3 meant Yugoslavia would attack in event Salonika occupied by Germany he replied in negative. Prince Paul also indicated Yugoslavia would not consider occupation of Salonika a *casus belli*.

Cvetkovic said that great military difficulty is that if Yugoslavia is threatened with attack, troops in Slovenia and Croatia must be brought south leaving northwest part of country undefended.

In reply to Department's request for my opinion I believe Government and Army will resist any attempt at occupation of country, but that Yugoslavia will not take offensive. Yugoslavia may feel obliged to sign pact with Germany without military clauses, but it is impossible to prophesy final attitude which will depend on nature and extent of German demands.

LANE

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<sup>52</sup> *Supra*.

760H.62/197 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 17, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 4:25 p. m.]

194. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. British Minister tells me in strictest confidence in event of imminent conclusion of nonaggression pact between Yugoslavia and Germany he has authority to propose to Yugoslav Government inclusion of article to the effect that Germany recognizes vital interest of Yugoslavia in Salonika. Greek Government approves this procedure.

Campbell says Cvetkovic told him yesterday, "We are provoking Germany as much as possible, but without effect". In other words if Germany attacks Yugoslavia, position will be simplified.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/9164 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 19, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 3:55 p. m.]

Personal for the Under Secretary. In my letter of February 25<sup>53</sup> to you which was sent by hand by Byington,<sup>54</sup> I referred to promise given to me by Prince on February 23 (see my 123<sup>54a</sup>) that he would resist military aggression as well as diplomatic demands on the part of Germany. After commenting on his temperamental disposition and his susceptible nature I pointed out that his promise should not be regarded as being of a permanent nature. I said I did not mean that he would intentionally break his word but that he might be subsequently so overwrought by the seriousness of the situation as to be inclined to forget the gravity of his former promises.

I fear that this is the situation as it is today, aggravated by attitude of closest advisers, as pointed out in my 20.<sup>55</sup>

As the Prince is dining privately with me tomorrow evening I shall do my best to strengthen his resistance then, even though it may be too late. It would, of course, be of the greatest help if I could deliver to him a personal message from the President, for whom he has the greatest admiration.

LANE

<sup>53</sup> Not found in Department files.

<sup>54</sup> Homer M. Byington, Jr., Second Secretary of Legation in Yugoslavia.

<sup>54a</sup> Dated February 23, 8 p. m., p. 947.

<sup>55</sup> Dated January 13, 5 p. m., not printed.



740.0011 European War 1939/9172 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 19, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received March 19—5: 50 p. m.]

209. Have just seen Shone, British Minister in Cairo and formerly Secretary here, who says he arrived last evening by special plane from Cairo with letter to Prince Paul from Eden which was delivered at once. Shone says that letter urged Prince to sign no agreement of any kind with Germany and that present moment propitious one for Yugoslavia to refuse German requests because of British successes in Africa.

Hargyropoulos, former Greek Foreign Minister, arrived yesterday with special message to Yugoslav Government probably from King George. We believe this message also urged resistance to demands.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/9164 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 19, 1941—9 p. m.

48. Your March 19, 1 p. m. The President has already left Washington and it is consequently impossible for me now to obtain from him any further message. I think, however, that you can properly state to the Regent that the President is following every development in the Yugoslav situation with the keenest interest and that he feels more strongly than ever the force of the considerations set forth in his recent messages to the Prince. You may make this as emphatic as you consider desirable.

WELLES

740.0011 European War 1939/9183 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 20, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received March 20—11: 45 a. m.]

212. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. I learn the following indirectly from the highest quarters: During German negotiations Yugoslavs put forward proposals which they felt sure Germans would refuse. Yugoslavs now in embarrassing position because Germans have accepted terms. Question up for decision by Regency and Cabinet this morning. Yugoslavs will attempt delay signature of pact, terms of which unknown to us, on ground that public opinion would

oppose it. British are arguing that German acceptance of seemingly absurd terms is proof of German weakness and should encourage Yugoslavs to refuse to sign. Croatian elements who favor compromise with Germany oppose refusal to sign.

Have reason to believe that Stojadinović<sup>56</sup> has been secretly removed to Greece.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/9206 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 21, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 10:38 a. m.]

215. Military Attaché<sup>57</sup> summarizes military situation as follows:

(Hypothesis 1) If Germany can be assured of non-belligerence of Turkey and Yugoslavia its forces of 20 divisions now in Bulgaria will be sufficient for action against Greece which can be launched by April 1.

(Hypothesis 2) If Germany has to protect its flanks in Bulgaria while attacking Greece an additional 10 German divisions will be required and are not likely to be in position before April 10. These presumably would be placed on the right (Yugoslav) flank, while the Bulgarian troops now massed on Turkish frontier should suffice to hold the left flank.

(Hypothesis 3) However unlikely, the possibility of a Yugoslav and/or Turkish offensive also must be considered. By April 1 the Yugoslavs could attack German right flank with 8 divisions before the Germans were in a position to cover this flank. As a corollary to such action the Yugoslavs with 4 divisions might launch an offensive against the Italians in Albania at the same time.

LANE

860H.00/1292

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] March 21, 1941.

The Minister of Yugoslavia called to see me this afternoon in order to read to me a telegram he had just received from his Foreign Minister. This telegram which was some pages in length proved to be nothing more or less than a historical survey of Yugoslav foreign policy during the past year emphasizing the desire of Yugoslavia to prevent war from spreading to the Balkans; its unfortunate failure in

<sup>56</sup> Milan Stojadinović, former Yugoslav Prime Minister.

<sup>57</sup> Lt. Col. William E. Shipp.

achieving that objective; and its alleged need now to assure itself that it would not be attacked.

After the Minister had concluded, I remarked that this seemed to be an explanation which explained nothing.

The Minister said that his Foreign Minister's telegram was an effort of which a schoolboy would be ashamed.

The Minister then said, however, that he had not yet lost hope that his Government would still refuse to sign any agreement with Germany. He said that the last newspaper reports seemed to make it clear that a new Cabinet Council meeting was now in progress and that the elimination of powerful Serb elements from the Cabinet had created such a political crisis that it seemed to him doubtful that the Government could go ahead and sign any agreement with Germany.

I asked the Minister what he thought the attitude of the Army would be, and he said that in his own judgment the Army, even though the Government apparently was now trying to purge the principal Serbian generals from the Army, would not agree to permit the Government to enter into any such agreement with Germany as that rumored.

The Minister said that he had been cabling the Regent directly and the Prime Minister directly all through last night and this morning. He said that he had used every argument in his power to convince them of the fatality of the step which they were apparently contemplating.

At this stage I communicated to the Minister the nature of the message which the Turkish Government had yesterday afternoon sent to the Government of Yugoslavia. The Minister had not previously been apprised of this.

I then said to the Minister that I was fully familiar with the President's view regarding the situation in Yugoslavia and therefore, although the President was away, I felt warranted in stating officially to the Minister that if the Government of Yugoslavia entered into any agreement with Germany which either diminished the complete sovereignty or autonomy of Yugoslavia, or facilitated in any way by means of Yugoslav connivance or concessions a German attack upon Greece or upon the British forces in the Mediterranean region, or which in any way assisted the Axis powers in either a naval or a military sense, this Government would immediately freeze all Yugoslav funds held within the United States and would refuse to consider any request for assistance which Yugoslavia might subsequently make of this Government for help under the terms of the Lease-Lend bill. I further stated to the Minister that the effect of any agreement with Germany on the part of Yugoslavia on public opinion in the United States would be utterly and completely disastrous as the Minister well knew. To summarize, I said, while this Government might conceivably understand and palliate an agreement between Yugoslavia and

Germany which was purely and solely a non-aggression agreement and nothing more, any agreement between Yugoslavia and Germany which in any sense permitted Germany military facilities would place Yugoslavia outside of the pale of the sympathies of the United States Government.

The Minister expressed his deep gratitude for the statement I had made to him and said that he hardly had to tell me that if Yugoslavia entered into any agreement of the character I had indicated, he would at once resign his position as Minister here. He said he had already conveyed this information both to Prince Paul and to the Prime Minister.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.0011 European War 1939/9232a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 21, 1941—4 p. m.

51. I am so impressed with your able handling of the present delicate situation that I desire you to make this further attempt to clearly impress upon Prince Paul and such members of the Government as you can reach:

(1) That information reaching us confirms the Italian debacle in Albania. That not only have the British forces attacked and destroyed Italian naval units and convoys, but the Greek troops have inflicted such losses upon the Italian military attempts that there can be little effort from that quarter at this time which would really threaten Yugoslav safety.

(2) The landing of the British in Greece is at the present time ahead of schedule and the terrain advantageous to withstanding any thrusts the Germans may be able to make against the positions that have been taken up.

(3) The attitude of the Turkish Government is now clear and we understand known to the Yugoslav Government by direct contact from Ankara.

(4) The United States, as long as Yugoslavia retains her entire independence and freedom of action in defense of her own territory, is prepared to offer all facilities under the Lend-Lease Bill which is now law, and finally, in accordance with the terms of the message recently sent you in that regard, those Yugoslav assets which are now on deposit in the United States will remain at her disposal as long as in the interpretation of this Government Yugoslavia remains a free and independent country.

I have talked with Minister Fotitch this afternoon, clearly expressing to him the views of the President, which coincide with the above and which I have asked him to convey to his Government. You may refer to these views in any conversations and express the hope that

they may be given the weight they deserve, not only in the present situation but in the future which we must all look forward to.

WELLES

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740.0011 European War 1939/9230 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, undated.

[Received, March 21, 1941—6:30 p. m.]

216. Personal for the Acting Secretary. My 212.<sup>58</sup> Following based on conversations with Prince and Princess<sup>59</sup> last night: Croats and Slovenes not only uninterested in Salonika but definitely opposed to Serbian interest there due to alleged competition with Adriatic ports. Maček and Kpsovec [*Kulovec?*] therefore, while firmly opposed as is entire Government to “a single German soldier setting foot on Yugoslav soil”, not so concerned as Serbs regarding encirclement. They have apparently convinced Prince that people in Croatia and Slovenia will not support strong attitude re Salonika which might lead to war. This argument absurd as scope of negotiations kept very secret. (Three alternatives in my 215<sup>60</sup> now only two:) (1) Attack Germany or Italy and (2) make compromise with Germany to “guarantee” country against invasion. Final decision not made up to last night but imminent: To sign Tripartite Pact without any military clauses.

My argument to both guests, aided by message in your 48,<sup>61</sup> was as follows:

They admit democracies will eventually win, yet unlike President they will not look to future. I feared Prince influenced by advisers who look only to present and their own material interests. Signature Tripartite Pact would be step against their ally Greece, native country of Princess. Yugoslavs in United States would feel Prince had let them down. Why not refuse to sign. Pact would be no guarantee against later German [attack?] as past events proved but would merely tie Yugoslavia's hands.

He agreed with last argument but said if he refused to accept guarantees war would come and Croatia and Slovenia would not fight while if guarantee accepted and Germany should attack, country would be united in resisting. He said that in opinion of General Staff only military possibility for Yugoslavia is to attack; defensive war would be fatal. But politically attack would be impossible.

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<sup>58</sup> Dated March 20, 1 p. m., p. 958.

<sup>59</sup> Princess Olga.

<sup>60</sup> Dated March 21, 10 a. m., 959.

<sup>61</sup> Dated March 19, 9 p. m., p. 958.

I expressed opinion that Yugoslavia is in geographically strategic position because of common frontiers with both Germany and Italy. Neither wanted other here. Therefore, attack from abroad unlikely. Acceptance of Yugoslav proposals by Germany confirms this.

He disagreed saying that Hungary, Bulgaria, and Italy would partition country with Germany in event of German invasion.

I argued that he admits German invasion inevitable some day. In that case, why not preserve neutrality which signature of pact would destroy, keep Yugoslav diplomatic integrity intact and maintain reputation abroad.

He said, "You big nations are hard, you talk of our honor but you are far away."

I replied that if we wished to pursue comfortable easy course, we would not have passed Aid-to-Democracies Bill and that our past and present attitude towards small nations, including Yugoslavia is proof of our sympathy.

My conclusions are that he wishes to avoid bloodshed at almost all costs and that he clings to Croatian-Slovenian arguments to support his position which he admits may provoke serious discontent throughout the country. He is a diplomat rather than a statesman, lacking the strength to make a decision of such vital importance. She is far stronger in attitude against Germany and urged me to emphasize on him President's arguments. Her influence may still be effective but I fear situation has now developed beyond her control.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/9222 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 21, 1941—9 p. m.

[Received 10 : 20 p. m.]

219. Although not officially confirmed, following substance of terms has been received from reliable source :

"Yugoslavia in principle joins the Tripartite Pact. However, by the annex to this pact, certain mutual obligations are created, while certain obligations in the pact will not bind Yugoslavia; (1st) Yugoslavia receives a guarantee of borders and territory. All powers which have signed the Tripartite Pact automatically take on themselves the guarantee for same. (2d) Yugoslav borders remain untouched and the territory unoccupied by any military forces of any of the signers of the Tripartite Pact (which means that the signing of the pact by Yugoslavia will not result in the entering of German troops into the country as was the case in Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria). (3d) Yugoslavia is freed of all obligations covered by military clauses in the Tripartite Pact such as mutual assistance or eventual common military action of the signers. (4th) At the completion of the present

war and at the time of the organization of the new Europe, consideration will be given to Yugoslavia's aspirations in the Aegean Sea.

According to the annex to the pact, Yugoslavia obligates herself: (1) To permit war material from the North to the South, sanitary transports, transport of wounded without any right of control or restrictions; (2) to break down all anti-Axis influence in the country; (3) from an economic point of view Yugoslavia will be gradually brought into the framework of the economic system of the German Reich.

The pact will be signed within 8 days."

It is reported that three Cabinet Ministers including Constantino-vich, Minister of Justice, are resigning in protest against decision of Government said to have been reached early this morning.

Repeat to Athens, Ankara, and Rome.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/9246 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 22, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received March 23—2:10 a. m.]

228. For the Acting Secretary. Your 51.<sup>63</sup> Cvetkovic told me today he had confirmation of points 1 and 2 but that as reported in my 221,<sup>64</sup> information in point 3 is incorrect (Turkish explanation is contained in my 225<sup>64</sup>). He was not as enthusiastic as I hoped regarding point 4 but as it was clear that he wished to justify attitude of his Government he presumably did not wish to hear arguments counter to those advanced in favor of signing Tripartite Pact.

He did not actually say that pact would be signed but from his discussion I am nearly certain this is Government's intention but not its desire. He said it is a question of peace or war. Which did I desire him to make? I repeated arguments in my 216<sup>65</sup> and asked him how would Yugoslavia be better off from practical standpoint by signing pact.

His reply was that it was essential for Yugoslavia to have guarantees from Germany. He agreed with me that German guarantees are worthless yet he said people did not want war and Government has obligation to them. I said if Parliament existed here he would find out quickly enough as I had found out from local expressions of praise of President's speech of March 15<sup>65a</sup> that people strongly opposed to compromise with dictators and therefore to signature of

<sup>63</sup> Dated March 21, 4 p. m., p. 961.

<sup>64</sup> Not printed.

<sup>65</sup> Undated, p. 962.

<sup>65a</sup> See Department of State *Bulletin*, March 15, 1941, p. 277.

pact which Foreign Minister admitted to me on September 27 (see my 404 <sup>66</sup>) is directed against United States.

As it is impossible to trust German guarantees would it not be better, especially as he seemed to believe in ultimate democratic victory, to maintain Yugoslav moral integrity by refusing German demands. I said Yugoslavia is independent and has a right to make its own decision without pressure from Germany.

When I realized he was determined to sign regardless of my arguments which he said were "not very strong" I endeavored to persuade him to temporize. He claimed he was doing this but could not hold out much longer. He would not tell me why. He promised, however, to try and drag out negotiations.

He lamely explained that Yugoslavia's adherence should not be regarded as move against us or Britain. Pact is purely political not military. I said I am sure action would have most unfavorable effect in United States where Yugoslav courage has been a tradition.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/9248 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 23, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 7:25 p. m.]

233. Yugoslav Government has until 12 midnight to give an answer as to whether it will sign the Tripartite Pact. I am given to understand by the highest quarters that decision has been made and is in the affirmative and that no further steps on my part can have any effect.

Pact which Yugoslavia will sign contains two reservations which will be made public:

(1) Yugoslavia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity will be guaranteed by the Axis.

(2) No German troops will be allowed in transit or transported over Yugoslav territory.

Foregoing repeated to Rome, Ankara, Athens.

Prince Paul advised me in strictest confidence and not for repetition to anybody that a secret clause exists whereby no war material is to be transported over Yugoslav territory.

Explanatory telegram will follow.

LANE

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<sup>66</sup> Not printed.



740.0011 European War 1939/9257 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 23, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received 11:35 p. m.]

234. For the Acting Secretary. Following is résumé my talk with Prince Paul this evening.

(1) He had just received telegram from Churchill urging Yugoslavia to attack Italians in Albania.

(2) I conveyed to him substance of Department's 51<sup>68</sup> and emphasized possible aid we could give to Yugoslavia provided Yugoslavia remains free and independent. I said, however, that it will be for us and not for Cvetkovic or Hitler to decide what constitutes independence.

(3) I referred to official opinion here that Tripartite Pact directed against United States and I referred to promises he and Prime Minister had made to me in past that Yugoslavia would not sign pact. He readily admitted having made such a promise. At that time he had no intention to sign. I said I feared that we would regard signature as unfriendly act.

(4) I referred to Cvetkovic's argument yesterday regarding guarantees which Cvetkovic himself considers worthless. Prince said, "I know they are worthless". He said, however, that Croats, Slovenes, the other two regents, and the opposition party of General Zivkovic had all urged him to sign. He personally does not wish to sign because of his British and Greek affiliations but he must think of the country.

(5) This statement gave me opportunity to refer to public opinion which is strongly opposed to signature. I said reports from Meily<sup>69</sup> indicated Croatia people do not favor signature. He said, "Let him speak to Maček". I asked whether Maček could be reached and whether there was still a chance. He said no.

(6) He is convinced that Turks do not wish to cooperate with Yugoslavia. Turkish Ambassador was to have seen Foreign Minister 2 days ago but at last minute canceled request for interview. I urged postponing decision even for 1 week until Turkish attitude could be clarified. He said this impossible as he had only until midnight to give Yugoslav answer. Yugoslavia would have to sign.

(7) When he repeated argument of being only a trustee for 5 more months and therefore unable to take step leading country into war I said King will undoubtedly lean on him for advice later. He emphatically replied he would leave policy entirely to King who undoubtedly

<sup>68</sup> Dated March 21, 4 p. m., p. 961.

<sup>69</sup> John J. Meily, American Consul at Zagreb.

would be influenced by others. He said he would give advice to King only if latter asked it.

(8) I believe he considers effect of decision as virtually ending his own influence for on my departure he presented me with his photograph usually done only on termination of mission.

(9) Signature will be at Vienna.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/9289 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 24, 1941—7 p. m.

[Received 10:17 p. m.]

238. For the Acting Secretary. Supplementing my 234,<sup>70</sup> Prince said that greatest difficulty of his position is internal. If he could believe country behind him as is the case with our President he might act differently. Nevertheless my arguments regarding public hostility towards signature of pact made little impression. I had summoned Meily from Zagreb to report to me on Croatian public opinion yet Prince was unconvinced (see paragraph 5). Decision had been made and unfavorable arguments were distasteful.

I have never seen Prince so upset and unless he is an excellent actor almost without self control; he said, "I am out of my head; I wish I were dead". He ranted about Bulgarian perfidy, British stupidity and opposition of Croats but he refused to consider possibility of not signing pact and capitulating to Germany.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/9316 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, March 25, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 6:49 p. m.]

1122. At 3:30 this afternoon at the Belvedere Palace in Vienna, Yugoslavia signed a protocol of adherence to the Three-Power Pact identical in terms with that signed by the previous adherents. Following the signature, the Prime Minister Cvetkovic declared on behalf of Yugoslavia that his Government and people had always appreciated the understanding shown by Germany for their ardent desire to maintain their freedom and independence. After referring to the agreements concluded by Yugoslavia with Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria, he stated that Yugoslavia had no claims against its neighbors and that

<sup>70</sup> *Supra.*

it had now decided to join the forces building a new order in south-eastern Europe since its interests demanded that the Balkans region be preserved from an extension of the present war as a foundation for economic prosperity and good neighborly relations.

Ribbentrop speaking on behalf of the 3 allied powers and the 4 previous adherents to the pact said that while the new order in East Asia is steadily shaping itself under Japan's sponsorship, the Axis has been swiftly gathering the forces of Europe into a growing organization for a new future. The accession of Yugoslavia to the new order, he added, is of special significance since it means not only that all the neutral Balkan countries have now opted for peace but also that a nation which has been particularly subject to British and American meddling has joined the block of nations which are determined to prevent an extension of the theatre of war. Ribbentrop stated that Germany has no territorial or political interests in southeastern Europe and seeks no military aid from anyone but is striving solely to exclude outside powers from the Continent and thus to lay the foundation for a just new order of lasting peace. At the close of the ceremonies, the participants, including Ciano,<sup>71</sup> Oshima<sup>72</sup> and the Ministers of the four previous adherents to the pact, were received by Hitler in the presence of Keitel<sup>73</sup> in an adjoining room.

The German radio announced at 5 p. m. that simultaneously with the signing of the protocol the German and Italian Governments addressed notes to Yugoslavia stating that it is their intention always to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and that in accordance with the understanding reached with the Yugoslav Government, the Axis Powers will not demand the right of passage of troops or war materials during the present war.

Repeated to Belgrade.

MORRIS

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860H.00/1240 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, [March 27, 1941—noon.]

[Received March 28—7:30 p. m.]

251. A successful military *coup d'état* took place at approximately 2:15 this morning under the leadership of General Simovich, Chief of Aviation. A manifesto made public early this morning and signed by King Peter II states that he has assumed power, that the regents have resigned and that Yugoslavia hopes for external and internal

<sup>71</sup> Count Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>72</sup> Hiroshi Oshima, Japanese Ambassador in Germany.

<sup>73</sup> Gen. Wilhelm Keitel, Military Chief of Staff to Hitler.

peace and appeals to the population to support the throne. The constitution of the new Government under General Simovich as Prime Minister was announced at about 9:30 this morning. It includes Maček as Vice President and Ninčić as Foreign Minister. All major parties are represented.

There was wild enthusiasm in Belgrade this morning with continuous demonstrations including two in front of this Legation. The three regents and leading members of the former government including Cvetkovic and Cincar-Markovic are reported to be under arrest, but this information has not been officially confirmed. It is announced from radio cars that the *coup d'état* has been acclaimed in cities throughout the country including Zagreb.

We may shortly be compelled to destroy all codes and ciphers except Gray. Suggest Department use Gray Code only in communicating with this Mission until further notice. Foregoing drafted March 27, noon.

Repeated to Ankara, Bucharest, Budapest, Rome, Sofia.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/9393 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 27, 1941.

57. Please call as soon as possible upon the Prime Minister or the new Foreign Minister and state in the name of your Government that the news which has reached this country of the constitution of the new Government under the King and General Simović has created the immediate popular reaction that this event constitutes a matter for self-congratulation for every liberty-loving man and woman.<sup>74</sup>

You are further authorized to state that in accordance with the provisions of the Lend-Lease Bill, the President, in the interest of the national defense of the United States, is enabled to provide assistance to Yugoslavia, like all other nations which are seeking to maintain their independence and integrity and to repel aggression.

WELLES

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<sup>74</sup> For text of President Roosevelt's telegram of March 28 to King Peter II of Yugoslavia regarding the *coup d'état*, see Department of State *Bulletin*, March 29, 1941, p. 350.

740.0011 European War 1939/9393 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 27, 1941—midnight.

[Received March 28—12:32 p. m.]

252. I called officially on Ninčić, newly appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, this evening. Due to his evident preoccupation, I saw him for only a few moments. While, because of disturbed conditions, I had no authorization from the Department to take any action constituting recognition of the Simović government I considered that prompt action on my part would be important in showing approval of a policy which evidently has the support of the people of this country and which seems to be in accord with the views publicly expressed by the President.

Please telegraph urgently whether Department approves my action. I have requested audiences with King Peter and General Simović.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/9393 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 28, 1941—6 p. m.

58. Your 252, March 27, midnight. Since this Government has never withdrawn recognition of the monarchy there is no special action required for recognition of the new Cabinet under Premier Simović set up by King Peter. Therefore the specific question raised in your telegram does not arise.

WELLES

740.0011 European War 1939/9410 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 28, 1941—midnight.

[Received March 29—5:45 a. m.]

265. General Simović received me this evening. I delivered to him the message contained in your 57<sup>75</sup> which he said he had not yet received through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He asked me to express to the President on behalf of the King and himself his very deep appreciation of the Government and people of the United States at this delicate moment and that the support of the President is especially appreciated as he is the leading defender of the liberty of the democracies of the world. The following is strictly confidential for the Acting Secretary.

<sup>75</sup> Dated March 27, p. 969.

Having further evidence of uneasiness as mentioned in my 257<sup>76</sup> regarding possibility of our using pressure to force Yugoslavia to take offensive as Britain has done, I said we had never urged on previous government such a move and my efforts had been solely to prevent Yugoslavia from relinquishing her independence. I referred to public enthusiasm today as proof of public support of policy of preserving independence and said that he could count on us to help both materially and morally to that end.

He said he had warned Prince Paul Sunday night that signature of pact would bring about revolt of officers, especially in aviation, but at critical moment Prince lacked courage to make decision. Prince had however yesterday been most helpful in Zagreb in persuading Maček and other Croats to enter new Government and promised last night to support Government outside.

As to Tripartite Pact Simović said Government wishes to avoid discussion if possible. It does not wish to denounce pact nor will it ratify it.

It considers pact to be work of Cvetković and not of present Government which does not consider itself obligated to observe terms which have not been ratified. Yugoslavia does not wish to provoke Germany or Italy but will resist by force any attempt to take Salonika, which is vital to national interests, nor will it tolerate move against sovereignty of country.

As Meily reports lack of enthusiasm in Zagreb regarding developments I asked him about situation in Croatia. He said he had assurances from Maček through Subasic who is now here that Croatian Peasant Party will support Government. He said being a soldier and not a diplomat he had talked to me freely but he did not wish his remarks to be taken as official expression of his Government but merely for information of President as showing his personal views. As he has definitely the support of Army and public, intensified by popularity of King, his views can in my opinion be accepted as controlling.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/9449 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 29, 1941—11 p. m.

[Received March 30—2: 50 p. m.]

275. Momcilo Ninčić, newly appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, received me this afternoon. My first impressions are that he is serious, conservative in action with a superior mentality and cultural background. Following is substance of his remarks: The Government has as yet taken no position regarding Tripartite Pact. His feeling

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<sup>76</sup> Not printed.

is that it cannot be repudiated as terms of pact provided that it would enter into effect immediately on signature. Therefore no ratification necessary. Croats, Slovenes and Mussulmans (Bosnians) desire adherence to pact's terms. Refusal of Government to honor terms would not only lead to trouble with Germany but would also bring about dissolution of country as Maček in that case would not enter Government. Vital question is how pact will be applied. Present Government will never permit what has happened in Rumania or Bulgaria, in control by Germany of country or will it permit any step which would be against independence. German Government has asked for explanation of Government's attitude but has set no time limit for reply. Personally he is in favor of peace provided sovereignty of country not impaired. This is not a Cvetkovic government which gives in total [*to all?*] demands. I could assure my Government emphatically on this point. Demonstrations of yesterday in favor of democracies and against Axis puts Yugoslavia in bad situation with Germany as demonstrations in France and Turkey in favor of this regime. Unwise British broadcasts also embarrassing. It would be appreciated if our Government would bear this in mind. Exodus of German colony is unfortunate sign but probably a move to exert pressure on Yugoslavia to accept pact's terms.

All members of Cvetkovic government not familiar with terms of pact even Ninčić not yet able to ascertain nature of all secret commitments. Person responsible for pact was Prince Paul who visited Hitler secretly at Berchtesgaden about March 11.

He said that freezing of Yugoslav funds in United States had put Yugoslavia into unfavorable political situation, on same basis with Hungary and other countries under German domination. I explained to him background of negotiations of which he was evidently unaware and said I had asked Department for information as to whether freezing still in force in view of change of government.

He said he was ignorant of my conversations with Prince and Cvetkovic in which they promised they would not sign Tripartite Pact. He said that Prince never really consulted political leaders and thus was not in touch with feeling in country.

He said that Yugoslavia could not count on Soviet support unless the Soviet Union were in danger of being attacked by Germany. In that case Soviets would probably offer Yugoslavia military alliance.

On leaving Minister I met Kulovec and Krek, two Slovene leaders, who said situation in Slovenia very delicate and that Government should shortly make its decision otherwise trouble might be expected. I explained to them as I had to Ninčić that our Government had never urged Yugoslavia to be the aggressor in any conflict despite rumors to the contrary.

740.0011 European War 1939/9450 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 30, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 2:40 p. m.]

277. My 275.<sup>77</sup> With regard to Prince Paul's meeting with Hitler at Berchtesgaden on March 4 or 5 (not 11) I am informed by reliable source that Hitler said to Prince during 2-hour interview Yugoslavia must sign Tripartite Pact in own interest as in June or July he was going to attack Russia.

British Minister says foregoing fits in with information he has.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/9507 : Telegram

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

ANKARA, March 31, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received April 1—7:38 a. m.]

87. In conversation with our Military Attaché yesterday Von Papen<sup>78</sup> made the statement that if Yugoslavia will not join the new order peacefully Germany will compel her to do so by military force in order to prevent the British and Americans forcing her into the other camp.

MACMURRAY

740.0011 European War 1939/9516 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, March 31, 1941—midnight.

[Received April 1—2:37 p. m.]

296. For the President: The King received me today at his Palace which is heavily guarded. I gave him a confirmation copy of your message<sup>79</sup> and told him that he had the support of yourself, our Government and a nation of 130 million people. He said that he had already replied to you and that he greatly appreciated your thought of him and that he valued your support more than that of anybody next to his mother, now in England, whom he has asked to return.

I referred to spontaneous enthusiasm in his favor on Friday,<sup>80</sup> and as an older man complimented him on his magnificent bearing at *Te*

<sup>77</sup> *Supra.*

<sup>78</sup> Franz von Papen, German Ambassador in Turkey.

<sup>79</sup> For text of the President's message of March 28, see Department of State *Bulletin*, March 29, 1941, p. 350.

<sup>80</sup> March 28.



*Deum* service and said that his mother would have been proud of him. He seemed very touched and laughingly admitted, "That was the hardest moment of my life. I was scared to death." He said Prince Paul kept him in ignorance of what was transpiring regarding the pact. In fact, he knew nothing of what was going on in governmental affairs except what he heard secretly through his friends and that the night of the *coup d'état* he was held a prisoner by General Kopic who would not permit him to receive General Simović. I told him of your messages to Prince and of efforts we had made to prevent Yugoslavia taking step which would make it lose its independence. I said that Prince had repeatedly given me the argument that he was acting only as trustee for King and for that reason he could not refuse to take a step which would guarantee the peace of the country. I told him that I had told Prince he had no right as trustee to hand over to King a country of which latter would be ashamed. The King said, "I am glad that you told him that, but he never told me anything about the President's messages."

After reemphasizing that he could call on me at any time either as American Minister or as friend I said I hoped he would not regard my remaining in Belgrade, in event he and Government evacuated capital, as absence of support, but I felt presence of American Legation here would help hold up morale of the people. He said quickly, "But neither I nor the Government is going to leave Belgrade until Germans actually arrive in city." I said in case planes bombarded city it would not be safe for him to remain. He replied Germans would devastate city and Dedinje where his palace is, but that he would not run away. He said he has an air raid shelter and would not go until last minute. I told him I felt sure you would be delighted to know of his courageous attitude and that his people, who showed their affection for him on Friday in such a spontaneous way that there was no doubt of its sincerity, would be heartened by his fortitude.

He admitted unfamiliarity with what had gone on in the past and said Antić<sup>81</sup> was a bad influence over Prince Paul as he would never let him know what the people were thinking.

He then asked me in a straightforward, almost boyish way, "What does the President think of Prince Paul?" As I was thinking of a suitable reply he said "I hope he will not think badly of him. He was really awfully good to me and did what he thought was best for the country." I told him of your interest in him and of your having told me in January 1939 that you would like him and his mother to visit you and Mrs. Roosevelt at White House. I said I had transmitted this message to Prince Paul who thought it was not advisable because of hostile complications with Germany. He expressed surprise saying Prince Paul had never told him of invitation and that it was absurd

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<sup>81</sup> Presumably Milan Antić, Yugoslav Minister of the Court.

2 years ago to have talked about the effect on Germany. He said "I would have gone like a shot." He said he had always admired the United States and if England and America win war he would then pay visit to United States.

On leaving I thanked him for having received me so soon (I made request only this morning after appointment of new Minister of the Court) and told him I hoped he would call on me at any time he needed our help or advice. He said he would do so and added that if I had not asked to see him today he would have sent for me.

His show of moral courage, his lack of bitterness towards Prince despite latter's lack of frankness, and of his evident desire to rely on the United States gives me great hope for his future and for that of the country. His interest in America in current affairs and industries (Prince Paul told me the King eagerly awaited American periodicals which I sent to Palace every week) and his genuine admiration for you, which I assure you was not put on for the sake of pleasing us, will, I feel sure, make it possible for us to be of utmost assistance to him. May I suggest that you immediately send a message to me for him in answer to foregoing as we are in imminent danger of being unable to communicate with the outside.

My audience was to me the most encouraging thing which I have experienced since the crisis started.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/9720a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 6, 1941.

80. The following statement was issued by me today after consultation with the President:

"The barbaric invasion of Yugoslavia and the attempt to annihilate that country by brute force is but another chapter in the present planned movement of attempted world conquest and domination. Another small nation has been assaulted by the forces of aggression and is further proof that there are no geographical limitations or bounds of any kind to their movement for world conquest.

The American people have the greatest sympathy for the nation which has been thus so outrageously attacked and we follow closely the valiant struggle the Yugoslav people are making to protect their homes and preserve their liberty.

This Government with its policy of helping those who are defending themselves against would-be conquerors is now proceeding as speedily as possible to send military and other supplies to Yugoslavia.<sup>73 82</sup>

HULL

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<sup>82</sup> For President Roosevelt's message of April 8 to King Peter, regarding the invasion, see Department of State *Bulletin*, April 12, 1941, p. 449.

124.60H/34 : Telegram

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

BUDAPEST, April 12, 1941—2 a. m.

[Received 11:00 a. m.]

164. From Lane from Belgrade, April 8. This morning the Swiss Minister,<sup>83</sup> who is in charge of German interests here, received word from German Chargé d'Affaires that position of Diplomatic Corps had become "untenable" and that he was willing to make two propositions: (1) That Diplomatic Corps evacuate by airplane to Budapest; (2) that it evacuate by automobile to Novi Sad where there would be less probability of a major military engagement. Condition was imposed by Feine<sup>84</sup> that no evacuation could be made from here to the south because of military operations there.

I explained to Steiner that first of all I had no right to leave Yugoslavia and second, that being accredited to the Yugoslav Government I must either remain in Belgrade or go to a place agreeable to the Yugoslav Government, and thirdly, as one of Feine's conditions was that the German and Italian Legations should be evacuated with the entire Diplomatic Corps I could not, as an accredited diplomatic representative to the Yugoslav Government, approve of any arrangement which would put the Yugoslav Government at a disadvantage. In other words, the Yugoslav Government must be able to obtain equal advantages with respect to its representatives and colonies in Germany and Italy respectively. Steiner then proposed that the suburb of Dedinje, where most of the Diplomatic Corps is now residing, be declared neutral. This was discarded as it would be highly resented by the population of Belgrade which has already greatly suffered from the bombardment.

A forward [*formal?*] meeting of the Diplomatic Corps was held this afternoon at the Brazilian Legation at which I made two proposals: (1) The Yugoslav Government should declare categorically that Belgrade is an open town and should agree not to defend it; and (2) the German Government should agree not to bombard Belgrade by air or by artillery.

As all of the diplomatic representatives insisted on inserting an alternative, in the event of no agreement by the German and Yugoslav Governments, of the evacuation to another city such as Ruma, where there is a large German minority, I felt it wise to compromise by agreeing to this on condition that the seat would have the agreement of both Yugoslav and German Governments, which would be unlikely.

Some of my colleagues at the meeting expressed the opinion that it would be impossible to reach an agreement between the two Gov-

<sup>83</sup> Paul Steiner.<sup>84</sup> Gert Feine, German Chargé in Yugoslavia.

ernments. I felt however that the Diplomatic Corps has the duty to exhaust every possible remedy to protect the nationals of each representative and in so far as possible to protect the population of Belgrade and that for that reason we should put forward this proposal. I am therefore sending this evening with the approval of the diplomatic body Colonel Fortier<sup>85</sup> who returned this morning from the temporary seat of Yugoslav Government to General Simovich and Outerbridge Horsey<sup>86</sup> by automobile to Budapest whence this telegram should be despatched and where our Legation will determine the best means to contact German Government, possibly through the Hungarian Government. [Lane.]

TRAVERS

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740.0011 European War 1939/9915: Telegram

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

BUDAPEST, April 12, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 12:55 p. m.]

166. Supplementing my 160, April 11, 5 p. m.<sup>87</sup> Following received through Horsey from Lane dated April 8.

“Although the Yugoslav Government announced some days before that Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana would be open towns the Germans began an air bombardment of Belgrade at 7 a. m. on Sunday morning April 6 without warning. It was very heavy and other bombardments of varying intensity occurred throughout the day, Sunday night and Monday. There has been no air activity today.

The morale of the civil population has been magnificent in spite of immense property damage and loss of life. It is impossible to state what the latter was.

We are at present living in the suburb of Dedinje which has suffered little or no damage. Most of the Government offices are gutted as is much of the central part of the city including the Belgian and Polish Legations. The German Legation was badly damaged.

The bombing was unquestionably indiscriminate, most of the worst damage occurring in crowded retail and residential quarters far from any possible military objective.

The city is without electricity or water and all available facilities have been so overtaxed that many dead are still lying in the streets. Many are still buried under debris. Food is unobtainable but we have supplies for some time.

I have organized American Red Cross with full cooperation of Yugoslav Red Cross and Belgrade municipal authorities for immediate relief of population with George H. Schellens as chairman. He requests authorization initial allocation \$100,000. Lane.”

TRAVERS

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<sup>85</sup> Col. Louis J. Fortier, Military Attaché in Yugoslavia.

<sup>86</sup> American Vice Consul at Budapest.

<sup>87</sup> Not printed.

124.60H/57

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Shaw)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 23, 1941.

Mr. Travers telephoned me from Budapest this morning. He said that Mr. Lane had been in touch with him and wanted to know whether the Department wished him to remain in Belgrade. I said that Mr. Lane should proceed to Budapest and there await further instructions.<sup>88</sup> Travers then asked whether members of the Belgrade staff should accompany the Minister to Budapest. I replied that we left entirely to the Minister's discretion who should be left and who should accompany him to Budapest. He asked whether we would defray the expenses of sending a car to the border and other expenses incidental to the Minister's travel. I said that we would.

Mr. Travers also stated that Mr. Lane had said that \$100,000 was needed for relief, and also bandages and medical supplies from the nearest depot. I said that I would pass this information on immediately. It seems that there are twenty-four Americans in or near Belgrade, and Mr. Lane raised the question of the expenses of their repatriation. I said that I would take this matter under advisement.

Mr. Travers reported that Mr. Pell <sup>89</sup> had arrived at Budapest, and that all the staff were well. He said that Horsey had not been able to return to Budapest. He added that he understood that Macatee <sup>90</sup> was well, although no definite information has been received concerning him.

G. HOWLAND SHAW

740.0011 European War 1939/10440 : Telegram

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

BUDAPEST, April 29, 1941—6 p. m.

[Received April 29—4 p. m.]

231. Personal for the President from Lane.

"Perhaps I am personally too upset by recent events in Belgrade to report objectively. May I however endeavor to impress on our Government the imperative necessity officials and private individuals forgetting their own personal interests and cooperating in the common cause. When I say that the danger for us is approaching I am not exaggerating. I fully realize that you know what our problem is but I wonder whether the American people do. We must wake up to the

<sup>88</sup> Minister Lane after a short stay in Budapest left that city May 21 to return to the United States via Berlin, Geneva, and Barcelona.

<sup>89</sup> Herbert C. Pell, newly appointed Minister to Hungary.

<sup>90</sup> Robert B. Macatee, First Secretary of Legation in Yugoslavia.

necessity that we must be willing to give everything we have to save the situation. This is for the sake of religion, democracy and civilization."

TRAVERS

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860H.01/317

*The Yugoslav Minister (Fotitch) to the Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, May 12, 1941.

SIR: I have the honor to convey to your Excellency the following statement which I have been instructed to make by my Government:

In the course of the first few days following the unprovoked attack on Yugoslavia the German army occupied a part of the territory of the Banovine of Croatia including its capital city Zagreb. Acting under the protection of the army of occupation the notorious conspirator, Ante Pavelic, who had been sentenced to death by French courts for the assassination of the late King Alexander,<sup>91</sup> proclaimed, with the support of a small group of partisans having no following whatever among the Croat people, a so-called "Independent State of Croatia." The legitimate representatives of the Croat people in the Yugoslav Government as well as those of the autonomous authorities of the Banovine of Croatia have been forced to withdraw under the onslaught of enemy armies.

It is, of course, a cardinal principle of International Law that military occupation of territory in the course of hostilities does not change the juridical status of the territory thus occupied and that occupation by enemy armies provides no legal basis for the establishment of a new juridical status within such territory. In consequence, the establishment of so-called "Independent Croatia" imposed by, or at the instigation of the authorities of occupation is devoid of any basis in law and constitutes a patent violation of the Law of Nations to which the Yugoslav Government continues to adhere.

The Royal Yugoslav Government desires to register its most emphatic protest against this unlawful action of the German Reich and considers null and void all acts relating to the creation of the so-called "Independent State of Croatia", the sole object of which is to dismember the national territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Accept [etc.]

CONSTANTIN FOTITCH

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<sup>91</sup> King Alexander I of Yugoslavia was assassinated at Marseilles, France, October 9, 1934.

860H.01/332

*The Yugoslav Minister (Fotitch) to the Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, May 24, 1941.

MR. SECRETARY: I have the honor to refer to my note of May 12, 1941 and, acting under the instructions of my Government, to convey to Your Excellency the following communication.

In the course of ceremonies staged in Rome on May 18th last purported agreements were signed ceding to Italy integral parts of the national territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. By virtue of further agreements entered into with representatives of the so-called "Independent State of Croatia" that "state", previously established on Yugoslav territory by the military authorities of occupation, has been declared by the Italian Government to be a hereditary monarchy under Italian protection, thus establishing in effect if not in name an annexation of these territories by the Italian Government.

These agreements were entered into with the same persons who, instigated and aided by the military authorities of occupation, had usurped power in Croatia without consultation with or participation of its people, in direct violation of their essential rights and in total disregard of their vital interests.

The Royal Yugoslav Government protests against this new violation of the integrity of its national territory and against the separation of the Croat people who, through their legitimate representatives within the Royal Government continue the struggle for the liberation of Yugoslavia, which includes all Croat territory, and recognize His Majesty King Peter the Second as their only legitimate Sovereign.

Accept [etc.]

CONSTANTIN FOTITCH

860H.01/332

*The Secretary of State to the Yugoslav Minister (Fotitch)*

WASHINGTON, May 28, 1941.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your note of May 12, 1941 concerning the creation of the so-called "Independent State of Croatia". I observe that the Royal Yugoslav Government desires to register its most emphatic protest against this unlawful action of the German Reich and considers null and void all acts relating to the creation of the so-called "Independent State of Croatia", the sole object of which is to dismember the national territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

I also wish to refer to your note of May 24, 1941 concerning the purported agreements said to have been signed in Rome on May 18 last providing for the cession to Italy of integral parts of the national

territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. I note that the Royal Yugoslav Government protests against this new violation of its integrity and against the separation of the Croat people, who, through their legitimate representatives within the Royal Government continue the struggle for the liberation of Yugoslavia, which includes all Croat territory, and recognize His Majesty King Peter the Second as their only legitimate Sovereign.

I desire to thank you for your courtesy in furnishing me with this expression of your views and to reiterate the indignation of this Government and the American people at the invasion and mutilation of Yugoslavia by various member states of the Tripartite Pact.

Accept [etc.]

For the Secretary of State:  
SUMNER WELLES

123 Biddle, Anthony J. D./401

*President Roosevelt to King Peter II of Yugoslavia*

WASHINGTON, September 5, 1941.

GREAT AND GOOD FRIEND: I have made choice of Mr. Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., a distinguished citizen of the United States, to reside near the Government of Your Majesty<sup>92</sup> in the quality of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America. He is well informed of the relative interests of the two countries and of the sincere desire of this Government to cultivate to the fullest extent the friendship which has so long subsisted between them. My knowledge of his high character and ability gives me entire confidence that he will constantly endeavor to advance the interests and prosperity of both Governments and so render himself acceptable to Your Majesty.

I therefore request Your Majesty to receive him favorably and to give full credence to what he shall say on the part of the United States and to the assurances which I have charged him to convey to you of the best wishes of this Government for the prosperity of Yugoslavia.

May God have Your Majesty in His wise Keeping.

Your Good Friend,

[FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT]

740.0011 European War 1939/12435

*The Secretary of State to the Yugoslav Minister (Fotitch)*

WASHINGTON, September 25, 1941.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your notes of June 5, 1941<sup>93</sup> conveying to me the two statements of the Royal Yugo-

<sup>92</sup> In London.

<sup>93</sup> Neither printed.



slav Government with respect, first, to the state of war existing between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria and between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Hungary, and, second, to the action of the German Reich and the Kingdom of Italy in the partition and annexation of the Slovenian provinces of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

I have taken due note of the resolution adopted by the Royal Yugoslav Government on May 4, 1941 to the effect that, in view of the participation of Bulgaria and Hungary in the attack against Yugoslavia perpetrated by the Axis powers, and in view of the participation of these countries in the dismemberment of the national territory of Yugoslavia, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia considers itself in a state of war—with Bulgaria as from April 6 and with Hungary as from April 10, 1941. In communicating to me this statement the Royal Yugoslav Government desired to emphasize that Bulgaria and Hungary were bound to Yugoslavia by treaties of eternal friendship, and that their acts of unprovoked aggression, committed at a time when the Yugoslav people were engaged in a bitter struggle for the maintenance of their freedom and independence, had seriously jeopardized all prospects of friendship and cooperation among the countries of the Danubian and Balkan regions.

I have also noted the statement of the Royal Yugoslav Government that the brutal partition of Slovenia constitutes a violation of the principle of ethnic self-determination, more especially since the territory now annexed by Germany and Italy is inhabited by compact and ethnically pure Slovenian elements; that this annexation is contrary to all principles of international law which enjoins the power occupying the adversary's territory in the course of hostilities from changing the juridical status of such territory until a peace settlement has been made; and that the Royal Yugoslav Government, which includes the only legitimate representatives of the Slovenian people, desires to register their emphatic protest against this action of the German Reich and of the Kingdom of Italy which has as its object the destruction of the national life and aspirations of the Slovenian people and of the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

In thanking you for your courtesy in bringing these two statements to my attention, I take this opportunity to refer to the repeated declarations of the Government of the United States in which the indignation of this Government and of the American people with regard to the invasion and mutilation of Yugoslavia has found expression.

Accept [etc.]

For the Secretary of State:  
[File copy not signed]

740.0011 European War 1939/17306

*The Yugoslav Minister (Fotitch) to the Secretary of State*

No. 769

WASHINGTON, November 4, 1941.

SIR: I have the honor to refer to your Notes of May 28th, and September 25, 1941 in which you have made reference to the indignation of the American Government and of the American people in regard to the invasion and dismemberment of Yugoslavia by the various states adhering to the Tripartite Pact. I desire again to express to Your Excellency the deep sense of gratitude with which the Royal Yugoslav Government received this declaration.

I have now been instructed by my Government to register an emphatic protest against the incorporating of national Yugoslav territory by the Kingdom of Bulgaria. Following the German attack on Yugoslavia and the subsequent military occupation of its territory, the German military authorities have allowed the Bulgarian army to take possession of certain southern and eastern parts of Yugoslav national territory. Bulgarian military cooperation with Germany on that occasion has caused the Royal Yugoslav Government to declare war on Bulgaria—a fact of which Your Excellency has been apprised.

It appears to be clear that the Bulgarian Government consider these territories as definitely and permanently included within Bulgarian national boundaries. This view is borne out by the various Bulgarian declarations which have been made by responsible officials, and more particularly by the actions of the Bulgarian Government which, by changing the legal status of the occupied Yugoslav areas, patently exceed the limits of their rights as the authority of occupation.

There have been published by the Bulgarian Government in their official gazette (No. 166 of July 31 of this year) three decrees of which the first, under No. 2620, concerns the creation of the new Bulgarian district of Skoplje; the second, under No. 2618, creating the district of Bitolj, and the third, under No. 2619, joining four Yugoslav counties to the existing district of Sofia. Moreover, the Bulgarian Government is carrying on military recruitment in these Yugoslav territories.

The Royal Yugoslav Government have the honor to draw Your Excellency's attention to the facts referred to above which constitute a flagrant violation of international law and usage and desires to register with Your Excellency a most emphatic protest against this new attempt at dismemberment of the Yugoslav State, this time by Bulgaria.

Accept [etc.]

CONSTANTIN FOTITCH

740.0011 European War 1939/17306

*The Secretary of State to the Yugoslav Minister (Fotitch)*

[WASHINGTON,] December 3, 1941.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your note of November 4, 1941, informing me that you have been instructed by your Government to register the emphatic protest of the Royal Yugoslav Government against the action of the Kingdom of Bulgaria in its incorporation of national territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. You refer to the declaration of war on the part of the Royal Yugoslav Government against Bulgaria as a result of Bulgarian military cooperation with Germany at the time of the German attack on Yugoslavia, and in particular to certain acts of the Bulgarian Government since that time as indicating that the Bulgarian Government considers the territories in occupation as definitely and permanently included within Bulgarian national boundaries.

In my notes of May 28 and September 25 I made reference to the indignation of the Government of the United States and of the American people in regard to the invasion and dismemberment of Yugoslavia by certain neighboring states. I wish to assure you that this Government views with the same sentiments the acts of the Bulgarian Government in extending its control over those parts of Yugoslavia occupied by Bulgarian forces.

Accept [etc.]

For the Secretary of State:  
SUMNER WELLES

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<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.

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