

President's Secretary's File
Diplomatic Correspondence
Poland 1935-38

Box 44

*file
Personal*

PSF: [unclear]

Warsaw, July 10, 1937.

My dear Mr. President:

During the recent visit to Warsaw on the part of Mr. Matthew Woll, Vice President of the American Federation of Labor, I had the opportunity to discuss with him various factors relating to the labor situation in the United States and elsewhere.

Mr. Woll was received as the American delegate to the Warsaw Congress of the International Federation of Labor Unions upon the extension of membership in that body to the American Federation of Labor.

As I realize that the labor situation both at home and abroad is of interest to you, I take pleasure in forwarding herewith a copy of my confidential memorandum incorporating Mr. Woll's views with respect to recent developments in labor circles.

1/

Margaret and I have already become extremely enthusiastic

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

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enthusiastic about our new post. I find the work tremendously interesting as well as Poland and its people. I am digging in fast and I hope to be able to send you a constructive summary of the situation in this part of Europe in the near future. I can not tell you how proud and happy we both are at your having appointed us to represent you here.

With warmest regards, I am,

Faithfully yours,

Tony Biddle, Jr

Enclosure:

1. Copy of despatch No. 75 forwarding memorandum of Mr. Woll's views on the labor situation.

No. 75.

Warsaw, July 10, 1937.

Subject: Transmitting memorandum of Mr. Woll's views with respect to recent developments in the labor situation in the United States and elsewhere.

~~CONFIDENTIAL.~~

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The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

With reference to my despatch No. 70 of July 8, 1937, on the subject of the Warsaw Congress of the International Federation of Labor Unions, I have the honor to inform the Department that Mr. Matthew Woll, Vice President of the American Federation of Labor, was received as the American delegate to the Congress upon the extension of membership in the International Federation of Labor Unions to the American Federation of Labor.

During Mr. Woll's stay in Warsaw, I had the opportunity to discuss with him various factors relating

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1/ relating to the labor situation in the United States,
and I take pleasure in forwarding herewith a confi-
dential memorandum incorporating his views with res-
pect to recent developments in the labor situation
in the United States and elsewhere.

I was impressed by the frankness and sincerity
with which Mr. Woll spoke to me and feel that his
remarks may be of special interest to those Federal
agencies which are concerned with labor matters.

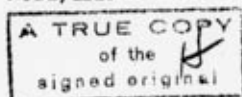
Respectfully yours,

A.J. Dressel Biddle, Jr.,

Enclosure:

No. 1. Memorandum of Mr. Woll's
views with respect to re-
cent developments in the
labor situation in the
United States and elsewhere.

550.4
In Quintuplicate
AJDB/LHH



Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 75, July 10, 1937, from the Embassy at Warsaw, Poland, on the subject of "Transmitting memorandum of Mr. Woll's views with respect to recent developments in the labor situation in the United States and elsewhere."

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM.

Matthew Woll, in my conversation with him during his visit here, stated in effect the following: the reason Warsaw had been chosen as the meeting place for the Congress of International Federation of Trade Unions was the following:

The British and French labor organizations, working in many respects along the same international political lines as their respective Governments, had engineered the meeting here in order to appeal to the laboring classes of Poland and other small neighboring states to bring pressure on their respective Governments to remain independent of the influences of the larger neighboring states. Both British and French delegates were careful not to mention the latter by name but their identities were obviously Germany and Italy. Britain realized she could no longer definitely count on her colonies as in the past and required some time yet before attaining her proposed peak in armament. The Dominions Conference had resulted in a demand for a fresh examination of Britain's position vis-à-vis Germany. The British Air Force and Navy would be up to standard in eighteen months, but a continued decline in enlistments would prevent the Army's being up to proposed strength by that time. Conscription would undoubtedly call for a general election.

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election. Hence Britain's present attitude in respect to Spain as well as her currently adopted means of circumventing Germany's attempts to gain control, in one capacity or another, of smaller states in this part of Europe. Including Sir Walter Citrine, President of the International Federation of Labor Unions, the various delegates to the Congress had deliberately given Woll the following impression: if Franco won in Spain they believed Poland would become the scene for the next test between the two ideologies. Though Citrine, at the meeting on July 2nd, had already publicly stated he believed it would be Czechoslovakia, he subsequently confidentially told Woll he really believed it would be Poland. Citrine, moreover, had told Woll that, in his opinion, the two ideologies, Fascism and Communism, had different aims but applied similar methods towards obtaining their respective objectives.

Woll's discussions with various delegates had given him the impression that labor circles looked for a military dictatorship to replace Stalin; such a dictatorship to be followed by a gradual breaking up of the Soviet Union into autonomous states. Moreover, that Germany was exerting no little influence towards this end.

Regarding the Comintern, Woll said that when Trotsky and Lenin came to power, they were faced with a lack of adequately armed and equipped, as well as coordinated, defense. Hence, among other
aims,

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aims, the establishment of the Comintern envisaged holding at bay other nations which might wish to intervene in Soviet affairs during the formative stages of organizing the Communist State. The Comintern directed its efforts along the lines of an "inside job", towards internally weakening, if not crippling, and thus holding off the opposition. They, Lenin and Trotsky, so to speak, augmented their own defensive forces by subversively enlisting the support of as large a portion as possible of the other nations' manpower. Woll had gained the impression that the Comintern's efforts were not currently proving as effective on the Continent as in the past, since they had provoked a forceful resistance. Hence the Comintern had turned to the United States. In continuing to apply like methods today, the Comintern aimed to gain control of the merchant marine on a worldwide basis. In this connection, Woll said the Comintern's efforts were now directed towards gaining a strong foothold in the unions engaged in our own shipping industry. He added that thus the Comintern aimed to control ocean transportation facilities eventually throughout the world with the objective of bringing about a paralysis of shipments of goods, food, and ammunition in the event of war.

Regarding the internal structure of the International Federation of Labor Unions, France and Belgium actually dominated the organization as a whole.

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whole. French and Belgian delegates played up to the labor of the Latin countries, the British played ball with the French up to a certain point but avoided becoming involved in France's Communist tie-up. Léon Jouhaux, President of Confédération Générale du Travail, the French delegate, though not formerly Communist-minded, now had to play ball with the Communists for he was accompanied here by a Communist Committee from his own labor organization. Besides, Jouhaux's long-time personal antipathy for Mussolini, led him, consciously or unconsciously, to support the cause, opposed to Mussolini's doctrine. The British were none too sure of France's position due to these Communist leanings; hence there was an increasing desire on the British delegates' part to gain the cooperation of American labor organizations. The British admittedly would feel more secure were American labor represented at the Congress. Woll's own impression was that the Jews in the International Federation of Labor Unions were strenuously endeavoring to gain a foothold in the organization's control. This was becoming more obvious every day.

Various delegates, the British and French in particular, had, for Woll's benefit, deliberately painted a black picture of economic and labor conditions here. Moreover, they had obviously determined to discredit by inference the present Polish Government.

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Government.

At the same time, Woll had been told that the underlying situation in Poland was a volcanic condition due to following facts:

(a) Poland had made a grave mistake in not having adopted land reform such as the Baltic States had done. One of the contributing reasons for peasants' difficulties here was that the landed nobility were allowed to retain their vast estates. These properties should have been split up into farms and made available to the surplus peasant population.

(b) Peasants' sons were raised on extremely meager living standard until reaching military age. They were thereupon taken into the army where they were fed well and generally well cared for. At the termination of the military training period they were released to go back to the farms and to return to their meager standard of living. The Government should establish and organize means for engaging these men after their training period in order to prevent discontent consequent to the drastic contrast between their welfare in the army and their subsequent return to poor living conditions. It was of utmost importance for the Government to create such means in order to secure these men as pillars of the State. Otherwise, they would become prey to the influences of radical organizers.

The
Racial
Element.

(c) The Jews felt themselves steadily becoming

more

- 6 -

more the objects of intolerance. They were resentful, fearful, and bewildered.

(d) In this connection, the Jews are apprehensive lest a continued lack of rainfall would mean a poor harvest and consequent bad times this winter. They felt that this would mean greater pressure against their race.

[In relation to the Jewish problem here, Woll believed the problem was fundamentally an economic one. However, it was an economic problem associated with and emphasized by the racial characteristics of the Jews.]

(e) It was generally believed here that the Fascist element in Government circles was behind the present drive against the Jews. In this connection, the labor delegates pointed out that three-quarters of the Government was Fascist-minded and only one-quarter liberal. So far the one-quarter had succeeded in tempering the otherwise more drastic actions of the majority. It was further felt by these delegates that the Hitler régime is playing for control of this Government.

As regards the conflict between the American Federation of Labor and C.I.O., Mr. Woll hoped and believed there would eventually be found a common ground whereon the two organizations might conciliate their differences. In the first place, America was no country in which two major labor organizations could continue a feud for very long.

Time

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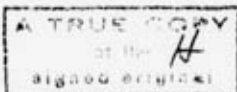
Time would see a change in leadership and personnel in both camps. The C.I.O., would probably find it necessary from time to time to alter its course to fit in with local or ever-changing circumstances of the day. He then pointed out that so far, both organizations in their official actions had "left the door open" after them, though perhaps only to the extent of a crack and the C.I.O., still bore the designation of "Committee". These facts in themselves were significant and pointed to the possibility of an eventual get-together. Meanwhile, in Woll's opinion, John Lewis, consciously or unconsciously, had allowed the Communist elements to honeycomb his organization - and Woll added with emphasis that John Lewis himself was certainly not Communist-minded. In Woll's opinion, Lewis had become the executive of the C.I.O., movement, and that the brains behind the executive were Sidney Hillman and other un-American labor factors. Moreover, Woll added, if John Lewis did not soon rid his organization of this element (which Woll emphatically labeled as Communist-minded), they would take the reins away from Lewis. Woll held that the presence of this element in Lewis' camp had unfortunately served to provoke a personal antagonism between the leading circles of the American Federation of Labor and the C.I.O., respectively. Woll further held that, politically speaking, as against C.I.O., the American Federation of Labor would continue as the predominant influence in Congress, whereas Woll looked for John Lewis to have

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have gained political influence only in those states wherein he had waged his forward movement. The result of this situation during the coming year might point to the possibility of both organizations' seeking a common ground. Mr. Woll regretted the conflict and hoped that time would see both organizations seeing eye to eye.

A.J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.,

AJDB/LHH



PSF: [unclear]

Warsaw, Poland.
December 10th, 1937.

My dear Mr. President,

I am delighted to have your long and interesting letter of November 10th, and I am deeply touched by your having so kindly stated that you are glad to have Margaret and myself in Warsaw, where, as you say, we may expect to be on the firing line in the event of things getting worse. I would rather have that statement from you than almost anything I can think of, and I assure you that it not only serves as a source of real encouragement and stimulation for us, but also as a spur to our working even harder towards strengthening your confidence.

Temple University of Philadelphia has decided to confer on me an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on February 15th, and I am particularly pleased to be the recipient of such a compliment, particularly since its source is my native city. Therefore, we should like to plan being in Philadelphia at that time, providing of course the situation in Europe does not meanwhile take a turn for the worse. The general condition over here, however, is still so volcanic and jittery that I do not feel we should plan to stay on the other side of the Atlantic for an extended period, for in the event of real trouble, we should not want to be away from our post. Hence, as my paramount desire is to see you, we shall be guided in making our plans, in respect to our length of stay at home, by whatever date you might find available to see me.

Therefore would it fit in better with your plans for us to plan to come before February 15th, or after that date? It would be such a pleasure to see you again, and to discuss the various events bearing on activities at home and abroad. I therefore sincerely hope that I may have the honor of an appointment with you at your convenience.

In

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Photo of Mrs. Bidone in Photo file
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In view of your expressed interest in the future course of the Polish Government, I take occasion to attach hereto, an outline of what I consider to be the Polish Government's present course, and my estimate as to its future course.

We were delighted to have had the pleasure of Bill Bullitt's several days visit with us. He is such a grand fellow, and I am very proud of the splendid job he is doing in Paris. I am only sorry that the unjustified rumours which accompanied his visit resulted in erroneous articles in our press at home, which eventually caused you the inconvenience of making a denial as to any official objectives entailed in his trip to Warsaw. Unfortunately, Press correspondents in this part of the world have lately been given to a combination of wish thinking, conjuring up fabrications to stir up international complications, and conjectural reporting without confirming the story at its source. Aside, however, from this particular unjustified and annoying press incident, Bill's visit here proved a source of real interest and pleasure for me, as well as an excellent opportunity for a constructive exchange of ideas and useful information.

With renewed thanks from the bottom of my heart for your friendly expression of confidence, which it is my constant and earnest desire to justify, and with every good wish, I am

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle, Jr

Outline of Polish Government's Present and Forward Looking Course in respect to:

Internal Politics.

Foreign Policy.

3 Power anti-Communist Pact

Jewish Problem.

Bearing of Economic Situation of Foregoing Aspects.

Internal Political

Present Course.

As was recently vigorously voiced by Marshal Smigly-Rydz, Poland would not adhere to the conceptions of the extreme Right or extreme Left, but would pursue a middle road policy, carrying on Pilsudski's forward looking precepts: Poland had to go forward by evolution, not revolution, and accordingly had to work to an objective, envisaging the realization of a democratic concept.

The President, the Marshal, and Colonel Beck, together with others in the present Government, appreciate the importance of maintaining a democratic facade during this still formative period of Poland's regeneration. Accordingly, they recognize the importance of maintaining a Parliament despite the decidedly centralized character of the present Government. The keynote of Government policy, therefore, during this formative period is: "a conducted democracy" - that is to say, "a democracy conducted under an authority". Contributing to the conception of this keynote, is the Government's conviction that the masses have not yet become sufficiently educated to comprehend, in its broad sense, the objective responsibility accompanying the right to vote in a national election. Moreover, the Government feels, that until the masses become more enlightened they will continue to be subject to the sway of subversive influences of the 3rd Internationale as well as the continued existence of cross currents and the play of other externally inspired forces. Hence they feel convinced that at this stage an election of national scope would result in a decidedly radical turn. In this connection, those Government officials who are regarded as competent and experienced observers of Slavic mass-psychology, earnestly point out for example, that our country's liberalism which they observe is called "radicalism" by our reactionaries, has a "ceiling", whereas in contrast thereto, the radicalism of Eastern Europe and of Poland in particular, has no "ceiling", and might be expected to serve as a "shoe-horn" for Bolshevism.

The Marshal, second only to the President in authority, made this declaration in a recent radio broadcast, as his answer in behalf of the Polish Government to recent widely published rumours of a totalitarian tendency.

I now look for Government inner circles to exert a quiet but definite effort to strengthen in every way possible the Government front, in their aim to exercise a firm check against communistic and other disturbances. At the same time the President and the Marshal who have the interests of the peasantry at heart, may be expected

- 2 -

to see to it that every effort is made to alleviate their hardships. This may be expected to meet with the Catholic Clergy's approval and support, which in turn would be reflected in added strength for the Government's position. Such a prospective course will undoubtedly entail the stressing of agrarian reform and the advancement of a broader line of social reform.

Course of Colonel Beck's
Direction of Poland's
Foreign Policy.

Although Colonel Beck, Minister for Foreign Affairs, has been frequently suspected in the past (particularly by the French) of leaning towards Germany, my own observations convince me that he is first and foremost a Polish patriot thinking in terms mainly of Poland's own objective policies, in the light of her own interests, and following the precepts of his former chief, the late Marshal Pilsudski, with whom he was intimately associated. Pilsudski had constantly stressed the importance not only of maintaining an equilibrium between the forces on Poland's Eastern and Western frontiers, but also the importance of building up as good friendship as possible with Germany during peace times, as well as of maintaining correct normal relations with the Soviet. This formula envisaged Poland's ability both to rehabilitate herself economically, socially, and otherwise, and to construct her defenses, militarily, socially, religiously, and otherwise, against what Colonel Beck (in carrying forward Pilsudski's line of thought) considers the "unlimited" menace of Bolshevism. In contrast to Colonel Beck's regarding communism as "unlimited" menace which seeks to penetrate every element in the structure of national life, he regards Germany as a "limited" menace, whose aims are at least ear-marked. To my mind, this, among others of the late Marshal's convictions has been the guiding influence in Colonel Beck's direction of Poland's foreign policy.

Notwithstanding the impression given by propaganda from the Soviet and left press both of France and Britain, the Polish people, as a whole, with the exception of small Francophile sections both of aristocratic and extreme left circles, are in accord with Minister Beck's careful but "active neutrality" policy.

Poland Remains Outside 3 Power
anti-Communist Pact.

As regards Poland's position in respect to the 3 power anti-Communist Pact, I am definitely of the opinion that Minister Beck is determined that Poland remain outside. Among others, the following important factors contribute to Minister Beck's stand in matter: (a) Poland is opposed to the formation of hostile blocs in Europe, (b) due to Poland's geo-political position she could not afford to

Join

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join a pact, which for her, would carry such potential difficulties in respect to her Eastern neighbours. Poland must at all times maintain that delicate balance between her Eastern and Western neighbours, and therefore must participate in no undertaking which might tend to upset the equilibrium which she has so far succeeded in maintaining. Besides, Minister Beck is opposed to Poland's joining any pact which holds either unforeseen complications for her, or the possibility of passage either of Russian or German troops over Polish territory. Poland's bitter experience in the latter respect has taught her a lesson. (c) Minister Beck would be in a far better trading position vis à vis Britain by remaining outside the anti-Communist Pact than by joining. Once Poland might have joined, she would have become identified merely as following the foot-steps of the other 3 major members, whereas from a tactical standpoint, by remaining outside, there always exists the possibility of joining; in other words, a "card up Poland's sleeve."

Indeed, I definitely feel Minister Beck, in directing the course of Poland's foreign policy, constantly keeps his eye on Britain's movements, and that his estimate of Britain's future action plays an important role in the Minister's formulation of Poland's long-term policy. To my mind, in terms of European considerations, Minister Beck's fondest aspiration is a close tie-in with Britain.

Jewish Problem.
Government's Concern.

The Polish Government as a whole are sincere and earnest in their search for a solution of the Jewish problem, the basis of which is mainly economic. In view of their urgent need for, and existing lack of capital for industrialization, and in search for a tangible solution, they emphasize the necessity of emigration outlets, not only for the Jewish element, but also for the surplus farm labor. In stressing this point, they are motivated both by their constant concern not only over the rapid rate of annual increase in the population as a whole, but also over the problem of finding "economic room" for this steady increase in an already economically overcrowded community, which fact, they realize, contributed to a volcanic internal political condition.

Government's Course.

In estimating the Government's near future course in relation to the Jewish problem, I am aware that there has been no small amount of pressure brought to bear on the Government from financial, commercial, and press sources abroad. Despite this pressure along a broad front however, it is my opinion that the Government may not be expected to make any major concessions, unless absolutely essential. On the other hand, however, the Government may be expected to re-emphasize its deprecation

of

- 4 -

of physical harm to the Jews and their property, and in this light, to re-double its efforts to protect them. Moreover, I believe the Government will continue to regard the problem mainly in the light of an inevitable economic struggle.

Bearing of Economic Difficulties.

Economic distress more than political discontent is mainly responsible for unrest among the peasantry (who comprise about 71% of all the workers of Poland). As a matter of fact, most of the political agitation is stirred up by individuals of the extreme Right and Left groups in the cities and towns with the scattered support of professional politicians who regularly represent the peasantry.

Moreover, in spite of prevailing economic difficulties, the Government deems it essential, in order to assure Poland's independence and peace between the two ever threatening heavily armed forces on her Eastern and Western borders, to contribute proportionately large sums from the national income towards the upkeep of military defense, at least during this period of European tension and uncertainty. These proportionately heavy military appropriations unfortunately work hardship for the Polish people as a whole, in terms of the standard of living.

To my mind, anything which would tend substantially to contribute to a cure of Poland's economic ailments, might conceivably be reflected in the Government's giving more vigorous and emphatic expression to its long term objective of achieving a democratic state in the true sense of its meaning.

PSF: P. Land
file
of
President
P. Land

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

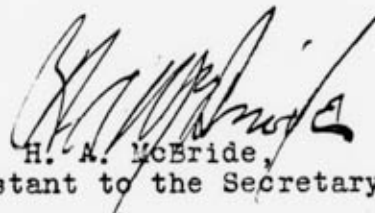
MEMORANDUM

April 27, 1938.

Dear Mr. McIntyre:

I attach copy of a despatch, No. 424, of April sixth, from Ambassador Biddle, marked "Strictly Confidential For the President and the Secretary".

Quite frankly, it is not apparent to us here why this particular despatch should be sent to the President, but in view of his specific request, we call it to your attention.



H. A. McBride,
Assistant to the Secretary.

The Honorable
Marvin H. McIntyre,
Secretary to the President,
The White House.

PSF: Bland

DUPLICATE

No. 424 Warsaw, April 8, 1938.

Subject: Trial of 39 alleged Communist agitators, and connected bearing of substance of conversations in highest police and military circles.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that on April 5, 1938, 39 persons, amongst whom were 9 Jewish women, allegedly members of a militant Communist organization, went on trial before the Warsaw District Court, charged with high treason, anti-Polish propaganda, and establishment of Communist cells in the Polish army. The leader of the "gang", a racial Pole, was released in 1934 after 6 years imprisonment for similar activities. Of the remaining number of the
men

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men accused, 23/Jewish and 6 are Gentiles. The indictment contains charges that the defendants were closely collaborating with the Moscow Comintern towards undermining the Polish army with a view of bringing about civil war and the downfall of the existing order in Poland.

During the first day's trial, texts of leaflets allegedly distributed by the accused were read into the court record. In substance these leaflets represented an appeal for the destruction of discipline in the army. Moreover, copies of telegrams were read into the court record illustrating how the plotters intended to proceed towards achieving their objective.

Details of an alleged secret center also came to light, as well as the methods for the distribution of moneys and instructions to foment insubordination. In this connection, the defendants were accused of distributing sums varying from 10 to 50 pounds sterling towards carrying out their subversive mission.

Veteran press observers are of the opinion that the methods allegedly employed by the defendants, as so far revealed in the trial, are identical to those which the first Russian revolutionaries employed in bringing about the disruption of the Russian Imperial Army in 1917.

Of connected interest, highest police authorities disclosed in my recent conversations, their secret reports revealed steady increase in subversive activities of Comintern agents throughout Poland. Moreover,

secret

- 3 -

secret police exchanges with other countries were indicating similar conditions, which my competent informant characterized as "hysterical activity", adding that the currently Stalin-revised, as compared to the former Trotsky-opportunist modus operandi of the Comintern, was now reflecting the hand of Stalin, in that many of the former agents had already been replaced by a more intelligent type, and that their subversive activities were directed along even more subtle and insidious lines than in former days. (See my despatch No. 288 of January 3, 1938.) My informant moreover remarked that, unfortunate though it might be, the fact that the first accumulating police dossiers here, as well as those of secret police organizations in other continental countries, indicated a predominance of Jews among the Comintern agents, might be expected eventually to be reflected in the light of a hardship against the Jews as a whole, at least on the Continent. To my mind, his remarks were significant, in view of his being known to me as a liberal in terms of racial and religious considerations.

Subsequently, one of this official's close associates, widely travelled and recognized as a man of liberal views and broad intelligence, offered the following opinion with apparent sincerity: providing a Japanese-Soviet war within the next two years could be localized, it might perhaps prove the one "solution" against the European continent's overhanging menace, which he pictured as the Comintern's envisaged

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envisaged opportunity to spread chaos throughout Europe: that juncture when Europe might have gone into an economic "tail-spin", with a subsequent widespread unemployment, resulting from the saturation point's having been reached in the armaments industries.

It was therefore relatively interesting to note that my subsequent conversation with highest military authorities disclosed their opinion that a Japanese-Soviet war within the next year and a half was almost inevitable.

Respectfully yours,

A.J.Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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(In quintuplicate)

Copy sent Embassy, Paris.

A TRUE COPY
of the *emq*
signed original

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

April 26, 1938.

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McINTYRE

There is enclosed herewith copy of a despatch from Ambassador Biddle marked "Strictly Confidential for The President and The Secretary" regarding Poland's activities in connection with the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia.


Harry A. McBride

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K.2

file
personal

Warsaw, July 28, 1938.

My dear Mr. President:

1/ For your information and interest, I am attaching hereto a memorandum covering in effect my recent conversation with the Chief of Minister Beck's Cabinet, Count Michał Żubiński.

To my mind, his questions and remarks justify recording, in that they reflect Polish officialdom's interest in the questions (a) as to whether the United States might be expected to supply Germany with war materials in the event of a European conflict, and (b) as to American public opinion's reported increasing antipathy for Nazi policy.

In response I prefaced my remarks by exacting an assurance from him that he would treat them in an unofficial, confidential, and off-the-record light.

The President
The White House
Washington D.C.

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light. Without dwelling on details, I endeavored to clarify our Government's neutrality policy and American public opinion in terms of its attitude towards certain phases of Nazi policy. I hope that the substance of my response meets with your approval.

Hoping that you will be able to find at least a little rest from your arduous duties during the hot summer months, and with every good wish, I am,

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle

MEMORANDUM

Memorandum of substance of my recent conversation with a high ranking Polish official wherein (a) he disclosed Polish and other European statesmen's interest in the question as to whether the United States might be expected to supply Germany with war supplies in event of a European conflict, and (b) he questioned me as to American public opinion's reported increasing antipathy for Nazi policy.

The following is the substance of my informal and confidential conversation with a high ranking Polish official. In connection with my response to his question, he assured me upon my request that he would treat the information informally, unofficially and in strictest confidence. Needless to say, I was guarded in my statement but owing to our close and frank relations, and to the fact that he has steadily proven an exceedingly helpful source of interesting information for me, I concluded to comply with his request in general terms.

In response to his remark that a vital question currently engaging the interest of European statesmen, in considering the possibility of a European conflict, was whether the United States might be expected to supply Germany either directly or indirectly with war materials and supplies, I drew his attention to the substance of our neutrality law, and recalled to him my previous remarks (imparted upon my return from the United States in March) to the effect that I had observed (a) that American public opinion in general was characterized by
opposition

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opposition to any entangling alliances, and (b) a rigid insistence on the part of public opinion that the United States guard its rights to independent and uncommitted judgement on all aspects of each and every foreign crisis as it developed; in other words, an unwillingness to make advance commitments. I added that in effect, the foregoing reactions reflected the principles which had long formed an integral part of our foreign policy.

I emphasized that the majority of my countrymen manifested a strong will to "steer clear" of war, believing at the same time that war was not inevitable. However, it would, to my mind, be dangerous for opinion abroad to interpret this as an unwillingness to fight under any circumstances, aside from invasion. At the same time, it would be equally misleading for opinion abroad to assume that the United States might be unable to retain its neutral status in the event of a major European conflict. As a matter of fact, there was no barometric device whereby we might gauge what position our country might assume under unforeseen circumstances.

In response to the Polish official's further inquiry as to the correctness of reports he had recently received regarding American public opinion's growing antipathy for Nazidom's policies, I stated that in further examining American public opinion in general, I had personally discerned a growing antipathy for the principles and practice of Nazidom's policies; they were for the most part in direct conflict with the principles underlying democracy.

In

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In clarification of this point I remarked that in appraising the full value of this antipathy, it was well to bear in mind (a) my Government's profound respect for the rule of law in international affairs, (b) Berlin's alleged implications in the recently detected "spy-ring", (c) the clash of our principles of tolerance and equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, creed or color, with Nazidom's neo-pagan policy of extreme anti-Semitism. Indeed, the effect of barbaric measures entailed therein, upon the sensibilities of my liberal-minded countrymen, was unfavorable, to say the least.

He then remarked that my observations as to my countrymen's continued belief that war was not inevitable, had especially engaged his interest. I thereupon offered my personal opinion that present European tension might be expected to be liquidated within the next year and a half, either through war or through statesmanship and diplomacy. Moreover, I personally believed that this current war-conducive tension could be liquidated by means of the latter provided there was sufficient will towards that end on part of Governments directly interested.

Throughout our conversation, I discerned his undisguised and lively interest in my remarks. In fact, he observed in conclusion that he was particularly interested, in that, in substance nearly all phases of my observations had corresponded in effect with verbal reports on the part of recently returned Ambassador Count George Potocki. Moreover, my remarks as to my countrymen's attitude in relation to the persecution of Jews in Germany had corresponded

with

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with observations recently and confidentially imparted to him by an important German diplomat to the effect that his Government had become seriously concerned over Ambassador Dieckhoff's alarming reports of a frenzied wave of anti-German feeling throughout the United States due (a) to the "spy scare", (b) to repudiation of liability for the Austrian external loans, and (c) to Jewish persecution.
