July 12, 1939

My dear General Watson:

I am enclosing copies of the following strictly confidential despatches from Ambassador Biddle which have been marked for the President:

No. 1079, dated June 9, 1939 reporting reaction of Polish officials to Berlin's present attitude toward Poland;

No. 1083, dated June 9, 1939 concerning activities of German Ambassador at Warsaw.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Enclosures:

Copies of two despatches, as listed.

Brigadier General Edwin M. Watson,
Secretary to the President,
The White House.
Department of State

ENCLOSURE

TO

6/29/39

Letter drafted

ADDRESS TO

Brig. Gen. Watson
The White House
No. 1079
Versailles, June 9, 1939

Subject: Reactions of Folks: Official circles to Berlin's current attitude.

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

Sir:

I have the honor to report that my recent conversations with informed officials here reveal that their reactions to Berlin's current attitude assume in effect the following line:

Notwithstanding (A) a noticeable détente in general tone of German press via-à-via Moscow; (B) Berlin officials' suggestion that Greece and Berlin agree to soft-pedal their
their respective press campaigns; and (C) Wilhelmstrasse's having recently "taken to sending word" to Warsaw, 1/ indirectly through League High Commissioner Burckhardt and others, and 2/ through German Ambassador to Poland von Politeo, that Berlin would welcome re-opening of Warsaw-Berlin negotiations when times were quieter; Berlin (a) continues to "back away" at the Danzig problem both in press and through other forms of propaganda, as well as through inspiration of provocative activities in Danzig; and (b) appears to be deliberately keeping coals on smoldering fires by further irritating Warsaw with attempt to deport to Poland Jews of Polish origin living in Germany. 2/ From the foregoing disclosures, I gained the impression my informants feel that the discrepancy between Berlin's words and actions is caused by attacking too much credence to Berlin's "smiles". Moreover, they are frank to admit that the aforementioned discrepancy serves further to diminish confidence in any expression of intention or policy on part either of Hitler or his associates.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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AJDB/ls
(In quintuplicate)

* In this connection, Jewish leaders here inform me that during past three days 50 Jews have been chased from Germany over the German-Polish border. Although most of them had no papers, the Polish authorities at Chorzów took pity and permitted them to enter Poland. According to my aforementioned informants, about 4,000 Jews of Polish origin living in Germany recently received orders to evacuate Germany. My informants understood that the Polish Government had warned Berlin that it would have recourse to retaliatory measures should mass expulsion of Jews of Polish origin take place in Germany. My informants added their estimates that there were about 20,000 Jews of Polish origin currently inhabiting Germany. Some of these had passports in order; others had no papers.
No. 1083  

Warsaw, June 9, 1939

Subject: Current propaganda campaign of German Ambassador and his staff amongst their colleagues, aimed at weakening anti-aggression front.

[Signatures]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report the following observations upon current propaganda activities of the German Ambassador and his staff: They have for the past several weeks been actively engaged in propagandizing amongst the Chiefs and staffs of Missions representing a number of the links in the chain of anti-aggression forces. The Ambassador's program

* The newly appointed Soviet Ambassador here confidentially volunteered the information that, among other things that the Soviet Nation Chiefs in all capitals throughout Europe were, pursuant of Hitler's instructions, conducting a propaganda campaign amongst their colleagues with view to weakening, if not breaking up, the anti-aggression front.
program has thus far entailed a series of luncheons and dinners whereat he arranges that the particular colleague with whom he wishes to press joins him in after-luncheon or after-dinner conversation in a salon apart from the other guests. During the past two weeks he has thus conducted lengthy talks with the Hungarian Ambassador, the Yugoslav Minister, the Greek Minister, the Indian Minister, the Swedish Minister, the Finnish Minister, and the Netherlands Minister.

I learn that Molotov usually adopts the following "line": both the moral and armed strength of the axis is far superior to that of the democracies. He thereupon cites statistics on comparative air strengths and motorized equipment, heavy artillery, etcetera. Moreover, he takes it a point to emphasize that, in case of war, the anti-aggression forces east of the axis would have to look for aid from Russia, for neither Britain nor France could help them directly either in terms of troops or equipment. This would mean that the anti-aggression forces of the aforementioned category would be forced to run the risk of encountering eventual Russian pressure. Realizing the dependence of certain states upon her aid, Russia might thus be in position to impose conditions to the disadvantage of states concerned.

Molotov, moreover, points out that, should London and Paris come to terms with Berlin, the other anti-aggression forces,
forces, having served London and Paris usefully as "sentries in a big show", would be left to shift for themselves. They should therefore be mindful of their potential subsequent position vis-à-vis Berlin which had a limit to its patience (This is clearly a warning that, in event Britain, France, and Germany came to terms, the "little fellows" had better be careful lest they be left at the mercy of Germany's potential vindictiveness).

Regarding Poland, Particle points out that now, given an opportunity to count Poland among the anti-aggression forces, Britain and France had thus far given little, if any, tangible evidence of their confidence and serious intention. Indeed, their combined attitude had been characterized by delay in extending Poland accommodation in terms of equipment and finance. This example could hardly prove encouraging for other links in the anti-aggression chain (This remark indicates Berlin is keeping close watch over London-Warsaw negotiations).

In further attempt to enrage his listeners' concern over London and Paris, and particularly London, Particle significantly intimates that reports reaching Berlin indicate that certain important elements in both capitals are only awaiting a psychological moment to invite the Axis powers to a peace conference. In this connection, Particle intimates
- 4 -

intimates in effect that, for purposes of home consumption, London might conceivably resort to a pretext that, in terms of peace gestures, it was necessary to leave no stone unturned, in order to place the blame for a possible conflict at Hitler's door. Judging, however, from current delays in implementing the present form of the Anglo-Polish Pact with no sign of practical value, it would appear London was hesitating, and giving serious consideration to the risk of involvement in a war over such questions as Danzig and a Corridor passageway.

In cases where Hitler's listeners have subsequently imparted in confidence the substance of his remarks, I have been careful to study my informants' reactions. Accordingly, I discerned that, with but few exceptions, they were greatly impressed, and concerned - in some cases obviously dismayed.

As I have pointed out in previous writings, Hitler is intelligent and possesses a charming, convincing manner.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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nJDB/ia
(In quintuplicate)