

President's Secretary's File
Departmental File
State: Hull, Cordell: 1938
Box 74



THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

January 7, 1938.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Relative to Roumanian-Jewish problem, in my press conference on January 6, in answer to a question, I sought broadly to set forth the support of this Government of freedom of religion and equal treatment of religious and racial groups by every Government, and also a general reference to our doctrine of non-intervention as follows:

"A correspondent said that there were current press reports to the effect that the French and British Governments have protested over the treatment accorded the Jewish people in Roumania, and asked whether this Government has taken any action. The Secretary replied that notwithstanding our policy of supporting such doctrines as freedom of religion and equal treatment of those of different religions as well as races, this Government, standing as it does for the doctrine of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other nations, except where rights of its nationals are involved, is not in a position to depart from that doctrine in any case. The Secretary went on to say that we are not unmindful of developments in every part of the world as they relate to treatment of minorities and we observe with close interest the developments in the instant case."

Having thus stated our position in support of religious and racial groups against unequal and unfair treatment

treatment abroad, and having referred to the fact that the doctrine of non-intervention prevented our intervening in the domestic affairs of other nations, the representative of our Government then proceeds to keep in touch with the situation as set forth in the three dispatches which are attached hereto.

You will observe that we can proceed more or less unofficially to keep in touch with the situation as our Minister is doing, without leaving the Government subject to an unfavorable reaction by the Roumanian Government upon the charge of intervention in her domestic affairs.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hue", is located in the lower right quadrant of the page.

State

LMS

GRAY

Bucharest

Dated January 5, 1938

Rec'd 6:40 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1, January 5, 3 p. m.

I had an interview with the Prime Minister this morning who told me that Rumania was in a state of "intense national resurrection". Regarding internal reform he said that the anti-Semitic movement was responsive to the wish of the majority of Rumanians. Specifically he intends to divide the Jews into two categories (a) those who are citizens and (b) those who are not. The former will have to prove their citizenship, and the latter must leave the country. Their destination is not a concern of this Government. He will lay the entire matter before the League of Nations.

The citizenship of other nationals will be respected and other powers have nothing to fear as Rumania desires cordial relations with all.

My impression is that the Government is intentionally
frightening

LMS 2-No. 1, January 5, 3 p. m., from Bucharest.

frightening; Jews into leaving the country voluntarily and while strengthening its internal political situation it will proceed with extreme caution in the formulation and execution of any concrete measures. Despatch follows.

GUNTHER

RB:SMS

*Hull
State*

JR

A portion of this telegram
must be clearly paraphrased
before it is communicated
to subject. (A)

Bucharest

Dated January 6, 1938

Rec'd 7:35 a.m., 7th.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

2, January 6, 10 a.m. (GRAY)

My No. 1, January 5, 3 p.m.

The Government has been slow in drawing up concrete measures in spite of rumors to the contrary. The change of government was so sudden that I do not think they had time to formulate any program other than to "take the wind out of the sails" of the iron guard by seeming to be even more nationalistic than they. I have talked again today with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and some officials of the Foreign Office and can assure you, as already reported, that the Government is going to proceed in the matter of the Jews most cautiously. It has been explained to me on various occasions by the members of the Government that such measures as may eventually be taken will be directed only against those Jews who have in recent years flocked to Rumania from Germany, Poland and Hungary without treaty right and who have not since obtained Rumanian naturalization; a floating population.

-2- #2, January 6, 10 a.m., from Bucharest.

population attracted here by lack of immigration restrictions and by reputed opportunities of gainful occupation. Those who have rightfully obtained naturalization are not under consideration.

I understand that the formation of a commission will shortly be announced, to deal with the Jewish question which will include the Minister of Justice and the Minister of the Interior, formerly one of the leaders of the National Peasant Party whom I have also talked with and who has assured me that no illegal action nor one not in accordance with the Constitution will be taken. Moreover I understand that an order will be issued forbidding the taking of independent action by any minister and provides that any proposed action must be submitted to the Cabinet for decision after it has first been passed upon by this commission.

There must have been some very wild stories in the outside press; those in France it is said here were maliciously inspired by the disreputable Titulescu(?). The Minister for Foreign Affairs leaves tomorrow night for a day's shooting to which he invited me but which I declined, and then for Praha and eventually Geneva. It has been semi-officially announced by the Prime Minister that Parliament will be dissolved by February 17th and

-2- #2, January 6, 10 a.m., from Bucharest.

new elections held later, perhaps in March.

There have been no threats to American owned or controlled business activities else I would have informed you, in fact no expropriations whatsoever have taken place and even in the case of the closing of the ^{three} Jewish controlled newspapers it has been made clear that property rights will be respected. (END GRAY)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ Evidently there have been reports that this Government is moving very rapidly toward the Rome-Berlin axis. With this I do not concur. My impression is that this Government, feeling that French policies do not spell complete security, desires friendly relations with all but will work for no radical change and will probably continue as a member of the League of Nations. Also I have a feeling that the King has concluded that the present is not a bad time to give nationalism a little rope and better to try it out now with this government than to have to later with the iron guard.

GUNTHER

HPL

(*) Apparent omission.

13F Hall
State

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 29, 1938.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

I should much like to get the following thought, unofficially and "off the record", to Mr. Beck in Poland.

"The President has always felt ~~the kind of~~ personal affection and friendship for the Polish nation and Government ever since he was able to help the Polish troops in the World War; ~~that~~ he feels that he can, as an old friend, suggest his disappointment at the Polish record of the past week.

He appreciates fully the historic and racial position of Poland in connection with the Teschen area. He knows that Poland had every right to suggest in a quiet and friendly way that the Polish

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WASHINGTON

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majority in the Teschen district should be treated in accordance with the same general principle as the German majority in the Sudeten area. But he did not like what came very close to being a threatening attitude. It reminded him of a fight between a very big boy and a very little boy. The big boy had the little boy on the ground and a third boy stepped forward and kicked the little boy in the stomach. As the English would say - "That isn't cricket".

F. D. R.

Handwritten notes

*File
Personal*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

State

THE SECRETARY

October 13, 1938.

Memorandum for the President

I herewith enclose proposed
press release on the Jewish question
by the Department of State on tomorrow,
provided it meets your approval.

John

*File
P. 1000*

Within the past few days this Government has received a large number of telegrams and letters from individuals and organizations in the United States concerning the Palestine situation, with particular reference to the reported possibility of the application by the British Government of a new policy with respect to that country. It is obviously impracticable to reply separately to the many communications which have been received and this statement is therefore being issued in lieu of individual answers.

As is well known the American people have for many years taken a close interest in the development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine. Beginning with President Wilson each succeeding President has on one or more occasions expressed his own interest in the idea of a National Home and his pleasure at the progress made in its establishment. American sympathy in a Jewish Homeland in Palestine was further manifested by the Joint Resolution of Congress signed by the President on September 21, 1922, recording the favorable attitude of the United States toward such a Homeland. In submitting the resolution the House Committee on Foreign Affairs reported that it:

"expresses our moral interest in and our favorable attitude toward the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people. It commits us to no foreign obligation or entanglement."

It is in the light of this interest that the American Government and people have watched with the keenest sympathy the development in Palestine of the National Home, a project in which American intellect and capital have played a leading role.

On several occasions this Government has brought its views regarding the rights of the United States and its nationals in Palestine to the attention of the British Government. As recently as 1937 a formal exchange of correspondence took place and the following self-explanatory paragraph is quoted from the concluding note dated August 4, 1937, communicated by the American Ambassador

in London to the British Foreign Office:

"In expressing satisfaction and appreciation for the assurances furnished that His Majesty's Government intends to keep the United States Government fully informed of any proposals which may be made to the Council of the League of Nations for the modification of the Palestine Mandate, I am instructed to request that these proposals may be communicated to my Government in ample time to enable it to determine what, if any, observations it may desire to make with a view to the preservation of American rights in Palestine."

It is expected, therefore, that this Government will have an opportunity to submit its views to the British Government with respect to any changes affecting American rights which may be proposed in the Palestine Mandate. These rights, which are defined by the American-British Mandate Convention or Treaty of December 3, 1924, comprise non-discriminatory treatment in matters of commerce, non-impairment of vested American property rights, permission for American nationals to establish and maintain educational, philanthropic and religious institutions in Palestine, safeguards with respect to the judiciary, and, in general, equality of treatment with all other foreign nationals.

The rights of the United States in connection with any changes in the terms of the Palestine Mandate are set forth in Article 7 of the above-mentioned Treaty, which reads as follows:

"Nothing contained in the present Convention shall be affected by any modification which may be made in the terms of the mandate, as recited above, unless such modification shall have been assented to by the United States."

This article is substantially identical with corresponding articles included in eight other existing agreements concluded by this Government with respect to the mandated territories of Syria and the Lebanon, former German islands in the North Pacific, French Cameroons, French Togoland, Belgian East Africa, British Cameroons, British East Africa and

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and British Togoland. None of these articles empower the Government of the United States to prevent the modification of the terms of any of the mandates. Under their provisions, however, this Government can decline to recognize the validity of the application to American interests of any modification of the mandates unless such modification has been assented to by the Government of the United States.

It is the Department's understanding that the Palestine Partition Commission, which was appointed some months ago to make recommendations with respect to partition, will make its report to the British Government at the end of this month and that no decision will be reached by that Government on the subject until after an opportunity has been had to give consideration to that report. In reply to a question in the House of Commons on October 6, 1938, Mr. MacDonald, British Colonial Secretary, is reported to have stated that the House of Commons would not be in the position of having to confirm or reject a decision already taken and put into operation but would have an opportunity of considering the policy before it was adopted and put into operation by the British Government.

The Department will, of course, continue to follow the situation closely and will take all necessary measures for the protection of American rights and interests in Palestine.

Hill
State

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE SECRETARY

October 21, 1938.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I herewith return your memorandum of October 17 with attached data on the refugee problem. I am glad to have the benefit of it.

Truce

About my mission, we must now try to get on with the job, go to Germany as soon as possible. I am to see Lord Winterton about this tomorrow. The problem seems to me about as hopelessly insoluble as it did. I have a number of financial schemes, but none in which I have confidence. Nor do I know whether the Government will give me the effective support which I need. Kennedy tells me that the British will do nothing unless the American Government will contribute something positive, and they have contributed nothing yet but words. In what manner am I going to come out of this adventure? I don't know. I am engaged in a sort of detective thriller conversations with a Commander Godman, a mysterious Englishman from Berlin, who claims to have enormous influence with the Nazis and that he can put through a financial scheme. He wants to be paid for his services. A boastful rough customer of the adventurer type. I should pay no attention to him. But Lord Winterton and the Treasury people tell me that I must take him seriously, but they don't tell me why. Lord Winterton sent word that this fellow was useful to the Prime Minister in his negotiations. All these experiences would be very stimulating and exciting - I suppose they are so - but they are wearing and I should be more cheerful if I had one face card or trump in the hand I have to play.