Vatican being asked to condemn German assassination and abuse of persons in occupied territories

British Minister, Sir Ronald Campbell;
Under Secretary, Mr. Welles

Sir Ronald Campbell called to see me this morning at his request.

The Minister stated that the British Minister at the Vatican had been authorized to make simultaneous approaches to the Cardinal Secretary of State with other representatives of the United Nations, upon the initiative of the Brazilian Ambassador, to urge that the Vatican do what might be possible publicly to condemn the assassination and abuse by Germany of innocent persons in occupied territories. I told the Minister that the American representative, Mr. Tittman, had already been authorized to the same effect.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: August 18, 1942

SUBJECT: Polish refugees

PARTICIPANTS: British Minister, Sir Ronald Campbell; Under Secretary, Mr. Welles

COPIES TO: S, A-B, PA/D, Eu, PA/M, NE, PA/LD, RA

Sir Ronald Campbell called to see me this morning at his request.

The Minister took up the question of the need to find a refuge for the Polish refugees now about to leave the Soviet Union, namely the wives and families of the members of the Polish divisions which had been permitted to leave the Soviet Union to fight in North Africa. Sir Ronald said that the British Government had reached the conclusion that they could not be taken care of in Iran. In the first place, he said, the food which they would require would take up a great deal of shipping space which should be devoted to military purposes. The British Government understood that they could not be given refuge in the United States and they wondered if this Government could not persuade the Governments of the other American Republics to find a place for them in South or Central America.

I replied that this did not seem to me feasible. I said the economic situation of all of the other American Republics at this time was such as to make it in the
highest degree improbable that any one of these countries would run the risk of having to take care of and support a great many thousands of destitute Poles. Furthermore, I said, all of these Governments, in their present situation, would be strongly opposed to permitting the entrance into their territory of a very large number of aliens who had no means of support and who could not speak the language and could not be assimilated for a long time to come. I stated it still seemed to me that the best plan, which would avoid the long haul of transportation as well as the need of sending food and supplies for the maintenance of these people, would be for these refugees to be given refuge in the Union of South Africa. The Minister read me a telegram which alleged that the British dominions in Africa had already given refuge to 78,000 Poles, Jews from Palestine and Crete, and refugees from the Mediterranean area. I said I thought that that was a remarkable showing but that it was not my understanding that any considerable percentage of these had been accommodated in South Africa and that it seemed to me that the suggestion of this Government and the helpful cooperation offered by the American Red Cross would not make it an insuperable problem for the Union of South Africa if these new Polish refugees were accommodated there.

In conclusion, the British Government requested that, pending a decision as to where these people should eventually be taken, the United States join with the British Government in explaining the situation to the Persian Government in order to make it clear to the Persian Government that these new Polish refugees were not going to stay indefinitely in Iran and that their presence there would be of a relatively short character. The British Government feared that if the United States did not join in these representations, the Persian Government would believe that these Polish refugees were to be dumped in Iran for an indefinite time and that serious repercussions might therefore follow.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: August 3, 1942

SUBJECT: Request for the United States Government to extend hospitality to 30,000 Polish refugees

PARTICIPANTS: British Minister, Sir Ronald Campbell;
Acting Secretary, Mr. Welles

COPIES TO: S, A-L, PA/D, En, PA/H, NE

The British Minister, Sir Ronald Campbell, called to see me this morning at his request.

Sir Ronald said that the President had yesterday spoken with him, after my conversation on the telephone with the President, concerning the request of the British Government that this Government permit the entrance into the United States of some 30,000 Polish refugees from the Soviet Union, these refugees being the immediate families of the Polish divisions which were now moving from the Soviet Union to North Africa.

I told Sir Ronald that the President had agreed with me that it was impossible for this suggestion to be complied with by this Government inasmuch as on account of the tremendous distance involved it would be physically impossible to transport so large a number of persons from Persia to the United States in the ships available, and, in the second place, such a step on our part would involve an amendment of our present immigration laws, which was highly undesirable at this time. I said the best thing we could consequently do would be to explore the possibility of providing for the settlement of these refugees in temporary camps at some place in Persia through an
arrangement whereby the Persian Government would not have to undertake any expense and whereby food supplies required by these people would be sent from the United States with the assistance of and under the auspices of the American Red Cross. I said that as soon as possible the Department would discuss the matter more fully with the British Embassy in order to see what might be done.