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Summer Welles Papers
Box 165 Folder 13
Europe Files
Poland, 1942

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: October 26, 1942

SUBJECT: Handing over to Germany by France of Polish workmen;
Evacuation of Polish refugees from Iran;
Polish internees in Spain;
Polish-Soviet relations

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador of Poland, Mr. Jan Ciechanowski;
Under Secretary, Mr. Welles

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

The Polish Ambassador called to see me this morning at his request. The Ambassador took up the matters listed in the memorandum attached herewith which he left with me.

With regard to point No. 1, I told the Ambassador that the American Ambassador in Vichy had already made representations in this matter but that I would be very glad to have further representations made, although I was not sanguine as to the practical result which would be forthcoming.

With regard to point No. 2, I told the Ambassador, for his confidential information of the agreement recently reached between the British Government and this Government as a result of which 25,000 Polish refugees would be given refuge by the British Government in Kenya as a result of the willingness of this Government to accept for internment in the United States 25,000 Italian prisoners of war now in Kenya in addition to the prisoners of war which this country had already agreed to accept.

With regard to point No. 3, I told the Ambassador that the American Ambassador in Madrid had already approached the Spanish authorities in this matter but

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that I would be glad to request Ambassador Hayes to do what he might consider appropriate in the way of additional representations, and that I would also be glad to request that consideration be given to the request of the Polish Government that some 50 of these Polish officers now interned in Spain might be given visas to come to the United States.

Subjects raised by the Polish Ambassador in his conversation with the Under Secretary of State at the Department of State on October 26, 1942.

1) The Polish Government has been informed that the French authorities are continuing to hand over Polish qualified workmen to the Germans in connection with M. Laval's pledge. Among other Polish workmen forcibly handed over to the Germans, apparently eight hundred such specialized workmen have been handed over from the town of Lyons. This would mean ten per cent of the entire number fixed for that region. From other parts of France smaller numbers are being handed over.

The Polish Government informs the Ambassador that there are at present in France about ten thousand Polish industrial workmen and three thousand five hundred in free professions.

The Polish Government instructs the Ambassador urgently to ask the United States Government for energetic intervention in order to bring pressure to bear upon the French Government to discontinue the handing over of Polish citizens to the German authorities, which is contrary to the letter and spirit of international law and usage. In view of the opposition which these measures appear now to have aroused among the French population, the Polish Government believes that such an intervention might achieve the desired result. Most of the Polish workmen in question are specialists in war industries and the Polish Government is anxious to do all that it can to prevent their utilization for the enemy war effort.

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2) Evacuation of Polish Refugees from Iran.

The Ambassador referred to the conversations which the British Ambassador had with the Under Secretary of State concerning the possibilities of evacuation of some of these refugees to Central and South American Republics. The Polish Government is informed that the Mexican Government would be willing to receive about twenty thousand such refugees, while the Government of Guatemala expressed its readiness to receive about three thousand.

Owing to the necessity for a speedy evacuation of these people from Iran for reasons known to the Department of State, the Polish Government would be most grateful for support and assistance on the part of the United States Government in carrying out this evacuation of part of the refugees to the Republic of the Western Hemisphere.

3) Polish Internees in Spain (Camp of Miranda de Ebro).

The Ambassador received cable instructions from the Polish Foreign Minister in a matter which General Sikorski, Polish Prime Minister, regards as most important, namely, the question of Polish internees mostly soldiers of the Polish fighting forces in France, who are being detained in Spain by the Spanish authorities under German pressure in the Camp of Miranda de Ebro.

The Ambassador reminded the Under Secretary of State that this matter had already been discussed at the time of the last visit of General Sikorski and that the U. S. Ambassador in Spain had been informed of this problem and had taken it up with the Spanish Government.

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There are nearly five hundred such internees at Miranda whose release in view of their possible utilization in the Polish Armed Forces is most desirable.

The Polish Government is trying to obtain visas for these people from Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, with right of asylum for the duration of the war, it being a condition placed by the Spanish authorities that if released they should proceed to countries of the American Continent. Chile has already granted two hundred visas, Argentina sixty-two, and the matter of obtaining another one hundred visas from Uruguay is being negotiated. The departure of two hundred and sixty-two to Chile and Argentina could take place immediately if the Spanish Government grants its consent.

The Polish Government has obtained full support from the British Government and from the Holy See, as well as a personal intervention on the part of the Holy Father, to obtain this permission. The Polish Government is of the opinion that a friendly intervention on the part of the United States Government in Spain at this time, in view of the change of the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, might be decisive in obtaining this release and permission for the said internees to take advantage of the visas hitherto granted by Chile and Argentina. The Polish Government has reasons to think that if about fifty U. S. visas could be granted to some of these internees, such a proof of the direct interest of the United States in this matter might be very effective in Spanish Governmental circles.

The Polish Government would be most grateful for anything the United States Government would care to do in

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this matter, so important to the Polish war effort and to the morale of these internees who have risked their freedom in order to fulfill their duty to join the Polish Army after the collapse of France.

4) Polish-Soviet Relations.

The Ambassador expressed great pleasure in being able to communicate to the Under Secretary of State that he had been informed on the 23rd of October by Count Raczynski that, undoubtedly owing to the interventions authorized by the President and carried out by the United States Embassy in Moscow, and lastly by the Honorable Wendell L. Willkie, as personal emissary of the President, - the Soviet authorities had informed the Polish Chargé d'Affaires, Minister Sokolnicki, that the investigation conducted against the arrested officials and delegates for relief work of the Polish Embassy in Russia had now been concluded and that as a result of this investigation fifteen of the arrested persons had been found innocent and their release ordered; seventy-eight persons were regarded as allegedly guilty of anti-USSR. activities and were to be expelled from Russia. As regards the remaining sixteen officials, proceedings would be instituted as the Soviet authorities alleged that they had proof of activities of a serious nature against them.

The newly appointed Polish Ambassador, Mr. Tadeusz Romer, who has just arrived in Soviet Russia, is of the opinion that this step on the part of the Soviet authorities is a proof that there is a tendency to carry out the promise recently made to Mr. Willkie of trying to clarify and improve

Polish-Soviet

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Polish-Soviet relations and this is a signal proof that the American intervention with Premier Stalin has proved effective. Ambassador Romer thinks that he may succeed in obtaining a change of attitude regarding the above mentioned sixteen officials against whom proceedings are to be instituted and obtaining their release.

The Polish ambassador would like to take this earliest opportunity of expressing to the United States Government the warmest and most sincere thanks on behalf of the Polish Government for the invaluable help given to Poland in this matter, and also would be most grateful if, pending the arrival of Prime Minister General Sikorski, the thanks of Prime Minister General Sikorski could likewise be conveyed to the President.

October 17, 1942

A-L - Mr. Long:

For your information.
Please have drafted some
appropriate acknowledgment
for my signature.

U:SW:GES

Polish Amb., re evacuation to US from France for duration
of from 1,000 to 5,000 children (their repatriation to
Poland)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Memorandum of Conversation

DATE:

September 28, 1942

SUBJECT:

PARTICIPANTS:

Polish Ambassador, Mr. Jan Ciechanowski;
Under Secretary, Mr. Welles

COPIES TO:

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The Polish Ambassador came to see me this morning at his request. The Ambassador took up for discussion the points which are dealt with in extenso in his memorandum which he handed me and which is attached herewith.

With regard to the issuance of visas to certain persons listed in the Ambassador's memorandum, I told the Ambassador that the matter had already been discussed with me and that I understood that a favorable reply to these requests would be made in the immediate future.

The Ambassador told me that the Polish Minister of Finance had been invited to visit Canada on official business and that he would make this trip about the middle of November. The Ambassador said that the Minister's wife and children were living in the United States and that while the Minister of Finance did not intend to make any official visit to the United States in order to discuss any official business while in this country, he did intend to make a few addresses at Princeton and Harvard Universities on purely economic questions.

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As set forth in the memorandum attached, the Ambassador expressed the keen interest of his Government in the possibility of bringing five thousand Polish-Jewish children, now stranded in France, to the United States.

The Ambassador spoke with great disquiet of the propaganda going on in the United States with regard to the adjustment of the Polish frontier after the war in a manner favorable to Russia. The Ambassador handed me the maps attached herewith which he told me were to be published in the next edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica and which showed a division of Poland between Germany and Russia. The Ambassador said he had written to the president of the company publishing the Encyclopedia Britannica protesting against this proposed publication and asked that the State Department do whatever it considered appropriate to support the request he had made. To this request I made no reply.

U:SW:DMK

September 28, 1942

Eu
Mr. Atherton:

I am sending you herewith a copy of the memorandum of my conversation with the Polish Ambassador this morning. I think it would be helpful if you would have your Division prepare some personal letter for me to send him advising him of the decisions reached by the Department in all of these various matters dealt with in the documents attached.

U:SW:DMK

August 31, 1942

PA/M
Mr. Murray:

I have seen the British Ambassador this afternoon. He had no further instructions and no additional information. He considers that this telegram will be highly useful. I agree with this point of view and I suggest that the telegram be sent as soon as possible.

U:SW:DMK

Telegram to Tehran re evacuation of Polish
refugees from Iran

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE:

August 24, 1942

SUBJECT: Flight of Polish refugee children in Iran

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador of Poland, Mr. Jan Ciechanowski;
Under Secretary, Mr. Welles

COPIES TO: S, PA/D, Eu, PA/M, NE

8-24-42

The Ambassador of Poland called to see me this morning. The Ambassador spoke again about the plight of the Polish refugee children in Iran and I told the Ambassador that we were trying to do everything we could to be helpful in this regard. I said that I had not yet abandoned hope that some arrangement might be worked out with the Union of South Africa, but that I feared the more probable ultimate solution would have to be for temporary accommodation of these refugees in Iran. The Ambassador said that if that proved to be the case, his Government trusted that the children would be placed at some point near Tehran where the climate would be better for them than on the seacoast. I said I quite understood and that obviously some place in the highlands would be more suitable, but that I recognized the great difficulty of obtaining food supplies for these refugees under present conditions and that the lack of transportation equipment between the seacoast where the food supplies would be received and the interior of Iran constituted naturally a factor that had to be kept in mind.

U:SW:DMK

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE:

August 24, 1942

SUBJECT: Treatment of Polish refugees in unoccupied France

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador of Poland, Mr. Jan Ciechanowski;
Under Secretary, Mr. Welles

COPIES TO: ¹⁻¹⁸
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CONFIDENTIAL

The Polish Ambassador called to see me this morning. The Ambassador spoke of the reported action of the Vichy Government in acceding to the demand of Germany that Polish refugees in unoccupied France be rounded up and turned over to the Germans for forced work in Germany. I said that we had already made representations to the Vichy Government with regard to the treatment of refugees of these categories and that while I could not say that I was sanguine as to the practical influence of our representations at this time, the Ambassador could rest assured that we had done and were doing everything that we thought could possibly be useful at this stage. The Ambassador asked particularly that our Chargé d'Affaires at Vichy be requested to keep in touch with M. Zabiello, the unofficial Polish Chargé d'Affaires in Vichy, with regard to this problem. I said that I would be very glad to ask that the necessary instructions be sent to Mr. Tuck.

U:SW:DMK

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE:

August 18, 1942

SUBJECT:

Arrest in Soviet Union by Soviet Government
of Polish diplomatic officials and Polish
relief agents

PARTICIPANTS:

Ambassador of Poland, Mr. Jan Ciechanowski;
Under Secretary, Mr. Welles

COPIES TO:

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S, PA/D, Eu

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The Ambassador of Poland called to see me this afternoon with an urgent message from his Government.

The Ambassador stated that after his recent conversations with the Secretary of State and with myself regarding the arrest in the Soviet Union by the Soviet Government of Polish diplomatic officials and of relief agents, the Ambassador had called upon the President to discuss this question with him in order to seek the assistance of the President in finding a prompt solution of the problem. The Ambassador stated that the President had assured him that Mr. Harriman would be instructed, on the occasion of his visit to Moscow, to suggest to the Soviet high authorities that the Polish diplomatic officials under arrest be permitted to proceed to Iran, and, second, that, inasmuch as the supplies now stored in the Soviet Union for distribution to the Polish nationals in that country had come from the United States and inasmuch as the imprisonment of the Polish relief agents eliminated the possibility of proper distribution or custody of these relief supplies, the Soviet Government agree to permit these Polish relief agents likewise to be evacuated from Soviet territory to Iran and be replaced with other Polish relief agents individually acceptable to the Soviet authorities.

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The Ambassador stated that the President had said that it would be a good plan for the Polish Foreign Minister in London to discuss these questions with Mr. Harriman before the latter left for Moscow in order that Mr. Harriman might fully understand all of the details of the questions involved.

The Ambassador concluded by saying that he had word that no instructions had been received by Mr. Harriman from the President and that unfortunately the Polish Foreign Minister, Count Raczynski, had not been able to see Mr. Harriman before the latter left London in view of the fact that the Ambassador's message had only been received a few hours before Mr. Harriman's departure.

General Sikorski therefore urged that this Government instruct Ambassador Standley, who was to be in Moscow until August 20, to present these suggestions to the Soviet authorities in the hope that the Soviet Government would accede thereto.

I told the Ambassador that I was unfortunately not familiar with the assurances which the Ambassador alleged the President had given him, but that I was quite sure that, if the President desired to make these suggestions to the Soviet Government, there would be no objection on the part of the Department of State to the sending of instructions to Ambassador Standley as requested by the Polish Government.

U:SW:DMK

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: July 23, 1942

SUBJECT: Arrest of Polish relief delegates and members of the Polish Embassy in Russia; shelter for Polish refugees in South Africa.

PARTICIPANTS: The Polish Ambassador, Mr. Jan Ciechanowski;
The Under Secretary, Mr. Welles.

COPIES TO: S, A-L, PA/D, Eu.

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The Polish Ambassador called to see me this afternoon at his request.

The Ambassador read to me two memoranda relating the recent arrest by the Soviet Government of various members of the Polish Embassy in Russia and of various relief delegates of the Polish Government operating with the consent of the Soviet Government in Russia, and requesting the assistance of the United States Government in bringing about a "restoration of harmonious cooperation between the Polish and the Soviet Governments regarding the continuation of the distribution of relief to Polish nationals in Soviet territory."

The Ambassador said that these recent developments meant that most of the relief distribution centers were now closed and that many thousands of Polish citizens would be literally starving in the immediate future. Furthermore, the Ambassador said, the relief supplies, which have recently reached Russia in large quantities from the United States for Polish relief, would now be without protection and supervision and would probably be disbursed so that the Polish refugees in Russia could never get any benefit from them. The Ambassador also said that he would be most grateful if our Embassy

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at Kuibyshev would ascertain what, if any, truth there was in the charges made by the Soviet Government that the Polish officials recently arrested had been guilty of "activities counter to the interests of the Soviet Government". The Ambassador said that, if there was any truth in these charges, General Sikorski would take summary action.

I stated to the Ambassador that the Department would be very glad to telegraph immediately to our Embassy in Kuibyshev in order to get a report upon the circumstances set forth in the Ambassador's memoranda.

The two memoranda mentioned are attached herewith.

I also told the Ambassador of the nature of the unsatisfactory reply received from the South African Government regarding our request that a limited number of Polish refugees be given shelter in South Africa with the cooperation of the American Red Cross. I said that this message was now being given consideration and that we would study the possibility of making further representations to the Union of South Africa should any such further representations seem possible or justified.

Subjects raised by the Polish Ambassador in his conversation with the Under Secretary of State at the Department of State on July 23rd, 1942.

The Polish Ambassador communicated a memorandum based on information received from the Polish Embassy in Kuybishev through the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London regarding the latest developments in the relations between Poland and the USSR. in the matter of the further carrying out of the plan for the relief of Polish citizens in Russia agreed upon in 1941 between the Polish Government and the USSR. Government. At that time the Soviet Government had agreed to the organization of direct distribution by special officials of the Polish Embassy of all relief supplies to the Polish citizens at present in Russia. This plan had been put into execution and had been working satisfactorily until quite recently. It is not being stopped by the Soviet Government on the basis of the unwarranted accusation that the officials employed by the Polish Embassy for this work were pursuing anti-Soviet and intelligence activities.

As there is no foundation for such accusations, it is

probable

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probable that the Soviet authorities are using this pretext in order to prevent the continuation of Polish relief work among Polish Citizens in Soviet Russia for some other political reasons.

The Polish Ambassador is instructed to communicate all the data pertaining to this matter to the Secretary of State, to draw his attention to the seriousness of the situation which has thus arisen in Polish-Soviet relations, to the critical situation of the Polish citizens in Russia if the distribution of relief supplies were to be definitely stopped, to the waste of valuable relief supplies ready for distribution which would result if this distribution were to be definitely stopped.

The Polish Government attaches the greatest importance to the maintenance and further development of good relations with the USSR. It regrets the lack of cooperation on the part of the Soviet Government in the pursuit of this policy.

The Polish Ambassador is instructed to ask the Secretary of State to take this important matter under serious consider-

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ation and kindly to intervene in view of clearing up the situation and of lending the valuable support of the United States Government to the endeavors of the Polish Government and the Polish Embassy in Russia to obtain the restoration of harmonious cooperation between the Polish and the Soviet Governments regarding the continuation of the distribution of relief to Polish citizens by the Polish Embassy in Kuybishev.

July 23, 1942.

With reference to the previous memoranda on Polish-Russian relations which the Polish Ambassador personally handed to the Secretary of State on July 13, 1942, additional information has been received from the Polish Government, which the Ambassador submitted in conversation with the Secretary of State on July 23rd 1942.

According to this information, during the past week two officials of the Polish Embassy in Kuybishev, Mr. Gruja and Mr. Zařski, as well as their collaborators, who had been arrested by the Soviet authorities, were released by them with the request that they leave the USSR. The Soviet Government gave as reason for this request that these two Polish officials had indulged in activity detrimental to the USSR. Since that time the following delegates of the Polish Embassy for distribution of Relief supplies to the Polish population have been arrested: Mr. Metzman and his collaborators in Samarkand, Mr. Matroszko with practically the

entire

entire personnel of his office in Barnaul, Mr. Wiśniewski with several collaborators in Kirov, and the Second Secretary of Embassy, Mr. Glogowski, with part of his personnel in Ashabad.

According to the reports received up to this time, out of a total of twenty offices of such delegates of the Polish Embassy, which had been officially authorized by the USSR. authorities to distribute relief among the Polish citizens in the USSR., the following have been closed by the Soviet authorities: the Polish Relief Offices in Archangel, Vladivostok, Aldan, Akmolinsk and Saratov.

The offices at Samarkand, Barnaul, Kirov, Petropavlovsk and Ashabad although not formally closed, are inactive due to the arrest of their personnel. The continued refusal by the Soviet authorities to recognize the personnel appointed by the Polish Embassy to operate the Relief Office in Murmansk and the Polish Relief warehouses in Menprepk has immobilized all relief activities of both these ports of

arrival

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arrival of Relief supplies.

As a result of this situation about 40% of the Polish civilian population in USSR. is deprived of assistance and relief. Consequently there are no proper Polish agencies at the northern ports to take over and handle relief transports arriving there for the Polish population. The warehouses are stocked with valuable goods, without any supervision and will certainly deteriorate and may be stolen. The distribution of clothing, food, medical supplies, vaccines and cash assistance has ceased. Orphanages and invalid asylums are left without care or supervision.

The Polish Chargé d'Affaires, Minister H. Sokolnicki, received the following written declaration of Commissar Wyszynski on July 20th:

"The Soviet authorities have established that all the arrested delegates of the Embassy, instead of loyally fulfilling their prescribed duties of assisting for and distributing relief to Polish citizens in close cooperation with the local Soviet authorities, were carrying on

intelligence

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intelligence work and were conducting activities inimical to the USSR. In view of this, the Institution of Delegates admitted by the Soviet Government for the purpose of carrying on relief work has not justified its existence. The Peoples' Commissariat considers that the further existence of these Delegations is impossible.-

"The local USSR. authorities have been duly instructed."

The Polish Chargé d'Affaires has rejected the accusations contained in Commissar Wyszynski's declaration and had requested the immediate release of all the arrested Polish Embassy employees and primarily those with diplomatic status. Although Minister Sokolnicki does not foresee that the USSR. authorities will proceed to take legal action against these arrested Polish officials in view of the unfounded accusations made against them, he fears that their detention may be lengthy.

July 23, 1942.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: May 19, 1942

SUBJECT: Evacuation of Polish children from Russia.

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Jan Ciechanowski, Polish Ambassador;
Mr. Welles, Under Secretary.

COPIES TO: S, EU

PH-100-100

The Polish Ambassador called to see me this afternoon at his request.

The Ambassador told me he had received this morning a very urgent telegram from General Sikorski to the effect that the last reports received concerning Polish children in the Soviet Union showed that a desperate situation existed and that approximately 65 percent of the children had already died from malnutrition. The Polish Government asked urgently whether the United States could not do something to assist these children and their mothers if they were evacuated from the Soviet Union and requested that this Government permit some ten thousand of them to come to the United States. The Ambassador said that he had been instructed to seek an audience with the President in order to communicate this message to him but that knowing the burdens upon the President's time, he had put this request in the form of a letter addressed to the President and asked if I would see that it reached the President.

I told the Ambassador I would be glad to transmit this letter to the President, but that it seemed to me that that portion of the request which suggested that ten thousand of these unfortunate women and children be brought to the United States was not a very practical one. I said

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that if my understanding was correct, the only way in which these people could be evacuated from the Soviet Union would be through Iran and that in that event, the difficulty of finding shipping to take such a huge number of persons to the United States would make it impossible of realization. I said it seemed to me offhand, in view of the fact that the Persian Government was not willing to accept any more Polish refugees on account of the large number already there, and in view of the fact that under present conditions the British Government would not permit Polish refugees to go to India, that the only possibility that occurred to me was to try and get these women and children into some part of eastern South Africa on the understanding that if the Government of the Union of South Africa permitted their entrance, arrangements would be made by the American Red Cross for their maintenance until the Polish Government was able to undertake this task itself. I stated I would be very glad to let the Ambassador know of any constructive and helpful suggestions we might have to offer.

The Ambassador then handed me a memorandum which is attached herewith covering the above point in part and likewise asking again if the United States Government would not do what it could to speed up the evacuation from the Soviet Union of the Polish contingents not included in the four divisions which it had been agreed between Stalin and General Sikorski should remain in the Soviet Union to fight on the Western Russian front.

I said I would be very glad to do what we could to be helpful in this matter.

U:SW:IJ

**Subjects raised by the Polish Ambassador in conversation
with Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles on May
19th, 1942.**

I - The Polish Ambassador informed the Under Secretary of State about the tragic situation of children of Polish civilian deportees at present in Soviet Russia. As General Sikorski had forecast in his conversation with The President, the food shortage in Russia has now become acute and according to information received from the Polish Ambassador in Luybishev, the situation of the Polish civilian population, and especially of the Polish children, has become most serious. The Polish Ambassador in Soviet Russia informed the Polish Government that the mortality among the Polish children had risen to a startling percentage owing to lack of resistance due to under-nourishment.

The evacuation of some 50,000 Polish children, including mothers and guardians, has become most urgent.

The British Government is doing all in their power, but having already undertaken the admission to various

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parts of the British Empire of some 15,000 civilian evacuated to date to Iran, and owing to the threatened situation in India, the British Government cannot be expected to cope with this new problem in its entirety, especially in the present war conditions, there being no safe place in the British Empire where so great a contingent of persons could be evacuated.

In view of this situation the Polish Government has instructed the Ambassador to present this very urgent problem to the attention of The President and to appeal to him for the grant of asylum in the United States for the duration of the war to some 10,000 Polish children, including mothers and guardians.

The Polish Ambassador would be grateful to the Secretary of State if he would lay before The President the letter which the Ambassador has written in this very urgent matter.

II - Referring to his last conversation on the subject of

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the interruption of the evacuation from Soviet Russia of Polish military, General Sikorski informs the Polish Ambassador that Premier Stalin's reply to the General's message appears to confirm General Sikorski's impression that the further evacuation of Polish military will not be resumed before the completion of the formation in Soviet Russia of four Polish divisions numbering 44,000 men, which, according to the agreement concluded between General Anders and Premier Stalin in March, 1942, are to constitute the Polish Army in Russia. Although this is not explicitly stated, it is clearly implied in Premier Stalin's message.

Considering the importance of continuing the recruiting of Polish soldiers in Russia, their evacuation and their speedy armament, in the interest of the United Nations' war effort, the Polish Ambassador is instructed to bring the matter once again to the attention of the Secretary of State in

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the hope that some form of friendly intervention on the part of the U. S. Government may obtain the desired result of speeding up the further evacuation of Polish military from Russia.

Enclosure:

Letter to
The President
mentioned
above.

May 19th, 1942.

791/80-2ja

May 19, 1943.

Mr. President,

I have received today an urgent telegram from the Polish Government concerning the fate of the children of Polish deportees in Russia. The Polish Government is informed by the Polish ambassador in Soviet Russia that owing to food difficulties these Polish children are virtually condemned to die if some means of saving them is not at once made available. The Polish ambassador in Soviet Russia reports that the mortality among the Polish children is reaching a startling percentage.

In view of this appalling situation the Polish Government considers that the evacuation from Russia of some 50,000 of Polish children, including mothers or guardians, is a matter of extreme urgency. The Polish Government has already applied to the British Government for their agreement to aid help in the evacuation of these Polish children from Soviet Russia. While the British Government

The President,

The white House.

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Government has adopted a most favorable attitude, the Polish Government is aware that under present war conditions, and especially in regard to the unceasing situation of India, the British Government cannot cope at present with so considerable an additional contingent of refugees in any part of the British Empire.

In this connection it must be remembered that the British Government is at present doing its utmost by placing some 13,000 Polish civilian refugees from Soviet Russia who have already arrived in Iran.

In these circumstances the Polish Government has instructed me to draw your attention to the situation of these Polish children and their mothers and guardians, and to ask you, Mr. President, whether, in view of their tragic fate, it would be possible to grant asylum in the United States for the duration of the war to 10,000 children, including mothers and guardians.

I have the honor to refer to the conversation which General Sikorski had with you on March 26th, in the course

of

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of which he described the situation of the Polish civilian deportees in Soviet Russia, the growing difficulties of supplying them with food and the urgency of evacuating as many of them as would be possible to enable them to survive. The American Red Cross is in possession of startling reports concerning the physical state of exhaustion and destitution of the Polish civilians and especially of the children who have recently been evacuated from Soviet Russia to Iraq.

In appealing to you on behalf of this population, which during the last two years and a half has gone through inhuman suffering, I am aware of all the difficulties which even such a partial solution of this terrible war problem presents at this time.

After having exhausted all other possibilities, the Polish Government takes the liberty of appealing to you, Mr. President, to save these children.

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

May 19, 1942

Evacuation of Polish children from Russia.

Mr. Jan Ciechanowski, Polish Ambassador;
Mr. Welles, Under Secretary.

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The Polish Ambassador called to see me this afternoon at his request.

The Ambassador told me he had received this morning a very urgent telegram from General Sikorski to the effect that the last reports received concerning Polish children in the Soviet Union showed that a desperate situation existed and that approximately 65 percent of the children had already died from malnutrition. The Polish Government asked urgently whether the United States could not do something to assist these children and their mothers if they were evacuated from the Soviet Union and requested that this Government permit some ten thousand of them to come to the United States. The Ambassador said that he had been instructed to seek an audience with the President in order to communicate this message to him but that knowing the burdens upon the President's time, he had put this request in the form of a letter addressed to the President and asked if I would see that it reached the President.

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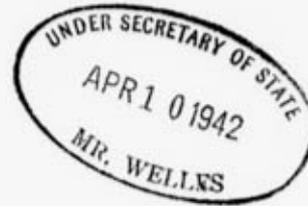
that if my understanding was correct, the only way in which these people could be evacuated from the Soviet Union would be through Iran and that in that event, the difficulty of finding shipping to take such a huge number of persons to the United States would make it impossible of realization. I said it seemed to me offhand, in view of the fact that the Persian Government was not willing to accept any more Polish refugees on account of the large number already there, and in view of the fact that under present conditions the British Government would not permit Polish refugees to go to India, that the only possibility that occurred to me was to try and get these women and children into some part of eastern South Africa on the understanding that if the Government of the Union of South Africa permitted their entrance, arrangements would be made by the American Red Cross for their maintenance until the Polish Government was able to undertake this task itself. I stated I would be very glad to let the Ambassador know of any constructive and helpful suggestions we might have to offer.

The Ambassador then handed me a memorandum which is attached herewith covering the above point in part and likewise asking again if the United States Government would not do what it could to speed up the evacuation from the Soviet Union of the Polish contingents not included in the four divisions which it had been agreed between Stalin and General Sikorski should remain in the Soviet Union to fight on the Western Russian front.

I said I would be very glad to do what we could to be helpful in this matter.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS



MEMORANDUM

April 8, 1942

U - Mr. Welles

You may possibly desire to place in your files the following four confidential documents which were handed to you during the course of General Sikorski's recent visit:

1. The conversation between General Sikorski and Mr. Stalin which took place in the Kremlin on December 3, 1941.
2. The conversation which took place between General Sikorski and Mr. Stalin on December 4, 1941, at the dinner given by Mr. Stalin in the Kremlin.
3. A report made by General Sikorski at a Polish Cabinet meeting on his trip through the Mid East and Russia.
4. A memorandum prepared for or by General Sikorski on "The Attitude of the Soviet Government Towards the Polish National Minorities".

There are set forth below a number of observations which can be drawn from these documents:

1. During

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1. During the course of the Sikorski-Stalin conversations Sikorski frankly reproached Stalin for the Soviet failure to live up to the Polish-Soviet Agreement of July 1941. Stalin was at first evasive in meeting these reproaches; he then evidenced irritation and displeasure apparently with the idea that Sikorski would not dare to stand up to him and would thus be reduced to a weak position during discussions; when he found that Sikorski continued to remain firm he treated him more as an equal and talked to him with considerable frankness.

2. Sikorski by refusing to be terrorized, by keeping his temper, and by remaining firm apparently was more successful in dealing with Stalin than other distinguished foreign visitors who feared to resort to the use of the negative in their discussions with Stalin and who, therefore, found themselves compelled either to accede to his demands or to resort to evasion.

3. A number of outstanding difficulties between Sikorski and Stalin were apparently found to be insoluble. Discussion of some of them was postponed to the indefinite future; others were left in an unclarified state and will undoubtedly give rise to considerable friction.

4. Sikorski

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4. Sikorski refused to discuss the problem of frontiers with Stalin and courteously but firmly rejected Stalin's suggestion that Poland and the Soviet Union define their borders at once without consultation with Great Britain or the United States.

5. The Soviet Government apparently endeavored to prevail upon the Polish Government not to claim as Polish citizens persons of Ukrainian, Jewish, or White Russian descent who were residents in the areas taken by the Soviet Union from Poland and who were Polish citizens at the time that Soviet troops entered Eastern Poland. The Soviet Government on its part was willing to admit that persons of Polish descent living in those areas were Polish citizens. Sikorski categorically rejected any arrangement of this kind. He took the position that the Polish Government could not betray the national minorities of Eastern Poland by handing them over to the Soviet Union.

6. Stalin in the course of his discussions with Sikorski made a number of anti-Semitic remarks. It is not clear whether these remarks represented anti-Semitic feelings on the part of Stalin or whether Stalin made them while endeavoring to persuade Sikorski that it would be to the advantage of Poland to get rid

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of the Jews by turning them over to the Soviet Union. According to Sikorski a number of Jews in Eastern Poland did assume a pro-Soviet attitude at the time of the entry of Soviet troops into the areas in which they were living. Most of the Jews, however, remained loyal to Poland and even those who were originally pro-Soviet have now changed their views and are among those most anxious to retain Polish citizenship. The White Russians also in general were loyal to Poland. The Ukrainians, however, have not behaved so well. Many of them have shown pro-Nazi tendencies.

7. Stalin displayed a somewhat vindictive spirit towards the Ukrainians of Eastern Poland many of whom apparently had displayed an anti-Soviet and even a pro-Nazi attitude. He indicated that when the Soviet troops reentered Eastern Poland these Ukrainians would be exterminated and the Ukrainian problem permanently liquidated.

8. Stalin gave orders in Sikorski's presence that Polish soldiers still retained in prison camps be released and he promised to have steps taken which would expedite the equipment of several Polish divisions. He also consented to the removal of Polish soldiers and civilians towards the South where weather conditions

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conditions would be more favorable. Stalin expressed resentment, however, at Sikorski's suggestion that Polish troops which the Soviet Union could not equip and arm be sent to Iran where they could be rehabilitated and armed by the British. While Sikorski was in Moscow no arrangements were effected for the dispatch of Polish troops into Iran.

9. The British Government, according to General Sikorski's report to the Polish Cabinet made after his return from the Soviet Union, has already sent to Russia complete equipment other than arms for 100,000 men and has promised to send at once arms for four divisions. At that time only one Polish division had arms which had been furnished by the Soviet Government in insufficient quantities. General Sikorski also informed his cabinet that Stalin had agreed that 25,000 soldiers and between 1,000 and 1,500 airmen and sailors could be evacuated to Iran for further service in Great Britain and Egypt.

10. Sikorski in talking to his Cabinet denounced previous Governments of Poland for their unfriendly attitude towards the Soviet Union and stated that he would endeavor to establish a durable friendship between Poland and the Soviet Union. He intimated, however,
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that Russia was not fully to be trusted and that there existed germs of future disputes. Among the causes of possible disputes he listed:

(a) Pan-Slavic tendencies on the part of the Soviets which Poland must reject and which Poland must meet by the establishment of a federation with Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

(b) Soviet determination to extend its Western frontier partly at Poland's expense.

(c) Soviet tendencies to propagate Communism.

He pointed out, however, that both Russia and Poland had agreed that future Europe must be based upon federationism.

11. Sikorski expressed himself as pleased that he had obtained consent from the Soviets for performance of religious rites by the Poles in the Soviet Union and for the establishment in Russia of two Polish daily newspapers operated for Poles by Poles and independent of the Soviet Government.

A copy of the letter of March 9, 1942, from Sikorski to Eden, which General Sikorski handed to you, is also enclosed.

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