

**Folder 5. MR 450 France (2)—Disposition of  
French Ships in Alexandria, 1942.  
1 July 1942–30 March 1945.**

WAR DEPARTMENT  
CLASSIFIED MESSAGE CENTER  
INCOMING CLASSIFIED MESSAGE

TOP SECRET AMUG

PRIORITY

**TOP  
SECRET**

From: Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces,  
Forward, Rheims, France

To: War Department  
Air Ministry Special Signal's Office

Nr: FWD 18371 SCAF 257 30 March 1945

Ref no FWD 18371 to AGWAR for Combined Chiefs of Staff repeat for information to AMSSO for British Chiefs of Staff from SHAEF Forward signed Eisenhower cite SHSC. This is SCAF number 257 TOP SECRET.

Reference PACS 166.

Authorization for the release of these craft was given by this Headquarters to the Deputy for Navy SHAEF Mission (France) on 27th March.

He was directed to make the necessary arrangements with the French Ministry of Marine.

End

FOOTNOTE: PACS-166 is CM-OUT-59742 (28 Mar 45) Gen. McFarland

ACTION: Gen. McFarland (CC/S).

INFO : Adm. Leahy, Gen. Arnold, Gen. Hull, Gen. Bissell,  
Adm. King, C of S.

CM-IN-32422 ( 31 Mar 45 ) DTG: 302215A ngr

TOP SECRET

26

*450 France*

COPY No.

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SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT  
CLASSIFIED MESSAGE CENTER

OUTGOING MESSAGE

TOP SECRET

TOP  
SECRET

Combined Chiefs of Staff  
77500. Col. Peck.

27 March 1945

Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces, Forward  
Echelon, Rheims, France

British Joint Staff Mission, Washington, D. C.

Number: WARX 59742

TOPSEC book message to SHAEF Rheims for Eisenhower for  
action, to AMSSO pass to British Chiefs of Staff for in-  
formation, FACS 166 from the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

SCAF 160 is the reference.

Chief of French Naval Mission here has stated that four of  
the motor launches ordered by the German Navy and under  
construction in Meulan are scheduled to be ready for action  
at end of March. He says these four craft would be a great  
help in French operations now in progress on Atlantic Coast  
and requests their release to the French Navy.

Request your views immediate.

End.

ORIGINATOR: Gen. McFarland

INFORMATION: Adm. Leahy, Gen. Arnold, Gen. Hull, Gen. Bissell,  
Adm. King, C of S.

CM-OUT-59742 ( Mar 45 ) DTG: 280201Z ngr

TOP SECRET

SECRET

COPY No.

4507rance

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33

WAR DEPARTMENT  
CLASSIFIED MESSAGE CENTER  
INCOMING CLASSIFIED MESSAGE

S-E-C-R-E-T

From: CG Allied Force Headquarters, Algiers, Algeria

To: War Department  
CG US Army Forces in European Theater of  
Operations, London, England  
Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary  
Forces, London, England  
CG US Army Forces in the Middle East,  
Cairo, Egypt

No: F-41436 4 May 1944

This is NAF 686 Commander in Chief United States  
Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations FF1/L9-3 of 19th April  
serial 001216 to Combined Chiefs of Staff British Admiralty  
Delegation Washington Commander in Chief Mediterranean  
Commander 8th Fleet and FAN 350 refer. F41436 signed Wilson  
cite FHRNA to for action AGWAR for Combined Chiefs of Staff  
and USFOR for British Chiefs of Staff to for info USAFINE  
UNITY London.

French at Algiers state Tourville could proceed  
Bizerta under own steam. ✓ They have not requested that she  
should be refitted at Bizerta or Allied port and have always  
been definite that work required could not be carried out  
at Dakar with present resources and personnel. Latter can-  
not be spared from elsewhere in this theatre.

2. My recommendation in NAF 681 was based on above.

3. It is considered that repairs to this cruiser  
are of no importance at this critical stage of the war and  
that expenditure of material and effort required to put  
ship into running order is unjustified see FAN 350. Further,

CM-IN-3379 (5 May 44)

S-E-C-R-E-T

*Col. Bank*

*450 French*

COPY NO. 55

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WAR DEPARTMENT  
CLASSIFIED MESSAGE CENTER  
INCOMING CLASSIFIED MESSAGE

S-E-C-R-E-T

Page 2

From: CG Allied Force Headquarters, Algiers, Algeria

No: F-41436 4 May 1944

as the climatic conditions at Dakar are bad, Tourville  
Ships Company is due for relief and the ship can steam,  
the Combined Chiefs of Staff may be inclined to recon-  
sider their decision and allow her to proceed to Bizerta  
to pay off.

No Sig

FOOTNOTE: NAF 681 is CM-IN-15678 (21 Apr 44) CC/S  
FAN 350 is CM IN-7345 (17 Mar 44) CC/S

ACTION: CC/S

INFO : Gen Arnold  
OPD  
Gen Bissell  
Adm. King  
Log

CM-IN-3379 (5 May 44) 0912Z jb

S-E-C-R-E-T

COPY NO.

55

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SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT  
CLASSIFIED MESSAGE CENTER

INCOMING MESSAGE

From: Algiers  
To: WAR

No. W4257/59915 (NAF 637) 4 March 1944

From AFHQ to AGWAR for Combined Chiefs of Staff USFOR  
for British Chiefs of Staff info USAFINE (Mideast pass) UNITY  
London No. W4257/59915 031126. From Wilson cite FERNA. This  
is NAF 637.

French cruisers Tourville, Duquesne and Suffren are  
in very bad order. Tourville requires 4 boilers retubing,  
Duquesne 4 boilers retubing and main condensers regrommetted,  
Suffren 3 boilers, 1 main, 2 auxiliary, and 2 dynamo condensers  
retubing. All require renewal of portion of salt and fresh  
water piping, renewal of large part of electric wiring, and  
about 50% of stern bushes require rewooding. PAN 319 refers.

2. French state work can only be undertaken at Ferry-  
ville as it is beyond capabilities of Dakar or Casablanca.  
They state that Tourville, which is the worst, will shortly  
cease to be operational. They have been informed by Commander  
in Chief Mediterranean that work cannot be started at Ferry-  
ville before autumn of 1944 at the earliest. This is probably  
an optimistic view, owing to presence of very heavy repair  
commitments for vessels of more importance in the war effort.

3. Admiralty consider that ships should be kept going  
as.

(Part 2 follows).

No Sig

CM-IN-3010 (5 Mar 44)

450 France

SECRET

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COPY No.

*Belmont  
Matthewson*

35

**SECRET**

WAR DEPARTMENT  
CLASSIFIED MESSAGE CENTER

**INCOMING MESSAGE**

From: Algiers  
To: WAR

No: W4257/59915, 3 March 1944

Part 2 AFHQ No. W4257/59915 031126.

Long as possible without repair except from local resources, and when no longer operational they should be laid up and the crews used elsewhere. 4 request decision on future of these cruisers.

No Sig

ACTION: CC/S (Captain Royal USN)

INFORMATION: OPD, General Bissell, General Arnold,  
Admiral King, Colonel Mathewson, Log

CM-IN-3010 (5 Mar 44) 0301Z med

**SECRET**

COPY No.

35

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NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM <u>COOPER (ALEXANDRIA)</u>		OPNAV	PRIORITY
RELEASED BY _____			<del>ROUTINE</del>
DATE <u>29 NOVEMBER 42</u>			DEFERRED
TOR CODEROOM <u>1747</u>			PRIORITY
DECODED BY <u>KEARNEY/HILL</u>			ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY _____			DEFERRED

INDICATE BY ASTERISK ADDRESSEES FOR WHICH MAIL DELIVERY IS SATISFACTORY.

LT KELLY

291200

NCR 8946 S

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

ORIGINATOR FILL IN DATE AND TIME	DATE	TIME	GCT
TEXT			

GODFROY NOT SYMPATHETIC JOINING U S BRITISH  
 DE GAULLE OR DARLAN. PRESENT ATTITUDE ONE OF INDECISION.  
 EXPECTED HE RECEIVE LETTER FROM DARLAN TODAY. WILL BE  
 GIVEN PERIOD ONE OR TWO DAYS FOR CONSIDERATION. ANTICIPATE  
 ESTABLISHMENT OF MORE DEFINITE ATTITUDE END THAT TIME.

16.....ACTION

COMINCH.....20G.....NAVAIDE.....10.....FILE.

291200

No. 1 Admiral      No. 2 File      No. 3 F-1 or Chartroom      No. 4 Special

**SEALED      SECRET**

Make original only. Deliver to communication watch officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS.)

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM <b>COOPER - CAIRO</b>		<b>OPNAV</b>	PRIORITY
RELEASED BY			ROUTINE
DATE <b>18 NOV 1942</b>			DEFERRED <b>DDDD</b>
TOR CODEROOM <b>0540</b>			PRIORITY
DECODED BY <b>MALCOLMSON</b>			ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY <b>HARRINGTON</b>			DEFERRED

INDICATE BY ASTERISK ADDRESSEES FOR WHICH MAIL DELIVERY IS SATISFACTORY.

**J. ALLEN**

**171800**

**NCR 1181**

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

ORIGINATOR FILL IN DATE AND TIME DATE TIME GCT

TEXT

ACTION

F-00
F-01
F-015
F-0015
F-05
F-07
F-1
F-11
F-2
F-3
F-30
F-31
F-32
F-33
F-34
F-35
F-37
IG-00
VCNO

ATTITUDE OF VICE ADMIRAL GODFROY SUBSEQUENT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS SUCH THAT HE CONSIDERS HIMSELF IN COMMAND FRENCH NAVAL UNITS IN ALEXANDRIA AS INDEPENDENT OF VICHY GOVERNMENT AND OF DARLAN. CINC MED INFORMED ME THAT GODFROY HAS ASSURED HIM WITHIN THE LAST TWO DAYS THAT HE WILL NOT TAKE ANY ACTION AT THIS TIME. ADMIRAL HARWOOD PLACES RELIANCE IN THIS ASSURANCE BUT IS DOUBTFUL AS TO WHAT ATTITUDE GODFROY WOULD TAKE IF PETAIN GOVERNMENT TOOK SEAT IN FRENCH TERRITORY NOT OCCUPIED BY GERMANS, NAMELY TOULON AND FROM THERE ISSUED ORDERS TO GODFROY. FRENCH NAVAL OFFICERS AND PERSONNEL IN GODFROYS FLEET VERY RESENTFUL AGAINST BRITISH AND AMERICANS BECAUSE OF REPORTS THEY RECEIVED OF STRONG ATTACK LAUNCHED WITHOUT PRIOR WARNING BY ALLIES AT CASABLANCA. IN CONVERSATION IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT THEY HAVE REFERRED TO IT AS A PEARL HARBOR AGAINST THE FRENCH.

16 ACTION  
DOMINOH...13...  
FILE:200P...NAVAID...00...

**SECRET**

Make original only. Deliver to communication watch officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS.)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-23815-1

**CONFIDENTIAL** ISSUED BY THE INTELLIGENCE DIVISION  
OFFICE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
NAVY DEPARTMENT

**CONFIDENTIAL INTELLIGENCE REPORT**

WAB  
103

Serial 47-42 Monograph Index Guide No. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Start new series each year, I. e. 1-40, 2-40) (To correspond with SUBJECT given below. See O. N. I. Index Guide. Make separate report for each main title.) 42  
From F-3 (O.N.I.) at Washington, D.C. Date 11/28/42, 1942  
(Ship, fleet, unit, district, office, station, or person)  
Reference N.A. Tangler letter of July 27, 1942. (\*)  
(Directive, correspondence, previous related report, etc., if applicable) N.A.  
Source Personal contact - N.A. Tangler Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_  
(As official, personal observation, publication, press, conversation with— (As reliable, doubtful, unverified, etc.)  
Subject FRANCE International Relations  
(Nation reported on) (Main title as per Index guide) (Subtitles) (Make separate report for each title)

BRIEF.—(Here enter careful summary of report, containing substance succinctly stated; include important facts, names, places, dates, etc.)  
**INTERVIEW WITH ADMIRAL D'HARCOURT, COMMANDING THE FRENCH FLEET AT CASABLANCA.**

In a cordial interview between the United States Naval Attaché at Tangier and Admiral d'Harcourt, commanding the French Fleet at Casablanca, the Admiral expressed the following personal convictions:—

- (a) Warm approval of the appointment of Admiral Leahy as Chief of Staff to the President, feeling that Admiral Leahy is a true friend of France.
- (b) Japan has over-extended herself in the Pacific and will be able to make no further gains save, perhaps, in China. However, the Axis have profited by the diversion of American forces into the Pacific theatre.
- (c) The sinking of the French vessels at Alexandria would make an irreparable breach in Franco-Allied feelings.
- (d) No French crew will ever permit their ship to be taken over by the Axis. They will scuttle the ship first.
- (e) The French crews at Alexandria have orders to remain aboard their ships if the British start to sink them.
- (f) The return of the Alexandria vessels to a port under French control would create a wave of pro-Ally feeling among the French.
- (g) The French make a distinction between the necessities of war, such as the seizure of Diego-Suarez, which action the Admiral recognizes as a strategic necessity, and the wanton destruction of French life and property which would be involved in the sinking of the vessels at Alexandria.

Admiral d'Harcourt was extremely friendly throughout the interview.

Distribution By Originator \_\_\_\_\_

Routing spaces below for use in O.N.I.

Note: (\*) Referenced report from which this Serial was prepared is on file in Op-16-F-3.

- Op-16
- Op-16-F
- Op-16-F-1
- Mono
- A-3-e
- Op-12
- Op-13
- State
- Naval Aide
- Aide to Secnav
- Op-10/11
- BAD

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SECRET

U.S. NAVAL LIAISON OFFICE  
OFFICE OF U.S. NAVAL OBSERVER

SECRET

SUEZ, EGYPT.

SECRET

July 21, 1942.

From: U. S. Naval Liaison Officer.  
 To: The Chief of Naval Operations,  
 (Director of Naval Intelligence).  
 Subject: Interned French Naval Vessels (Force X),  
 Alexandria, Egypt.  
 References: (a) OPNAV Secret Dispatch 031846 of July 1942.  
 (b) ALUSIO SUEZ Secret Dispatch 060700 of July 1942.  
 (c) OPNAV Secret Dispatch 100319 of July 1942.  
 (d) ALUSIO SUEZ Secret Dispatch 131535 of July 1942.  
 Enclosures: (A) Copy of Secret Message Delivered Admiral Godfroy 5 July 1942.  
 (B) Original of Admiral Godfroy's reply to Reference (a).  
 (C) Liberal English Translation of Enclosure (B).  
 (D) Original of Admiral Godfroy's reply to Reference (c).  
 (E) Liberal Translation (English) of Enclosure (D).

1. In order that the details of this report may be set forth chronologically all references outlined above will be quoted herein. The English translations of Admiral Godfroy's replies to References (a) and (b) are liberal and it is recommended that further translations be made at ONI. Reference (a) was received from OPNAV on July 4, 1942 and directed as follows:

"SECRET - PRIORITY - THIS IS OPNAV ZERO THREE ONE EIGHT FOUR SIX BEING SEFT FOR ACTION TO BOTH ALUSHA CAIRO AND ALUSNOB SUEZ X PRESIDENT DESIRES FOLLOWING BE COMMUNICATED AT ONE BY SENIOR AVAILABLE U S NAVAL OFFICER TO ADMIRAL GODFROY QUOTE NOTIFY ADMIRAL GODFROY THAT THE U S GOVERNMENT HAS FORMALLY ADVISED LAVAL THAT THE UNITED STATES IS PREPARED TO OFFER ASYLUM FOR FRENCH SHIPS NOW IN ALEXANDRIA X SHIPS TO SAIL VIA SUEZ AND BE MAINTAINED IN NEUTRAL PORTS SUCH AS URAGUAY IF THAT IS DESIRED X UNITED STATES GUARANTEES TO RETURN SHIPS TO FRANCE AFTER THE WAR X THIS OFFER IS PREDICATED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT SHIPS WOULD OTHERWISE FALL UNDER GERMAN CONTROL X UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL BRITISH PERMIT SHIPS TO BE RETURNED TO FRENCH PORTS X ADVISE GODFROY FURTHER THAT PRESIDENT IS PREPARED TO OFFER ASYLUM AFTER CONSULTATION WITH BRITISH IRRESPECTIVE OF OUTCOME OF PRESENT BATTLE IN EGYPT X NOTIFY BRITISH OF YOUR ACTION AND ADVISE NAVY DEPARTMENT AT ONCE X UNQUOTE X ACKNOWLEDGE XX

OPNAV"

RECEIVED S-C FILMS

Room 2155

AUG 7 1942

ROUTE TO: #6 Pres. Aide  
 File No. (SD) A14.2/EF28  
 Rec. No. 57547  
 Copy No. 2 of 2  
 NN

A-3 1283

AUG 7 1942



OFFICE OF  
NAVAL INTELLIGENCE  
RECEIVED

- 1 -

SECRET

SECRET

Subject: Interned French Naval Vessels (Force X), Alexandria, Egypt.

2. As senior Naval Officer Present action was therefore taken by the writer resulting in my dispatch (Ref. (b) on July 6, 1942 which stated as follows:

"SECRET - PRIORITY - OPNAV ZERO THREE ONE EIGHT FOUR SIX  
X GODFROY CONTACTED ABOARD FLAGSHIP FIFTH X MESSAGE  
DELIVERED X GODFROY STATED WILL NOT MOVE SHIPS OTHER  
THAN FRENCH PORT WITHOUT PERMISSION VICHY X CLAIMS ANY  
OTHER ACTION DIRECT VIOLATION TERMS GERMAN FRENCH ARMISTICE  
RESULTING GRAVE CONSEQUENCES FRENCH PEOPLE AND ULTIMATE  
GERMAN DEMAND EQUIVALENT NUMBER FRENCH SHIPS NOW FRENCH  
PORTS X GODFROY DESIRES PROCEED BIZERTE WHICH COMMANDER  
IN CHIEF MED WILL NOT ALLOW X STATED IF ALLOWED PROCEED  
BIZERTE WOULD SCUTTLE SHIPS BEFORE ALLOWING GERMANS TAKE  
CONTROL X THIS HIGHLY PROBLEMATIC DUE SENTIMENT OFFICERS  
CREW X EXPRESSED COMPLETE DISAPPROVAL MOVEMENT SHIPS THROUGH  
SUEZ CANAL STATING THIS ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED BRITISH CONNIV-  
ANCE X GODFROY FRIENDLY UNIT SAIL BUT EXPRESSED EXTREME  
BITTERNESS BRITISH APPARENTLY UNDER IMPRESSION BRITISH HOLD  
FRENCH IN CONTEMPT DUE ARMISTICE X EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE  
ALARM RUSSIA STATING MANY COMMUNISTS FRANCE AND RUSSIAN  
VICTORY PROBABLY CAUSE CIVIL WAR FRANCE X MY IMPRESSIONS  
GODFROY NOT GREATLY CONCERNED SITUATION EGYPT FEELING  
HIS POSITION NOT CHANGE GERMANS SUCCESSFUL TAKING ALEX-  
ANDRIA X EYE AM CONVINCED THAT REGARDLESS OUTCOME SITUATION  
EGYPT GODFROY WILL NOT ORDER MOVE SHIPS NEUTRAL PORT WITH-  
OUT PERMISSION VICHY X COMMANDER IN CHIEF MED INFORMED X  
SHOULD EYE ADVISE MINISTER PERTINENT FACTS XX  
ALUSIO SUEZ"

3. Reference (c) which was received from OPNAV on July 10, 1942 directed as follows:

"SECRET - PRIORITY - PRESIDENT WISHES FOLLOWING MESSAGE  
BE COMMUNICATED AT ONCE BY SENIOR AVAILABLE UNIT SAIL  
OFFICER TO ADMIRAL GODFROY X THIS SAME MESSAGE HAS BEEN  
SENT BY STATE DEPARTMENT TO VICHY FOR TRANSMITTAL TO  
LAVAL QUOTE THE PRESIDENT PROPOSES THAT IF THE FRENCH  
GOVERNMENT AGREES THAT THE FRENCH NAVAL UNITS NOW AT  
ALEXANDRIA BE WITHDRAWN BY WAY OF THE SUEZ CANAL THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES BY AGREEMENT WITH THE  
BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL GRANT SAFE PASSAGE TO MARTINIQUE  
WHERE THEY WILL NOT BE USED BY THE UNITED STATES OR  
BRITISH GOVERNMENTS BUT WHERE THEY WILL BE IMMOBILIZED  
ON THE SAME BASIS AS THE FRENCH WAR SHIPS NOW AT FORT DE  
FRANCE FOR THE DURATION OF THE WAR WITH THE ASSURANCE

(2)

SECRET

SECRET

Subject: Interned French Naval Vessels (Force X), Alexandria, Egypt.

3. Contd.

THAT AT THE TERMINATION OF THE WAR THEY WILL BE RESTORED TO THE FRENCH PEOPLE X PARA THE UNITED STATES AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS AGREE TO PERIODICAL RELIEF AND REPATRIATION OF THE CREWS AFTER THEY HAVE REACHED MARTINIQUE ON THE SAME BASIS WHICH WOULD HAVE OBTAINED HAD THE SHIPS REMAINED AT ALEXANDRIA X PARA THE PRESIDENT PROPOSES THAT THIS ARRANGEMENT BE ENTERED INTO IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THE FALL OF ALEXANDRIA BECOMES IMMINENT SINCE THESE SHIPS WOULD IN ANY CASE BE IN DANGER OF ENEMY ATTACK THERE X PARA INASMUCH AS THESE SHIPS HAVE FROM THE BEGINNING OCCUPIED A SPECIAL AND ARE NOW IN A PRECARIOUS SITUATION THEY ARE NOT WITHIN THE OPERATIVE PROVISIONS OF THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT AND HENCE THE PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT COULD NOT BE SAID TO BE VIOLATIVE OF THE AGREEMENT X UNQUOTE X ACKNOWLEDGE XX

OPNAV"

4. It was ascertained that Commander T. V. Cooper, USN., Naval Attache, American Legation, Cairo, had returned on evening of July 10, 1942. Commander Cooper was communicated with at Ismailia on the following morning (July 11) whereupon he came to Suez and was handed a copy of Reference (c). Commander Cooper immediately left Suez for return motor trip to Ismailia where arrangements had been made for him to be transported by air to Alexandria to deliver the message as contained in Reference (c) to Admiral Godfroy.

5. During the return motor trip to Ismailia, Commander Cooper was involved in an accident and suffered a broken arm and minor injuries which necessitated him being placed in the H.M.S. Hospital Ship "MAINE" at Ismailia. The writer was subsequently contacted by the Commander in Chief, Mediterranean Station, informed of this accident and advised that Commander Cooper had instructed that he (the writer) should therefore carry out the mission as outlined in Reference (c), delivering the message as prepared by Commander Cooper to Admiral Godfroy.

6. This was accomplished the following morning (July 12) and as a result Reference (d) quoted as follows was accordingly dispatched to OPNAV by the writer:

"SECRET - PRIORITY - OPNAV TEN ZERO THREE ONE NINE DELIVERED COOPER ELEVENTH FOR TRANSMITTAL GODFROY X COOPER IN MOTOR ACCIDENT ENROUTE ISMAILIA FROM SUEZ ELEVENTH SUFFERING BROKEN ARM MINOR INJURIES PLACED HOSPITAL SHIP ISMAILIA X EYE DELIVERED MESSAGE GODFROY TWELFTH X GODFROY INFORMS MOVEMENT SHIPS TO MARTINIQUE VIOLATION AXIS FRENCH ARMISTICE AS TRIP SUCH DURATION ONLY

SECRET

SECRET

SECRET

Subject: Interned French Naval Vessels (Force X), Alexandria, Egypt.

6. Cont'd.

"BE MADE COOPERATION ALLIED NATIONS AT WAR  
AXIS X STATED ALTHOUGH MARTINIQUE LOYAL  
FRENCH PORT SUCH MOVE PLACE HIM SAME POSITION  
FREE FRENCH WHICH HE DEFINITELY DOES NOT WISH  
X STATES PERSONALLY BOUND STIPULATIONS ARMIS-  
TICE AS LOYAL FRENCH NAVAL OFFICER X STATED MOVE  
TO MARTINIQUE PERSONALLY MORE FAVORABLE THAN  
SOUTH AMERICA BUT DEFINITELY AGAINST ANY MOVE  
THROUGH SUEZ CANAL X INSISTS SHIPS SHOULD BE  
ALLOWED PROCEED FRENCH NORTH AFRICAN PORT  
PREFERABLY BIZERTE X SPOKE VAGUELY LAVAL  
STATING LAVAL SUBTLE SMART AND HAVE SOME  
SOLUTION TO MATTER WITH FORMAL REPLY UNDOUBT-  
EDLY FORTHCOMING AND HE MUST ABIDE HIS GOVERN-  
MENTS DECISION X APPEARS GODFROY WOULD ORDER  
SHIPS PROCEED FRENCH PROPER OR FRENCH NORTH  
AFRICAN PORT WITHOUT RECOURSE VICHY PAREN  
POSSIBLE HE HAS ALREADY RECEIVED SUCH PERMISSION  
PAREN BUT WILL NOT ORDER MOVE THROUGH CANAL TO  
PORT OUTSIDE SPHERE CONTROL AXIS X DEFINITELY  
DOES NOT WISH CHANCE DISPLEASURE AXIS XX  
GODFROY PREPARED SHORT WRITTEN REPLIES EACH  
MESSAGE WHICH BEING FORWARDED AIRMAIL DETAIL  
REPORT X THIS AND MY ZERO SIX ZERO SEVEN ZERO  
ZERO ARE ACCURATE SUMMARIES AND STATED REPLIES  
XX POSITION GODFROY DELICATE BUT EYE AM CONVINCED  
HIS DECISION FIRM WITHOUT ORDERS VICHY OR POSSIBLY  
DRASTIC FORM PRESSURE XX

ALUSLO SUEZ"

7. Due to the highly delicate nature of this mission extreme care and diplomacy was exercised in presenting these messages to Admiral Godfroy. All contact with Admiral Godfroy was most pleasant and the writer was, on each occasion, graciously received aboard his flagship. Admiral Godfroy spoke freely of his position and appeared most anxious to impress that as a loyal French Naval Officer he could only abide by the terms of the French Armistice agreement with the Axis Powers as arranged by his Government. He informed that he wished to move his ships to a French North African port, preferably Bizerte, but that the British would not permit him to do so. His apparent willingness to order this move and his explanation for not being in a position to move his ships to a neutral port, led the writer to believe that Admiral Godfroy had undoubtedly received such instructions from Vichy. Recent reports indicate that this was true.

8. The writer did not enter into any discussion with Admiral Godfroy concerning any of these questions and my dispatches and this report are the results of his statements and conversation. As stated in Reference (b) Admiral Godfroy appeared to hold the United States in high esteem but expressed extreme bitterness toward the British. This attitude toward the British was definitely apparent and the writer is convinced that Admiral Godfroy was

- 4 -

SECRET

SECRET

Subject: Interned French Naval Vessels (Force X), Alexandria, Egypt.

8. Con'td.

experiencing some slight personal satisfaction at the British retreats in Egypt. Admiral Godfrey stated that the British condemned the French people upon the Armistice but that now they (the British) "were running quickly from the Germans" and that in moving his ships to a neutral port the "British wished to save face".

9. Admiral Godfrey expressed complete disapproval of the Free French and this feeling had not been improved by the appearance of units of the Free French Forces in Alexandria (enroute the Western Desert from Syria) who had become involved in fights with members of his crews on shore liberty, and who are apparently "loyal" or Vichy French, and which resulted in two of his men being shot and seriously wounded by some Free French Troops. Admiral Godfrey objected to moving his ships to Martinique on the grounds that it would place him in the same category as the Free French for the duration of the voyage -- would be a direct violation of the terms of the French Armistice inasmuch as it would require passage through the Suez Canal and the consent of the Allied Nations at war with the Axis Powers and with whom his Government has entered into an Armistice agreement. Admiral Godfrey stated that in moving his ships to a neutral port, or Martinique, the resulting consequences would even re-act unfavorably for the United States and Great Britain as the Axis Powers would undoubtedly demand an equivalent number of French war ships now interned in French ports. Admiral Godfrey stressed this point stating that he "knew" the Germans would demand such reparations.

10. It appeared to the writer that Admiral Godfrey is not greatly concerned as to the status of his ships should Alexandria fall into the control of the Germans. His statements reflected that he is under the impression (or wishes to appear to be under the impression) that his ships would remain interned in that port or allowed to proceed to some other French North African port for internment, should the German Forces be successful in this theatre.

11. It is the writer's impression that Admiral Godfrey intends to remain firm in his present attitude toward any changes in the port of internment for the French war ships at Alexandria unless such a change has the approval of Vichy.

12. In accordance with instructions as contained in Reference (a) the Commander in Chief, Mediterranean Station and the Flag Officer Commanding, Red Sea and Suez Canal Area, were kept informed as to action taken and results obtained. In conversation with Admiral Sir Henry Harwood, Commander in Chief, Mediterranean Station, Admiral Harwood stated that he and Admiral Godfrey had previously entered into a "gentlemen's agreement" regarding the French Naval ships at Alexandria and the writer gathered that this agreement was to the effect that neither of them would order these ships to move without first consulting the other.

SECRET

- 5 -

SECRET

SECRET

Subject: Interned French Naval Vessels (Force X), Alexandria, Egypt.

13. Admiral Harwood also stated that the German Forces could not take Alexandria as the British Army defences surrounding the city were too great. The speed however, in which the German Forces moved across Libya and Egypt, to a position some sixty-five (65) miles from Alexandria were not too re-assuring.

14. In commenting on his moving his Staff Headquarters from Alexandria to Ismailia, Admiral Harwood stated that he had ordered this move solely because of the fact that Alexandria was now within range of German dive bomber bases. Admiral Harwood also stated that he had ordered the movement of a number of British Naval vessels, and valuable repair ships, from their base at Alexandria to Suez and Port Sudan, merely as a precautionary measure. It has been noted that a small number of destroyers which had been withdrawn from the Mediterranean have recently moved through the Suez Canal, northbound, apparently returning to that area.

J. J. WILKINSON, JR.

c/c NAVAL ATTACHE, CAIRO

- 6 -

SECRET

SECRET

SECRET

Encl. "A"

SECRET

5 July 1942.

Admiral R. E. Godfroy,  
Commander-in-Chief,  
French Naval Forces,  
Alexandria, Egypt.

Sir:

The President of the United States of America has directed me to immediately inform you that the United States Government has formally advised Premier Pierre Laval of France that the United States is prepared to offer asylum for French ships now in Alexandria, Egypt.

The ships would be maintained in ports of neutral countries, such as Uruguay, if that is desired and would sail for such neutral ports via Suez.

The President informs that this offer is predicated upon the assumption that the French ships in Alexandria may otherwise fall under German control and that under no circumstances will the British authorities permit your ships to be returned to French ports.

The President further directs to inform you that he is prepared to offer asylum for your ships, after consultation with British authority, irrespective of the ultimate outcome of the present conflict in Egypt.

The United States of America guarantees to return these ships to France after the war.

Very respectfully,

John J. Wilkinson, Jr.  
Lieutenant, USNR.

SECRET

SECRET

-- COPY --

SECRET

Alexandrie, Dimanche 5 Juillet 1942.

REPONSE a la communication remise le 5 Juillet 1942 au nom du President des Etats-Unis d'Amerique par le Lieutenant John J. Wilkinson - U. S Navy.

ENCL. "B"

1. - Si mon gouvernement me prescrit d'aller en Amerique du Sud, j'executerai d'un tel voyage avec des equipages tres reduits et dans l'etat actuel de mes navires.

Mais il parait peu vraisemblable que mon gouvernement puisse me donner de tels ordres sans l'assentiment des Commissions d'armistice.

En effet, si je quittais le port d'Alexandrie pour prendre, sans l'autorisation de ces commissions, une direction autre que celle d'un port francais - et surtout si je passais par le Canal de Suez, ce qui ne peut se faire qu'avec la connivence britannique - elles ne manqueraient pas de prendre cette action comme une violation de l'armistice. Il en resulterait de desastreuses consequences pour la France. En outre les pays de l'axe pourraient exiger en compensation la livraison d'un nombre de navires de la flotte francaise equivalent a ceux qui auraient quitte Alexandrie ce qui serait beaucoup plus grave pour la cause americaine et britannique que le risque inconsistent resultant, pour cette cause, de la presence de mon escadre, desarmee, dans un port francais.

2. - Etant donne les declarations solennelles faites par les allemands et les italiens dans l'armistice au sujet de la flotte francaise, et les reaffirmations successives de ces declarations;

Etant donne d'autre part, l'assurance, que tout le monde doit avoir, que jamais un navire francais ne tombera intact entre des mains etrangeres, ce que le gouvernement francais n'a cesse d'affirmer depuis deux ans;

Etant donne, enfin, que des garanties supplementaires, dont il pourrait etre discute discrettement, peuvent sans doute etre encore obtenues du gouvernement francais quant a l'immobilisation des navires de mon escadre dans un port francais;

il devrait etre clair pour tous que la solution la plus juste comme la meilleure a tous egards - et la seule pratique - serait - ces garanties etant obtenues - de laisser la Force X aller se refugier a Bizerte.

3. - En tous cas, en l'absence d'ordres de mon gouvernement, je ne pourrais quitter Alexandrie que pour un port francais. Le sentiment de mon devoir comme le respect auquel je suis tenu des clauses d'un armistice accepte par mon pays ne me laissent pas d'autre possibilite.

Le Vice-Admiral Godfroy  
Commandant la Force X.

SECRET

- COPY -

- COPY -

SECRET

TRANSLATION

SECRET

Alexandria, Sunday July 5, 1942.

REPLY to the communication delivered July 5, 1942 in the name of  
The President of the United States by Lieutenant John J. Wilkinson,  
U.S. Navy.

Encl. "e"

1. If my Government orders me to go to South America I will naturally execute its orders despite the great difficulties of such a voyage with crews much reduced and in the present state of my ships.

But there appears little likelihood that my Government could give me such orders without the assent of the Armistice Commission.

Indeed, if I leave the port of Alexandria and start out, without the authorization of these Commissions, in any direction except that of a French port - and especially if I pass through the Suez Canal, which can be done only with the connivance of the British - they would certainly consider this action as a violation of the Armistice. From it would result disastrous consequences for France. Besides, the Axis Powers would be able to demand in compensation the delivery of a number of vessels of the French Fleet equivalent to those which would have left Alexandria. This (event) would be much more grave for the American and British cause than the smaller risk to that cause that would result from the presence of my disarmed squadron in a French port.

2. -Granted, the solemn declaration made by the Germans and Italians in the Armistice concerning the French Fleet, and the successive re-affirmations of these declarations;

Granted, on the other hand, the assurance that everyone must have, that a French vessel will never fall intact into foreign hands, which the French Government has never ceased to state for the last two years;

Granted, finally, that supplementary guarantees, which could be discreetly discussed, could without doubt still be obtained from the French Government in regard to the immobilization of the vessels of my squadron in a French port;

(Accordingly), it must be clear to all that the most just and best solution in all respects - and the only practical one - would be that these guarantees should be obtained - to let Force X go to take refuge in Bizerte.

3.- In any case, in the absence of the orders of my Government, I could leave Alexandria only for a French port. My sense of duty and the respect which I must entertain for the provisions of an Armistice accepted by my country presents me no other course (of action).

Vice-Admiral GODFROY,  
Commanding Force X.

R. E. GODFROY.

SECRET

- C O P Y -

SECRET

SECRET

ENCL. "D"

Alexandrie, le 12 Juillet 1942.

REPONSE au message du 11 Juillet 1942 du President des Etats-Unis d'Amerique, transmis le 12 Juillet 1942 par les soins de l'attache naval americain en Egypte.

La proposition qui m'est faite d'aller a La Martinique peut evidemment etre consideree avec beaucoup moins de reserves que celle de rejoindre un port sud-americain, puisqu'il s'agit cette fois d'un port francais.

Mais son acceptation ne pourrait malheureusement eviter que subsistat un cote tres delicat de la situation; la necessite d'avoir recours pour ce tres long voyage a la connivence, aux ressources et a l'aide constante de nations en guerre avec les puissances de l'axe.

De ce fait, le deplacement en discussion prendrait evidemment, pour ces puissances, le caractere d'une infraction patente aux stipulations de l'armistice. Or je suis et me sais personnellement lie par ces stipulations. M'en liberer, comme y inviterait l'opinion exprimee au dernier alinea de la communication qui m'est faite, (sous pretexte que la situation de mon escadre l'ayant mise des le debut materiellement a l'ecart de toute action des allemands et des italiens, l'armistice ne s'applique pas a elle), serait adopter envers mon pays la meme attitude que celle qui a pousse certaines de ses colonies a cesser, sous l'influence d'une argumentation analogue, de reconnaitre l'autorite de l'Etat francais. Une telle attitude ne peut pas etre celle d'un officier responsable d'une escadre et qui tient a rester aussi fidele a ses devoirs traditionnels que loyal envers sa patrie.

Il est vrai, toutefois, que la conclusion du voyage retablirait dans la suite pour mon escadre et pour moi-meme une position de loyalisme, puisque La Martinique est restee fidele au gouvernement legal francais. Mais cette conclusion serait lointaine et, entre temps, le depart et le voyage auraient offert aux puissances de l'axe le pretexte qu'elles n'ont pas cache etre pretes a saisir de declarer l'armistice viole par nous-memes, avec tout ce qu'une telle declaration pourrait comporter d'exigences nuisibles a la France et aussi aux interets britanniques et americains.

Il est donc indique que la decision relative a un deplacement eventual de mon escadre vers La Martinique soit prise par le Gouvernement francais, qui seul peut l'assumer en toute connaissance de cause, et non par moi. Puisque la communication a laquelle je reponds n'est qu'un double de celle qui lui a ete remise, il est actuellement avverti et ne manquera pas, je J'en(?) crois assure, de l'envisager dans l'esprit le plus conciliant.

Je n'ai donc, en ce qui me concerne, qu'a attendre les resultats de son action. Mais j'ajoute que je continue a considerer qu'il doit y avoir une solution qui permette de donner, dans un port francais de l'Afrique de Nord, des garanties equivalentes a celles que pourrait offrir le se-jour de mon escadre a La Martinique.

Le Vice-Amiral GODFROY  
Commandant la Force X

R. E. Godfroy.

- C O P Y -

0  
SECRET

- TRANSLATION -

SECRET

ENCL. "E"

Alexandria, July 12, 1942.

REPLY to the message dated July 11, 1942 of the President of the United States, transmitted July 12, 1942 in care of the American Naval Attache in Egypt.

The proposition which is made to me of going to Martinique can evidently be considered with much less reserve than that of proceeding to a South American port, since now a French port is concerned.

But acceptance of this proposition would unhappily only mean neglect of a very delicate side of the situation (son acceptation ne pourrait malheureusement eviter que subsistat un cote tres delicat de la situation), that is, the necessity of resorting for such a long voyage to the connivance, to the resources and to the constant aid of the nations at war with the Axis Powers.

From this fact, the movement under discussion would evidently assume, for these powers, the character of a patent infraction of the Armistice stipulations. Indeed I am, and I know myself to be, personally bound by these stipulations. To free myself from them, as I am invited to do by the opinion expressed in the last clause of the communication made to me (under pretext that since the situation of my squadron has been substantially since the beginning beyond the province (mise a l'cart) of all control by the Germans and by the Italians, and that therefore the armistice does not apply to my squadron), would be to adopt towards my country the same attitude as that which has caused certain of its colonies to deny, under the influence of an analogous argument, recognition of the authority of the French nation. Such an attitude could not be adopted by an officer who feels his responsibility towards his squadron and who trusts to remain as faithful to his traditional duty as he is loyal to his country.

It is true, nonetheless, that the conclusion of the voyage would result in both my squadron and myself remaining loyal, since Martinique has remained faithful to the lawful French Government. But the termination of the voyage would be far in the future and in the meantime, my departure and this trip would offer to the Axis Powers the pretext, which they have showed themselves anxious to find, of declaring the armistice violated by us, with all that such a declaration would involve of resulting harm to France and also to Britain and American interests.

It is then indicated that the decision relative to the eventual movement of my squadron to Martinique should be made by the French Government, which alone can make the decision with full knowledge of all factors (connaissance de cause), and not by me. Since the communication to which I reply is only the duplicate of that sent to the French Government, it is now acquainted with the matter and will not fail, I feel sure, to entertain the proposition in the most conciliatory spirit.

- 1 -

SECRET

SECRET

- TRANSLATION -

I can now, as far as I myself am concerned, only await the results of the Government's decision. But I add that I continue to think that there must be a solution which would permit the giving, in a French North African port, of guarantees equivalent to those which my squadrons being in Martinique would offer.

Vice-Admiral Godfroy  
Commanding Force X.

R. E. Godfroy.

- 2 -

ENCL. "E"

SECRET

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTM

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM <b>ALUSLO SUEZ</b>		<b>OPNAV</b>	<b>PPPPPP</b> PRIORITY
RELEASED BY _____			ROUTINE
DATE <b>27 JULY 1942</b>			DEFERRED
TOR CODEROOM <b>1621/27</b>			PRIORITY
DECODED BY <b>KILCULLEN</b>			ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY <b>GERMAN</b>			DEFERRED

INDICATE BY ASTERISK ADDRESSEES FOR WHICH MAIL DELIVERY IS SATISFACTORY.

*WAL*

**GERMAN 270330 NCR 858**

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

ORIGINATOR FILL IN DATE AND TIME	DATE	TIME	GCT
TEXT			

IN CONVERSATION 26TH WITH ADMIRAL HARWOOD COMMANDER IN CHIEF MED HARWOOD INFORMED HIS OPINION FRENCH NAVAL VESSELS ALEXANDRIA SHOULD BE ALLOWED PROCEED BIZERTE FOR IMMOBILIZATION AND INTERNMENT AS DESIRED BY GODFROY. HARWOOD HAS RECOMMENDED ABOVE ACTION TO BRITISH ADMIRALTY WHO FLATLY REJECTED SUCH.

HARWOOD OF OPINION GODFROY WOULD SCUTTLE SHIPS ALEXANDRIA HARBOR BEFORE SUBMITTING TO BRITISH ORDERS TO PROCEED THROUGH CANAL TO NEUTRAL PORT IN DISOBEDIENCE TO ORDERS VICHY. IF SHIPS SCUTTLED AND ALEXANDRIA FALLS SHIPS COULD BE USED BY ENEMY AS FORTS DUE SINKING SHALLOW WATER. HARWOOD OF OPINION THAT AS LONG SHIPS REMAIN UNDER COMMAND GODFROY THEY WILL NOT BE HANDED OVER INTACT TO ANY FOREIGN POWER AND BELIEVES THAT IF SHIPS ALLOWED PROCEED BIZERTE, UNDER AGREEMENT WITH VICHY THAT THEY BE INTERNED AND IMMOBILIZED WITH FURTHER STIPULATION THAT GODFROY REMAIN IN COMMAND, THAT RESULTING REACTION AMONG ALL FRENCH PEOPLES WOULD MORE THAN REPAY ALLIES IN LOSS CONTROL SHIPS AND FURTHER AID AND CO-OPERATION FRANCE BE FORTH COMING.

HARWOOD ALSO EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE ALARM RECENT

# SEALED SECRET

Make original only. Deliver to communication watch officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS.)

270330

020-Other

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM <b>ALUSLO SUEZ</b>		<b>OPNAV</b>	PRIORITY
RELEASED BY _____			ROUTINE
DATE _____			DEFERRED
TOR CODERROOM _____	FOR ACTION		PRIORITY
DECODED BY _____			ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY _____			DEFERRED

INDICATE BY ASTERISK ADDRESSEES FOR WHICH MAIL DELIVERY IS SATISFACTORY.

**(SHEET TWO OF TWO SHEETS)**

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

ORIGINATOR	FILL IN DATE AND TIME	DATE	TIME	GCT
TEXT				

PRESS QUOTING PRESIDENT TO EFFECT THAT IN EVENT BRITISH ORDERING SHIPS THROUGH CANAL, AND ORDER NOT OBEYED, BRITISH BE JUSTIFIED IN DESTROYING THEM. HARWOOD FEELS THIS STATEMENT HAS DAMAGED RELATIONS WITH GODFROY WITH WHOM HE HAS "GENTLEMANS AGREEMENT".

I AM UNDER IMPRESSION THIS AGREEMENT BETWEEN HARWOOD GODFROY IS TO EFFECT NEITHER WILL TAKE ACTION REGARDING SHIPS WITHOUT FIRST CONSULTING OTHER.

HARWOOD EXPRESSED CONTENTS THIS MESSAGE TO ME IN CONFIDENCE REPEAT IN CONFIDENCE STATING HE DID NOT SEZ NSFJAN.\*

*wish to be quoted*

\* GARBLE. UNDERLINED WORDS BEING SERVICED.

DISTRIBUTION:

**P1A.....ACTION.**

FILE.

**SEALED SECRET**

Make original only. Deliver to communication watch officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS.)

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE	
FROM <b>ALUSLO SUEZ</b>		<b>OPNAV</b>	<b>PPPPPP</b>	
RELEASED BY _____			ROUTINE	
DATE <b>29 JULY 1942</b>	FOR ACTION		DEFERRED	
TOR CODEROOM <b>1430/29</b>			INFORMATION	PRIORITY
DECODED BY <b>WATERS</b>				ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY <b>COPELAND</b>			DEFERRED	

INDICATE BY ASTERISK ADDRESSEES FOR WHICH MAIL DELIVERY IS SATISFACTORY.

**COPELAND**

**CORRECTION TO 270330 NCR 858  
THIS IS 270330 NCR 2157**

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

ORIGINATOR FILL IN DATE AND TIME	DATE	TIME	GCT

TEXT

FOLLOWING IS REPETITION OF LAST PARAGRAPH OF ALUSLO SUEZ  
**270330 (NCR 858):(GARBLE CLEARED BY SERVICE)**

HARWOOD EXPRESSED CONTENTS THIS MESSAGE TO ME IN  
CONFIDENCE REPEAT IN CONFIDENCE STATING HE DID NOT WISH  
TO BE QUOTED.

DISTRIBUTION:  
**PIA.....ACTION**  
**S/S FILE**

**SEALED SECRET**

Make original only. Deliver to communication watch officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS.)

1230 July 14

This message was shown by Lt. Mott to Admiral King; Admiral Cunningham, with Admiral King's approval; Admiral Wilkinson, Director of Naval Intelligence; and Mr. Dunn of the State Department.

Mr. Dunn requested a copy of the despatch for the Secretary of State.



DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM <b>ALUSLO SUEZ</b>	FOR ACTION	<b>OPNAV</b>	<b>PRIORITY</b>
RELEASED BY _____			ROUTINE
DATE _____	INFORMATION		DEFERRED
TOR CODEROOM _____			PRIORITY.
DECODED BY _____			ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY _____			DEFERRED

INDICATE BY ASTERISK ADDRESSEES FOR WHICH MAIL DELIVERY IS SATISFACTORY.

PAGE 2

121535 NCR 2398

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

ORIGINATOR FILL IN DATE AND TIME	DATE	TIME	GCT
TEXT			

TO MATTER WITH FORMAL REPLY UNDOUBTEDLY FORTHCOMING AND HE MUST ABIDE HIS GOVERNMENTS DECISION. APPEARS GODFROY WOULD ORDER SHIPS PROCEED FRENCH PROPER OR FRENCH NORTH AFRICAN PORT WITHOUT RECOURSE VICHY (POSSIBLE HE HAS ALREADY RECEIVED SUCH PERMISSION ~~ON~~ BUT WILL NOT ORDER MOVE THROUGH A CANAL TO PORT OUTSIDE SPHERE CONTROL AXIS. DEFINITELY DOES NOT WISH CAUSE DISPLEASURE AXIS. GODFROY PREPARED SHORT WRITTEN REPLIES EACH MESSAGE WHICH BEING FORWARDED AIRMAIL DETAIL REPORT. THIS AND MY ~~060700~~ ARE ACCURATE SUMMARIES AND STATED REPLIES. POSITION GODFROY DELICATE BUT EYE AM CONVINCED HIS DECISION FIRM WITH OUT ORDERS VICHY OR POSSIBLY DRASTIC FORM PRESSURE.

NO OTHER DISTRIBUTION BY NCR.

ACTION: P1A.....  
FILE.

**SEALED SECRET**

Make original only. Deliver to communication watch officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS.)

ISH

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (SC)

(Paris)  
Vichy

Dated July 11, 1942

Rec'd 11:04 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington,

TRIPLE PRIORITY

1010, July 11, 1 p.m.

I saw Laval this morning and transmitted to him the message in the sense indicated in your 430, July 9, midnight.

Laval stated that he regretfully had to inform me that the resident's proposal was unacceptable and that he was certain that German and Italian consent thereto could never be obtained. He added that to accept our proposal the Germans would insist that an equivalent amount of French naval tonnage should be sent to a French harbor in occupied France. He was not prepared to accept our statement to the effect that the proposed arrangement could not be said to be violative of the armistice agreements and informed me that I could expect from him a written answer not later than Monday, July 13.

While Laval's attitude was not favorable to the proposed

-2- #1010 July 11, 1 p.m. from (Paris) Vichy

proposed arrangement, he remarked with obvious satisfaction that he was glad to see that our Government was willing to suggest that French ships should be sent to a French port.

TUCK

NPL

**SECRET**

(Paris)

Vichy

Dated July 11, 1942

Rec'd 11:04 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY

1010, July 11, 1 p.m.

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TUCK

\* Map Room Note: This should undoubtedly be "president's".

**SECRET**

JULY 9, 1942

FROM : OPNAV  
TO: ~~ALUSNA CAIRO,~~  
ALUSNOB SUEZ.

PRESIDENT WISHES FOLLOWING MESSAGE BE COMMUNICATED AT ONCE BY SENIOR AVAILABLE U. S. NAVAL OFFICER TO ADMIRAL GODFROY. THIS SAME MESSAGE HAS BEEN SENT BY STATE DEPARTMENT TO VICHY FOR TRANSMITTAL TO LAVAL. QUOTE. THE PRESIDENT PROPOSES THAT IF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AGREES THAT THE FRENCH NAVAL UNITS NOW AT ALEXANDRIA BE WITHDRAWN BY WAY OF THE SUEZ CANAL, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, BY AGREEMENT WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, WILL GRANT SAFE PASSAGE TO MARTINIQUE, WHERE THEY WILL NOT BE USED BY THE UNITED STATES OR BRITISH GOVERNMENTS, BUT WHERE THEY WILL BE IMMOBILIZED ON THE SAME BASIS AS THE FRENCH WARSHIPS NOW AT FORT DE FRANCE FOR THE DURATION OF THE WAR, WITH THE ASSURANCE THAT AT THE TERMINATION OF THE WAR THEY WILL BE RESTORED TO THE FRENCH PEOPLE.

THE UNITED STATES AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS AGREE TO PERIODICAL RELIEF AND REPATRIATION OF THE CREWS AFTER THEY HAVE REACHED MARTINIQUE ON THE SAME BASIS WHICH WOULD HAVE OBTAINED HAD THE SHIPS REMAINED AT ALEXANDRIA.

THE PRESIDENT PROPOSES THAT THIS ARRANGEMENT BE ENTERED INTO IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THE FALL OF ALEXANDRIA BECOMES IMMINENT SINCE THESE SHIPS WOULD IN ANY CASE BE IN DANGER OF ENEMY AIR ATTACK THERE.

INASMUCH AS THESE SHIPS HAVE FROM THE BEGINNING OCCUPIED  
A SPECIAL AND ARE NOW IN A PRECARIOUS SITUATION, THEY ARE NOT  
WITHIN THE OPERATIVE PROVISIONS OF THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT AND  
HENCE THE PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT COULD NOT BE SAID TO BE VIOLATIVE  
OF THAT AGREEMENT. UNQUOTE. ACKNOWLEDGE.

OK - 7/9/42

J. L. McCREA

J. L. McCREA

CAPTAIN, USN

JULY 9, 2150.

100319

July 9, 1942.

AMEMBASSY

VICHY (FRANCE)

You should transmit to Laval as soon as possible a message in the following sense:

The President proposes that if the French Government agrees that the French naval units now at Alexandria be withdrawn by way of the Suez Canal, the Government of the United States, by agreement with the British Government, will grant safe passage to Martinique, where they will not be used by the United States or British Governments, but where they will be immobilized on the same basis as the French warships now at Fort de France, for the duration of the war, with the assurance that at the termination of the war they will be restored to the French people.

The United States and British Governments agree to periodical relief and repatriation of the crews after they have reached Martinique on the same basis <sup>would</sup> which/have obtained had the ships remained at Alexandria.

The President proposes that this arrangement be entered into

into irrespective of whether the fall of Alexandria becomes imminent, since these ships would in any case be in danger of enemy attack there.

Inasmuch as these ships have, from the beginning, occupied a special and are now in a precarious situation, they are not within the operative provisions of the armistice agreement, and hence the proposed arrangement could not be said to be violative of that agreement.

(Signed) Hull  
(S)

PA/D JCD:AMW

AS  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (SC)

Beirut

Dated July 7, 1942

Rec'd 3:02 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

241, July 7, 2 p.m.

Am informed by Chief British and French naval  
officers at Beirut that this is to be Allied submarine  
base in Mediterranean. Ten or twelve submarines are  
expected here in near future and about a hundred  
naval officers. Bombings of port are expected.

Haifa is to be destroyer base.

Whatever battleships were in eastern Mediterranean  
have gone through Canal. I got no definite statement  
re cruisers but gathered they have also left these  
parts. English naval forces at Alexandria are in-  
significant but French fleet is still there. They  
appeared to believe that Haifa and Beirut could only  
be of adequate service for short time and that if  
Alexandria fell to enemy and were not soon recovered,  
ships would have to make a break for Gibraltar.

GWYNN

EJH

DM  
This telegram must be  
paraphrased before being  
communicated to anyone  
other than a Governmental  
agency. (BR)

(Paris)  
(Vichy)

Dated July 7, 1942

Rec'd 8:48 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY

RUSH

986, July 7, 8 p.m.

Laval sent for me this afternoon at five o'clock  
and in the presence of Rochat delivered to me a note  
which he requested that I transmit to my Government.

The following is a close translation of this  
communication:

"The French Government had been apprised of  
the American aide memoire of July 3 concerning the  
French naval squadron at Alexandria.

The proposals submitted were so unacceptable  
that it was justified in thinking as was stated to  
the Charge d'Affaires of the United States on July  
3 that the Federal Government must have drawn up  
this document before learning of the decision taken  
by the German and Italian Governments to abide by

the provisions

-2- #986, July 7, 8 p.m. from Paris, Vichy.

the provisions of the Armistice Convention and not to put forward any claim with regard to the French fleet at Alexandria. This decision has been made known to the Federal Government of July 2.

In an oral declaration the Charge d'Affaires of the United States informed the French Government on July 5 that the Federal Government maintained its note in the terms in which it had been presented.

After this confirmation the French Government is in a position to appreciate the full extent of the claims of the Federal Government. It rejects them formally as being contrary to the honor and interests of France. The Federal Government is aware that the French Government has the legitimate preoccupation not only of maintaining the French flag on the vessels of its squadron at Alexandria, all vessels of its navy, but also of insuring itself its safety. The Federal Government also knows that contrary to the allegations so often spread in America the French Government has never delivered nor attempted to deliver any one of its warships to foreign powers.

The Federal Government which was informed of the decision taken by the German and Italian Governments in application of the armistice conventions cannot

-3- #986, July 7, 8 p.m. from Paris, Vichy.

cannot contend that our ships at Alexandria are in danger of 'falling into the hands of German or Italian military or naval forces'. The correction as well as the precision of the German and Italian replies should not permit the Federal Government to adopt such an attitude which is in your estimate vis a vis the French Government.

If the Federal Government is as it claims desirous of safeguarding the interests of the French navy it would not have refused but on the contrary would have facilitated the departure of our vessels from Alexandria towards a French port, the Federal Government in asking that our warships be directed toward a 'secure' American port of asylum advances a claim that is clearly incompatible with French obligations under the Armistice conventions.

The Federal Government on the other hand in formulating such a demand casts a slur on the dignity of France. The French Government cannot allow its word to be doubted at a time when it renews its resolution to maintain all its war vessels under the French flag. The Federal Government fails to appreciate

-4- #986, July 7, 8 p.m. from Paris, Vichy.

appreciate the traditions of honor of the French Navy which alone intends to ensure the safeguard of the vessels which the nation has entrusted to its care.

The French Government takes note that the American Government declares as justifiable the destruction of French vessels at Alexandria, we refuse to obey the orders of the British forces.

The French Government wishes once again to stress the extreme gravity of the consequence which might result from any act of violence occurring at Alexandria against the French naval forces.

The French Government notes with regret that President Roosevelt does not hesitate to associate himself in advance with the heavy responsibilities of those who in contempt of military honor contemplate a criminal action against a disarmed squadron.

Another outrage, following that of Mersel Kebir, should on the contrary weigh heavily on the conscience of the American people.

France has a right to be respected."

For the sake of accuracy I wish to point out that when I delivered the gist of the Department's 413

of July

-5- #986, July 7, 8 p.m. from Paris, Vichy.

of July 4, 3 p.m. to Logarde (Embassy's 973, July 5, 4 p.m.) I gave him an exact verbal translation of its second paragraph. I did not (repeat not) say that "the Federal Government maintained its note in the terms in which it had been presented."

TUCK

CSB

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

ORIGINATOR	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM <b>ALUSLO SUEZ</b>		<b>OPNAV</b>	<b>PPPPPPPP</b>
RELEASED BY			ROUTINE
DATE <b>4 JULY 1942</b>			DEFERRED
TOR CODEROOM <b>2255/4</b>			PRIORITY
DECODED BY <b>FERMIER</b>			ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY <b>GERMAN</b>			DEFERRED

INDICATE BY ASTERISK ADDRESSEES FOR WHICH MAIL DELIVERY IS SATISFACTORY.

**GARTH**

**041420 NCR 6867**

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

ORIGINATOR	DATE	TIME	GCT
TEXT			

**ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OPNAV 031846 IMMEDIATELY  
COMPLYING DELIVER PERSONALLY GODFROY.**

**ENEMY PLANES OVER SUEZ AND CANAL EARLY MORNING  
THIRD FOURTH LAYING MINES. CANAL PRESENTLY BLOCKED. INDICATIONS  
MINING WILL CONTINUE.**

**REPORTS INDICATE BRITISH POSITION RE BATTLE EASIER  
BUT STILL EXTREMELY SERIOUS.**

**THIS ONLY CODE I NOW HOLD. WILKINSON.**

**DISTRIBUTION:**

**REC COPY: P1A.....COMINCH(4).....**

**SHO COPY: 10.....13(TO INFORM STATE DEPT).....BADO(ADM.  
CUNNINGHAM)PERSONALLY.....**

**SEALED SECRET**

**041420 NCR 6867**

Make original only. Deliver to communication watch officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS.)

DRAFTER		EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM	OPNAV	FOR ACTION	ALUSNA CAIRO ALUSNOB SUEZ	PPPPPPPP
RELEASED BY	T.S. WILKINSON			ROUTINE
DATE	3 JULY 1942.	INFORMATION		DEFERRED
TOR CODEROOM	1846/3.			PRIORITY
DECODED BY	GERMAN			ROUTINE
PARAPHRASED BY	GERMAN			DEFERRED

INDICATE BY ASTERISK ADDRESSEES FOR WHICH MAIL DELIVERY IS SATISFACTORY.

**BERTHOLD**

**031846 NCR 4128**

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

ORIGINATOR FILL IN DATE AND TIME	DATE	TIME	GCT

TEXT PRESIDENT DESIRES FOLLOWING BE COMMUNICATED AT ONCE BY SENIOR AVAILABLE U S NAVAL OFFICER TO ADMIRAL GODFREY:

"NOTIFY ADMIRAL GODFREY THAT THE U S GOVERNMENT HAS FORMALLY ADVISED LAVAL THAT THE UNITED STATES IS PREPARED TO OFFER ASYLUM FOR FRENCH SHIPS NOW IN ALEXANDRIA. SHIPS TO SAIL VIA SUEZ AND CAN BE MAINTAINED IN NEUTRAL PORTS SUCH AS URAGUAY IF THAT IS DESIRED. UNITED STATES GUARANTEES TO RETURN SHIPS TO FRANCE AFTER THE WAR. THIS OFFER IS PREDICATED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT SHIPS WOULD OTHERWISE FALL UNDER GERMAN CONTROL. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL BRITISH PERMIT SHIPS TO BE RETURNED TO FRENCH PORTS. ADVISE GODFREY FURTHER THAT PRESIDENT IS PREPARED TO OFFER ASYLUM AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE BRITISH IRRESPECTIVE OF OUTCOME OF PRESENT BATTLE IN EGYPT. NOTIFY BRITISH OF YOUR ACTION AND ADVISE NAVY DEPARTMENT AT ONCE".

ACKNOWLEDGE.

DISTRIBUTION:

REC COPY: P1A....COMINCH....

SHO COPY: 10....13(TO INFORM STATE DEPT)....BAD(ADM.CUNNINGHAM) PERSONALLY....

**SEALED SECRET**

Make original only. Deliver to communication watch officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS.)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

July 4, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

In view of the telegram of July 3, 6 p.m., copy of which is hereto attached, I would like to know whether you wish to send this telegram in the form, as drafted, or with any modifications you wish to make.

(Penciled)

CH

OK

FDR

July 4, 1942

AMERICAN EMBASSY

VICHY (FRANCE).

Your 967, July 3, 6 p.m.

It is true that our 411, July 3, 1 a.m. was sent before receiving your 962 of July 2, 7 p.m.

Department's 411 of July 3, 1 a.m. transmits the French proposal as he wishes it to be laid before the French Gov

ACTION TAKEN IN MAP ROOM:

Received from State Department at 1215, EWT, July 4, 1942; telephoned to Captain McCrea immediately; and then delivered to Miss Tully as directed by Captain McCrea. Returned by Miss Tully to Map Room at 1430 with President's "O.K." Delivered to Mr. James Dunn personally in the Map Room at 1500. Mr. Dunn stated that he would put it on the wires immediately.

Mr. Terry, in Captain McCrea's Office, notified of above action at 1510.

CHESTER HAMMOND  
Major, J.A.G.D.

RCC

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (SC)

Vichy

Dated July 4, 1942

Rec'd 12:30 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

TRIPLE PRIORITY.

RUSH.

971, July 4, 11 a.m.

My 967 July 3, 6 p.m.

I happened to meet Rochat late yesterday evening. He informed me that according to a telegram received yesterday afternoon from Admiral Godefroyat, Alexandria, the British had made no (repeat no) demands of any kind in connection with the French squadron there. Rochat wished me to know this chiefly because of unsubstantiated reports which were afloat in Vichy yesterday to the effect that the British intended to scuttle the French fleet in Alexandria.

Rochat added that after our conversation with Laval yesterday afternoon Admiral Duphan had expressed to him his conviction that if the French Government were to comply with the suggestion and offer of the United States Government he was certain that the German Government would demand the cession of an equal amount of tonnage of French war vessels now lying in French ports.

WSE

TUCK

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

This cable was sent in confidential Code.  
It should be carefully paraphrased before  
being communicated to anyone.

(Paris)  
Vichy

Dated July 3, 1942

Rec'd 4:45 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

967 July 3, 6 p.m.

I saw Laval this afternoon at four o'clock and delivered the message contained in your 411 July 3, 1 a.m. Rochat was present and Admiral Auphan was hurriedly summoned.

Laval's immediate reaction was one of extreme annoyance. He characterized our suggestion as "injurious and insulting" and remarked that the President must have a very curious conception of French honor. He then asked me whether this message constituted a reply to his two communications to me of July 1 (Embassy's 956 July 1, 7 p.m.) and of July 2 (Embassy's 962, July 2, 7 p.m.). I replied that the message from my Government made a reference only to the communication which he had made to me on July 1. He requested me to forward a reply to my Government of which the following is a close translation.

"Mr. Tuck

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

This cable was sent in Confidential Code.  
It should be carefully paraphrased before  
being communicated to anyone.

-2-

"Mr. Tuck delivered today at four o'clock to the Chief of the Government an American note. This note is drawn up in terms so unacceptable that the French Government is forced to believe that it does not constitute an answer to the aide-memoire which was delivered yesterday--July 2--to the American Charge d'Affaires.

"Before delivering a suitable reply to this note the Chief of the French Government has asked Mr. Tuck to question his Government on this point."

Laval considered that our suggestion and offer to the French Government was beyond all reason. Why he asked was our Government averse to the French fleet in Alexandria proceeding to a French port? France had originally with difficulty obtained German agreement to retain these ships in Alexandria and we were now suggesting that the French Government should take action contrary to the Armistice Convention, while at the same time we continuously insisted upon the strict observance of the terms of that convention.

I said that if I had understood him and Admiral Auphan correctly, their main preoccupation was to preserve these ships for the French Navy and that the  
proposal

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**THE SECRETARY**

This cable was sent in confidential Code.  
It should be carefully paraphrased before  
being communicated to anyone.

-3-

proposal made by our President did in effect guarantee their return to France at the end of the war.

Laval stated that the French Government could under no circumstance accept our suggestion and that he hoped that when our Government had had time to review the message which he had delivered to me on July 2 and which embodied the communications received from the Armistice Commissions at Wiesbaden and Turin, it would be prepared to reconsider its position. It was for this reason that he would limit himself for the time being to the reply above quoted.

TUCK

July 3, 1942

AMERICAN EMBASSY,

VICHY.

411

TRIPLE PRIORITY.

Your 956, July 1, 7 p.m.

You should immediately transmit the following message to Laval:

The President is, of course, deeply concerned that the French men of war now at Alexandria should under no circumstances fall into the hands of the German or Italian military or naval forces. The President is equally deeply interested in the restoration of these ships to France at the end of the war. He has, therefore, so informed the British Government and now makes the following suggestion and offer to the French Government.

The President proposes that the French ships at Alexandria be placed in the protective custody of the United States which is to include passage of the French ships through the Suez Canal and thence to a secure and

*Read to President at 12<sup>55</sup> 3 July*

remote port of asylum for the duration of the war in a port of the United States or other American republic to be mutually agreed upon with the guarantee of the return of the French ships to France at the end of the war.

The President feels that this proposal is in the interest of France. However, if this offer on behalf of the United States is not accepted by the French Government, the British, knowing of this offer, would of course be properly and wholly justified in ordering the French ships through the Suez Canal, and if the order were not obeyed would be wholly justified in destroying the ships to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy.

The President trusts that this reasonable proposal can be accepted for the honor of France.

Hull

PA/D:JCD:DFB:SS

~~Draft~~ 7-3-42

TO: Rockwell (or whomever Captain McCrea suggests)  
FROM: Chief of Naval Operations (if Captain McCrea so determines)

Please notify Admiral Godfrey at once that the U. S. Government has formally advised Laval that the United States is prepared to offer asylum for French ships now in Alexandria. Ships to sail via Suez and can be maintained in neutral ports such as Uruguay if that is desired. United States guarantees to return ships to France after the war. This offer is predicated on the assumption that ships would otherwise fall under German control. Under no circumstances will British permit ships to be returned to French ports. Advise Godfrey further that President is prepared to offer asylum after consultation with the British irrespective of outcome of present battle in Egypt. Notify British of your action and advise Department at once.

(Instructions from Mr. Hopkins: The President wants copy of this as soon as Navy gets ~~it~~ to them; to Admiral Cunningham in Washington, and to State Department. Notify both of them that the message has been sent and show them the message.

*File Copy*

JW  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (SC)

Vichy

Dated 2, 1942

Rec'd 12:40 a.m., 3rd

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

TRIPLE PRIORITY.

RUSH

962, July 2, 7 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

Laval sent for me this afternoon at 4 o'clock.

On my arrival I found Admiral Auphan, Minister of Marine  
and Rochat present. Laval presented me with what he  
described as an aide memoire, the contents of which  
he requested me to bring urgently to the attention of  
my Government. The following is a careful translation  
of this communication:

"The evolution of the military situation created  
by the rapid advance of Rommel's army had naturally  
drawn the attention of the French Government to the fate  
of our squadron which lies at Alexandria.

On June 26 Admiral Auphan addressed to Admiral  
Godefroy a telegram of instructions. In case the  
British were to evacuate Alexandria the latter  
(godefroy) should attempt to reach a French port.

If that

-2- #962, July 2, 7 p.m. (SECTION ONE) from Vichy

If that were to prove impossible, he was to remain on at Alexandria under the French flag and refuse to follow the British in their retreat. He was reminded that our ships were not to fall into foreign hands".

This telegram of instructions was on the following day - June 27 - communicated to the Armistice Commissions at Wiesbaden and at Turin.

The French Government received today July 2 the two following communications from Wiesbaden and from Turin:

TUCK

REP

MJF

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (SU)

Vichy

Dated July 2, 1942

Rec'd 2:37 a.m., 3rd

Secretary of State,

Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY

RUSH

962, July 2, 7 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

(one) the Supreme German Command recognizes that the instructions given to the French Maritime forces at Alexandria are in conformity with the Armistice Convention. The Supreme German Command gives at the same time the assurance that it intends to act in conformity with article eight of this Convention with regard to all French naval vessels which might be found in Alexandria as a result of having explicitly carried out the instructions given by the French Admiralty.

(two) the Italian Government has decided to adhere purely and simply to the Armistice Convention and advances no pretension as regards the French Naval vessels no matter under what conditions they may be found in Alexandria'.

The Chief of the French Government considers it his  
duty

-2- #962, July 2, 7 p.m. (SECTION TWO) from Vichy

duty to call these facts to the attention of the Federal Government. He requests to take cognizance of this communication which is a sequel to the communication which the Federal Government received yesterday from the French Government.

TUCK

REP

MJF

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (SC)

Vichy

Dated July 2, 1942

Rec'd 12:26 a.m., 3rd

Secretary of State,

Washington

TRIPLE PRIORITY

RUSH

962, July 2, 7 p.m. (SECTION THREE)

Any act of violence on the part of the British in view of these above indications might result in consequences the extreme gravity of which could not be overlooked by the Federal Government".

In handing me this communication Laval said that he considered it his duty to keep our Government informed frankly and openly as regards the stand which the French Government intended to adopt in connection with its naval squadron at Alexandria. He assumed that the Department of State would communicate this information to the British Government.

(END OF MESSAGE)

TUCK

REP

SECRET

No. 962

FROM: VICHY, FRANCE

July 2, 1942 7:00 P.M.

I saw Laval this afternoon at four o'clock. At his request, Admiral Auphan, Minister of Marine, was present. I was handed a memorandum which I was requested urgently to bring to the attention of my government. A careful translation follows:

"The evolution of the military situation created by the rapid advance of Rommel's army had naturally drawn the attention of the French Government to the fate of our squadron which lay at Alexandria.

"On June 26th, Admiral Auphan addressed to Admiral Godfroy a telegram of instructions. In case the British were to evacuate Alexandria, the latter (Godfroy) should attempt to reach a French port. If that were to prove impossible, he was to remain on at Alexandria under the French flag and refuse to follow the British in their retreat. He was reminded that our ships were not to fall into foreign hands.

"On June 27th, the following day, this telegram was communicated to the Armistice Commission at Wiesbaden and at Turin.

"The French Government received today, July 2nd, the two following communications from Wiesbaden and from Turin:

'(1) The Supreme German Command recognizes that the instructions given to the French maritime forces at Alexandria are in conformity with the Armistice Convention. The Supreme German Command gives at the same time the assurance that it intends to act in conformity with Article 8 of this Convention with regard to all French naval vessels which might be found in Alexandria as a result of having explicitly carried out the instructions given by the French Admiralty.

'(2) The Italian Government has decided to adhere simply and purely to the Armistice Convention and advances no pretension as regards the French naval vessels no matter under what conditions they may be found in Alexandria.'

"The Chief of the French Government considers it his duty to call these facts to the attention of the American Government. He requests that cognizance will be taken of this communication which follows the communication which the United States Government received yesterday from the French Government.

SECRET

- 2 -

"Any act of violence on the part of the British in view of these above indications might result in consequences the extreme gravity of which could not be overlooked by the Federal Government."

In handing me this communication Laval said that he considered it his duty to keep our Government openly and frankly informed as regards the position taken by the French government in connection with its naval squadron at Alexandria. It was his assumption that this information would be communicated by the Department of State to the British Government.

TUCK

Note: Mr. Dunn stated that the above despatch had been given to the British Embassy in Washington on the morning of July 3rd.

7/3/42

Read to Mr. Hopkins over telephone  
at 1500.

P.

JG  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (SC)

(Paris)  
Vichy

Dated July 1, 1942

Rec'd 11:30 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

TRIPLE PRIORITY  
RUSH

956, July 1, 7 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

Acting on my own initiative I called on Admiral Auphan, Minister of Marine this morning. I said what the news regarding Rommel's advance in Egypt appeared to be increasingly serious and that the latest reports indicated that the spearhead of the Afrika Korps had reached El Daba which is very near to Alexandria. I said that were Rommel to succeed in occupying the Nile Valley and Alexandria the situation with regard to the French Naval squadron in that port would become an extremely delicate one. I asked him whether he would give me the benefit of his reaction to the situation.

Admiral Auphan replied that the position of the French fleet in Alexandria was indeed so critical that it was giving his government the most serious preoccupation. He had only one hope

and that was to

-2- 956, July 1, 7 p.m.(SECTION ONE) from (Paris) Vichy and that was to save these vessels for the French fleet and he greatly feared that the British might resort "to another Mers-el-Kebir". I asked him whether thought had been given to the possibility of sending these vessels through the Suez Canal into the Indian Ocean. He replied that this would be impossible as it would convey to the Germans "an appearance of dissidence." He reminded me that there had been great difficulty with the Germans in the past in connection with the presence of these ships in Alexandria as the terms of the armistice required that French naval vessels should remain in French ports. Any attempt to send them to safety through the Red Sea would certainly be interpreted by the Germans as a move towards dissidence and would create serious difficulties for the French Government. I said that I hoped he would understand that my visit was of an unofficial character and that I had not come on behalf of my government. I thought however, that it would be of interest to the Department of State to be informed of his views. He said that before he could authorize me to acquaint my government of his reaction he felt it necessary to mention the matter to Laval. He would then let me know whether I was at liberty to inform my government.

Laval sent

-3- 956, July 1, 7 p.m. (SECTION ONE) from (Paris) Vichy

Laval sent for me this afternoon at 4 o'clock. I found Admiral Auphan and Rochat present. Laval said that Admiral Auphan had acquainted him of my visit and that while he understood perfectly that I had not been sent by my government he was nevertheless glad of the opportunity to acquaint me of his government's official position in connection with the French Fleet at Alexandria. He then dictated to Rochat in my presence a statement of which the following is a careful translation:"

TUCK

KLP

ELP

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (SC)

(Paris)  
Vichy

Dated July 1, 1942,

Rec'd 10:32 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY

RUSH

956, July 1, 7 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

"The French Government desires by all means possible to save the French squadron which is now at Alexandria.

If the British forces should have to evacuate Alexandria the French Government will not permit that our ships should be molested by these forces before their departure. In such an eventuality they would defend themselves by all the means at their disposal. Admiral Godefroy, commander of the squadron has received order to refuse to follow the British in their retreat.

If a new attempt such as that of Mus-el-kebir were to occur the consequences would be serious.

The French Government again reaffirms that all French warships can only remain French which is furthermore in conformity with the armistice conventions.

In present

-2-#956, July 1, 7 p.m. (SECTION TWO) from (Paris) Vichy.

In present circumstances the French Government would like to see (envisage rait volontiers) its ships in a position to proceed freely to the nearest French port.

Laval then told me the Germans had brought up this matter some time ago and that precisely the same answer had been given to them. He said that he preferred that no publicity should be given to my visit or to the above statement. He nevertheless welcomed the opportunity to acquaint the United States Government's stand with regard to the fleet in Alexandria and he hoped that it might be possible in the near future to receive an expression of our reaction.

(END OF MESSAGE).

TUCK

KLP