

NEUTRALITY

C.F.

1561

June 29, 1937

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR CORDELL HULL

For many reasons I think that if Mussolini or the Italian Government or Hitler or the German Government have made or make any official admissions or statements that their Government armed forces are actually taking part in the fighting in Spain on the side of Franco, or are engaging in the Spanish war, then in such case we shall have to act under the Neutrality Act.

I am thinking about precedents and the future. It has been our contention that war exists if the Government armed forces of any nation under the territory of another nation are engaged in fighting.

I do not think we can compound a ridiculous situation if after the fight is established, Great Britain and France continue to assert solemnly that they "have no proof" of Italian or German participation in the Spanish War.

Don't you think we should cable Phillips and Dodd to ask for categorical answers? According to some of the newspapers, Mussolini has personally directed participation by the regular Italian armed forces-- and Hitler has also made the same kind of statement.

Will you check all this and telephone me at Hyde Park Thursday or Friday?

F. D. R.

FDR:MB