

Belgium 11/7/89 - 5/10/90

LC
PM

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HSM
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased
before being communi-
cated to anyone. (Br.)

Brussels

FROM Dated November 7, 1939
Rec'd 2:48 p. m.

Shaw to MTO
204
Secretary of State,
Washington.



167, November 7, 5 p. m.

I have been reliably informed that the German Ambassador asked Foreign Minister Spaak to state what the Belgian attitude would be if Germany should find it necessary to invade the Netherlands in order to protect Dutch neutrality from violation by British planes. The Foreign Minister replied that Belgium reserved its decision until the occurrence of such an event. A similar answer is said to have been given to the British Ambassador who inquired what Belgium's attitude would be in case of a German attack on Holland.

Foreign Ministry is generally believed to favor no action by Belgium. Influential military circles, however, consider that strategical reasons would compel Belgium to intervene in order to protect Antwerp and the River Schelt.

KLP

DAVIE NOV 13 1939

FILED

74000H EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 944

GMR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JI
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to any one. (C)

Brussels

FROM Dated November 7, 1939

Rec'd 6:44 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

170, November 7, 10 p.m.

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE

From an unofficial source which heretofore I
have found invariably accurate and reliable I am
informed that what precipitated the King's hurried
trip to Holland was information which he and his
Government had received yesterday, Monday, that
Germany was going to invade Holland on Thursday
and that while there was scant hope that the joint
efforts of the two rulers to obtain peace would
be effective they nevertheless felt it impera-
tive to make some effort.

DAVIES

EMB:NPL

NOV 13 1939

FILED

*note
740 0011 EWA 39*

*Received excerpts telephone
to President by Secretary
at 11:15 p.m. 11/7/39; copy
to make name at 9:48 a.m.
1939
FILED*

7706019 EUROPEAN WAR 1939/ 23

6/40

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Handwritten notes:
6
PTC
PA/

1939 NOV 27 PM 2 15

Brussels, November 8, 1939.

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

No. 511

Subject: Conference with King Leopold III at the
Palace at Laeken on November 8, 1939.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
NOV 28 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

~~SECRET~~ CONFIDENTIAL

Confidential.

Handwritten: 740.00119EW

Rating	Distribution Instructions
Grade for	ONI MID

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

DEC 11 1939

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
DEC 2 - 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Sir:

Supplementing my cables of November 7 (Nos. 166, 1 p.m.;
167, 5 p.m.; 168, 6 p.m.; 169, 9 p.m.; and 170, 10 p.m.) with
reference to the hurried trip of His Majesty King Leopold III
to Holland on Monday night, November 6, and the offer of medi-
ation by the King of the Belgians and the Queen of Holland to
Germany, France and England, I beg leave to advise that I had
an extended conference with King Leopold today at 2:30 at the
Laeken Palace, with the understanding that the information which
he gave me was to be employed solely for the use of the Presi-
dent and the Secretary of State and the Government of the United

740.0019 EUROPEAN WAR 1939/ 172

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE
DEC 9 - 1939
A.M./C
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEC 15 1939
RETURNED

States. He outlined to me very frankly what has occurred, as follows:

That it was quite clear that the belligerents on both sides were reluctant to precipitate the full violence of unrestricted war;

That one of the difficulties of the situation was that there were no contacts of approach as between the belligerents with a view to securing a possible meeting of minds, looking to a composition of the matters in difference;

That it would be inconceivable to him that Germany would wish to pursue the war if peace were possible, because the situation in Eastern Europe had been "rectified" from the German viewpoint;

That Germany has brought great pressure to bear upon the smaller neutral countries to emphasize what was termed their obligation to furnish such contacts of approach and try to establish some means of composing differences between the belligerents, as otherwise they would not escape, themselves, the horror of possibly unlimited warfare;

That Hitler recently sent for the dean of the Military Attachés in Berlin, a Swede, and had told him specifically that the neutrals would have to do something about this or war in its most horrible form would result;

That for some days last past, the German press had assumed a most violent attitude toward the neutral countries, particularly Holland and Belgium, in connection with their alleged inability to protect their sovereignty and neutrality;

That many rumors had reached the Government of Holland and the Government of Belgium of the massing of German shock troops on their borders and the preparation of pontoon bridges

and the like - all pointing to a possible imminent invasion of Holland and possibly Belgium;

That on Sunday and Monday the Queen of Holland became seriously alarmed and took the matter up with him, with the result:

That he motored over to see Queen Wilhelmina on Monday night and took with him not only the Foreign Minister, Mr. Spaak, but also one of his Generals, Major General Van Overstraeten (his personal military aide and his liaison officer with the General Staff). The joint proffer of mediation by the two rulers sent to the three belligerents was the result of their conference;

That the two Sovereigns were hopeful that this offer might possibly lead to a discussion of peace terms, which at least would serve to delay the outbreak of ultimately disastrous warfare;

That, prompted possibly by the presence of one of King Leopold's Generals with him in Holland, the German press had attacked both Holland and Belgium very violently;

That yesterday a protest was filed by the Belgian Foreign Office against these press attacks, with the result that Belgium was assured that they would stop.

.

His Majesty went on to say that he could not conceive how the German High Command could possibly rationally decide upon a violent offensive at this time. He pointed out that mechanized and motorized warfare was peculiarly dependent upon weather conditions and that any big offensive required long hours of daylight, which does not prevail here at this time of year. Moreover, there was very little that the Germans could gain at best.

Even . . .

Even though successful, he said, the Germans could only push forward their lines into Belgium, to be stopped there or certainly at the Maginot Line in France, and be then confronted with another stalemate. This would be very costly in every respect and particularly because it would completely alienate world public opinion. For these reasons he could not believe that it would be possible for the German High Command to embark upon such a plan.

He gave the impression to me that in spite of this, he was impressed by the attitude and fears of Holland, particularly because the decision resided within the mind of one man - Hitler - the quality of whose judgment one could not rely upon. In that connection he stated that he had been recently informed by certain Germans within the past three weeks that there was some question as to whether the German High Command would go along with Hitler unless its judgment was in accordance with the wisdom of his plan.

His Majesty stressed the advantage which would accrue to the democracies to explore the possibilities of securing peace through the mediators, because, he said, at least it would consume time, even though it did not result in an agreement. It was the King's opinion that Hitler definitely desires peace now.

King Leopold left here for Holland at eight o'clock Monday night by motor, dressed in the uniform of the Commander-in-Chief of the Belgian Army. At the palace in The Hague he conferred with the Queen until the early hours of the morning. The discussions were resumed the following day.

The offer of mediation by the Sovereigns was prompted by a mixture of motives: one, of possibly affording a means of

averting a terrible, intense war; and the other, to impress Germany with the fact that the neutrals were attempting to do their share to preserve peace, in the hope of at least stalling off the fateful hour of invasion.

I asked His Majesty whether it were possible that Belgium could remain neutral in the event of an invasion of Holland. To this he did not reply directly. He stated, however, that perhaps the Germans would consider his trip into Holland, accompanied by his confidential military aide, as indicative of a very close relationship between the two countries, in which they would find themselves standing together.

As was stated in my cable No. 172 of November 8, 4 p.m., the King and his Government are taking no chances but are making every preparation to be in readiness, should the worst happen. The tension here is everywhere apparent.

Respectfully yours,



Joseph E. Davies

qn.

File No. 710

JED:AFH

4 Carbon copies
Received 710

Read to Maj. Butts, MUD

PM
SC

EU

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

PAP

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

BRUSSELS

FROM Dated November 9, 1939
Rec'd 8:18 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

176, November 9, 8 p.m.



Responsible official of the Foreign Office advises me today that the German Government had addressed no communication to his Government demanding concessions of a territorial or military nature under threat of invasion and he believes that the same situation exists with respect to the Netherlands. He knows however that everything is prepared for a sudden attack on Belgium or the Netherlands and that this might occur in two or three days although bad weather conditions might cause a temporary postponement. The latter information is confirmed by the Canadian Minister who is also accredited to Holland. He is confident that Hitler has definitely decided upon this action.

My Foreign Office informant added that in the event of a German invasion the Government's plans contemplate a withdrawal to the west probably Ostend. No decision, however, has as yet been taken by the Government to abandon the capital in order to spare it from bombardment. I have been promised that in the event of a decision to evacuate

the

740.001 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 966

GM/R

REC'D

NOV 11 1939

155-267

PAP -2- 176, November 9, 8 p.m. from Brussels

the capital I shall be promptly notified. Some of the Foreign Office archives are now being prepared for evacuation.

DAVIES

ROW:CFW

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Eu. Hooghat

ESH
his telegram must be
closely paraphrased
before being communicated
to anyone. (Br.)

Brussels
FROM Dated November 10, 1939
Rec'd 10:10 p. m.

*26
2012
11-13-39*

Secretary of State,
Washington.

*Send to President
on
Nov 11
1:25 p.m.
JH*

1939
NOTED

178. November 10, 2 p. m.

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

Situation here quiet with pessimism in official
quarters increasing. With additional men called to the
colors there are now reported to be over 600,000 under
arms. Today also additional service motor transport was
requisitioned. Persistent additional flights today of
German aircraft over Belgian territory, particularly in
the neighborhood of Mons and Tournai in southern Belgium
continue to indicate flagrant deliberate disregard of
Belgian neutrality by the German forces. Here as in
Holland there are official protestations of confidence
that there will be no German invasion which are belied
by actual precautions hurriedly being taken. It is regarded
as significant here that the Dutch Government decided today
to flood main defenses, is hurrying construction of addi-
tional barriers on motor highways leading into Amsterdam
and has ordered the extinguishment of all lighthouses and
lightships

740.0011 EW

740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 384

FILED

NOV 14 1939

GMR

U

hsm -2- No. 178, November 10, 2 p. m., from Brussels

lightships on the Holland coasts tonight; also that all police and military leaves have been cancelled by the Dutch. Reports of the massing of German troops on the Dutch and Belgian borders continue to be received today with reports of heavy shipments of petrol to that sector and also the moving up of large cavalry reinforcements alleged to be more effective against water defense than mechanized attack.

751.55
755.62

Despite persistent powerful pressure of French and British to procure staff conversations with Belgian high command for defense cooperation in the event of German invasion the King and his Government have firmly held to their announced policy of strict neutrality on the ground that to do otherwise would be to violate their honorable commitments and afford Germany excuse for attack.

DAVIES

DDM

80

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EMB

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

Brussels

FROM Dated November 13, 1939

Rec'd 10:42 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sent to the President by 9:45, Nov. 14



184, November 13, 11 p. m.

ULTRA CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF STATE

In connection with my visit to the King at the Palace this afternoon incident to the delivery of President's message contained in the Department's No. 77 received November 13, I respectfully report the following. At the conclusion of the discussion with reference to the President's message quite on his own initiative and to my surprise, the King discussed freely the international situation. He gave it as his opinion that there would be no German offensive against Holland and Belgium now for the following reasons:

(One) There were serious differences of opinion in Germany between the politicians of the Party who were eager for war and the German High Command who were strongly opposed. (Two) By reason of air reconnaissances and other information that had been obtained both the military group and Hitler had become much impressed with the extent of the Belgian defenses which have been developed most formidably including extensive inundations

200-201-12

362-87

7400011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 993

Confidential File GMR

EMB page 2 - No. 184, November 13, 11 p. m. from Brussels

inundations from the Albert Canal Road, obstructions, trenches, pillboxes, and the like. (Three) The lateness of the season combined with these conditions would make the enterprise most hazardous.

In addition thereto he stated that in his opinion the purpose of the German concentration of troops had been to throw fear into Holland and Belgium to make them stand up against the British blockade in connection with the economic front. Delay in his opinion worked altogether to the advantage of the Allies.

700-119-511
With reference to the offer of "good offices" he stated that the only communication from the German Government thus far was that Hitler would study most carefully the proposal of the rulers of Holland and Belgium but that this situation was aided by "personal contacts" which he did not amplify but which I assumed referred to messages relative to congratulations over Hitler's escape at Munich.

He thought that the concluding paragraph of King George's reply was a hopeful indication. He stated that his Government was pursuing the matter in collaboration with the Dutch Government. In that connection the Foreign Office today stated to Counselor Wilson that the two governments were limiting their efforts solely to "good offices" namely the transmission of viewpoints or messages and not mediation in the sense of trying to adjust

EMB page 3.- No. 184, November 13, 11 p. m. from Brussels

to adjust differences. The King further stated that should I desire to communicate his views to the President and the Secretary of State, I should ask that the subject matter thereof should be held in strictest of confidence and confined to the President and the Secretary of State and their immediate assistants.

In view of this limitation I have not forwarded this cable to The Hague pursuant to cable instruction No. 75, November 11, 7 p. m. and shall not do so unless specifically advised by the Department.

DAVIES

EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED



Shannon to MID
SDA

FROM

Brussels

Dated November 18, 1939

Rec'd 9:55 a. m.

HSM
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased
before being communi-
cated to anyone. (Br.)

Secretary of State,
Washington.

192, November 18, 2 p. m.

Optimism that crisis has passed is today as pre-
valent here as was the extreme tension of last week.
It is reported that Belgian army is again granting
leaves of absence.

DAVIES

HTM
CSB

NOV 20 1939

FILED

7406011 FTD OCT 11 1939 / 1052

CMR

Thomson to MID

PM
10

ED

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HSM
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased
before being communi-
cated to anyone. (C).

FROM Brussels
Dated November 21, 1939
Rec'd 2:55 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
NOV 22 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

197, November 21, 6 p. m.

In a visit with the King today he stated that conditions continued calmer and that the danger of invasion seemed postponed at least for the present. He confirmed reports of activities of the Franco and Italian Governments in connection with representations to the German Foreign Office during the late crisis. He is much worried for the present and gravely concerned for the future because of the assumed coercion that is now being employed or may later be projected (in any future composition of peace) against small countries whose ability to work and to live or even to exist depends upon their right to import raw materials and food. As stated in previous cables, Belgium is having a hard time to meet the exactions of both sides arising out of the blockade.

DAVIES

CSB

740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 1063

GMR

NOV 22 1939
RECEIVED

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

EO
DITB
M/10

1939 DEC 14 PM 1 39

Brussels, November 22, 1939.

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

No. 527

Subject: Attitude of Belgium in case of
a German Invasion of Holland.

AGENCY OF SPECIAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
DEC 14 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
DEC 15 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

740.0011EW

Classification Instructions
for
ONI
MID

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE
DEC 20 1939
Siri

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

With reference to the above-entitled matter, I beg leave
to report as follows:

Following the crisis of the week ending November 13th,
the optimistic reaction in public opinion, as set forth in
cables heretofore, has continued to grow into a substantial
general confidence that Belgium at least is free from possible
German invasion for the present. This is the prevailing opin-
ion of the diplomatic corps as well as of official circles here
now. This is not necessarily any indication of what it will be
ten days from now, in view of the rapidity with which events move.

There . . .

740001 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 1169

GMR

JAN 3 1940

FILED

There has been and still is a marked division of opinion in Belgium on the question of what the Government should do if Holland only were invaded by Germany. Generally speaking, the Walloons, or French-speaking population, are advocates of immediate intervention by Belgium in the event of such a contingency. In certain Flemish political circles, however, even where these circles are strongly opposed to Germany, there is strong opposition to any intervention or military action by Belgium unless Belgium's vital interest is immediately threatened or unless Belgium is actually invaded.

The Belga Agency (which is a kind of Associated Press of Belgium) recently denied a statement which had been made in the foreign press, that Mr. Spaak, Minister for Foreign Affairs, had declared that Belgium would fight if Holland were invaded.

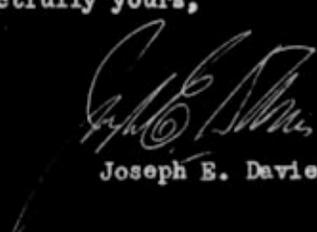
General Van Overstraeten, who is reputed to be the King's most intimate friend and adviser, is stated to be a strong proponent of strict neutrality. The majority of the military experts of the Belgian army, however, are strong proponents of a policy of immediate intervention. The Chief of the General Staff, General Van den Bergen, is reputed to have stated on Friday last that he had finally come to an acceptance of General Van Overstraeten's view.

In official circles, however, there is a flat denial that any decision has been taken in connection with this matter. It is stated definitely that Belgium reserved the right to postpone making any such decision until the contingency actually occurred (see telegram No. 167 of November 7, 5 p.m.). The Foreign Office undoubtedly considers it desirable to keep Germany in doubt as to just what the Belgian attitude would be.

The overwhelming preponderance of popular opinion in Belgium is anti-German and pro-Ally. The memory of the last war still obtains, however, in large sections of the community, and it is not forgotten that Holland failed to come to the aid of Belgium when she was attacked in 1914. It is also undoubtedly true that the very great majority of the Belgians desire to keep out of the war if they possibly can.

If I were called upon to give my judgment as to what the precipitate of these mixtures of opinion would indicate, it would be that the overwhelming majority of the Belgian population would be ardently in favor of coming to the aid of Holland in case of German attack only if their own vital interests were being threatened and if it were declared by the King that such was the fact. In other words, it would only be as a matter of Belgian defense against immediate or future menace of German attack.

Respectfully yours,



Joseph E. Davies

qn.

File No. 710

JED:AFH



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Brussels, November 28, 1939.

January 5 1940
H
Raf
Fu
EA
HAD

No. 539

Subject: Conversations with Prime Minister Pierlot and Foreign Minister Spaak.

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
1939 DEC 19 AM 11 09

MR. DURN
29 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Sub
DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 2 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
PM

For the attention of the President and the Secretary of State.

700-5311 EW

SECRETARY OF STATE
JAN 6 1940

OFFICE OF THE ADVISER FOR
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
JAN - 6 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SECRETARY OF STATE

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that on November 28, I called on the Prime Minister, Mr. Pierlot, and on Foreign Minister Spaak. During these visits, in which I was accompanied by Counselor Wilson, I mentioned my approaching departure for the United States and discussed various aspects of the European situation, with special reference to their effect upon Belgium. As I consider that the views expressed by Mr. Pierlot and Mr. Spaak will be of interest to the President and Secretary of State, they are set forth below:

PIERLOT

Conversatio.

- 2 -

Conversation with Prime Minister Pierlot.

I explained to Prime Minister Pierlot the reasons for my departure for the United States.

740.00112 EW

The conversation then turned to the subject of the blockade of German exports which the Prime Minister declared was unjust. He expressed the opinion that it would injure the neutrals more than Germany. With respect to the German mine warfare, he believed that Great Britain would oppose it successfully. In response to a question of mine, he stated that the war trade negotiations with France were approaching an end and confirmed my information concerning the Franco-Belgian agreement for the exchange of iron ore for coal and coke. Part of this coke would come from Germany in return, it appears, for an agreement on the part of Belgium to export to Germany a definite percentage of its steel manufactures. He expressed the belief that Germany would continue to furnish the necessary coke except, possibly, in the event that the Germans should be angered by the refusal or inability of Belgian shippers to transport German products in Belgian ships, owing to the blockade measures taken by the Allied Governments.

I stated that I would appreciate it if the Prime Minister would outline the European situation as he viewed it, as such an expression would be of great value to the President and the Secretary of State. He acquiesced very pleasantly and entered upon a very clear and comprehensive statement.

He agreed with Foreign Minister Spaak that the situation was not so acutely dangerous as it had been on November 11.

Nevertheless,

Nevertheless, Belgium must be on its guard because from 45 to 47 German divisions are still stationed along the Dutch and Belgian frontiers. It seemed odd to Mr. Pierlot that they should be placed there, especially if they were reserve troops. He understood that there might not be enough room for them near the battle front, but he failed to see why, in a country the size of Germany, it was necessary to concentrate so many soldiers in a rather uncomfortable and inconvenient corner of that country. Furthermore, these troops are arranged in a manner permitting a rapid offensive; namely, in deep formations, headed by motorized forces and tanks. This was the way the German armies were arranged prior to the invasion of Poland and, in the present instance, the same motorized regiments are found on the Dutch and Belgian frontiers that participated in the Polish campaign. On the other hand, although the French and British have many troops along the Franco-Belgian boundary, they are distributed in a long line; in other words, in a defensive rather than an offensive formation.

Mr. Pierlot then discussed the general aspects of Germany's political and military situation. He referred first of all to the possibility that the Germans might address their major activity toward the Balkan states in order to obtain a greater breathing space for themselves. Here, however, they were checked by Russia. On the west, the Maginot line cannot be successfully attacked. On the other hand, if the Germans should attempt to pass through Switzerland, they would have to cross an unfavorable terrain in the face of serious opposition.

If they should overcome this and finally enter France, they would find themselves in the southeastern part of the country where they could not vitally destroy the enemy. If they should attempt to break through Holland and Belgium, they would meet, especially in the latter country, with an extremely effective resistance based on previously prepared successive lines of defense. In addition, the French and British would undoubtedly participate in this fighting and thereby establish a numerical equality. The nature of the country, according to Mr. Pierlot, did not permit the use of tanks and armored cars as in Poland, and if the Germans should by chance break through one line of defense, they would immediately face another.

On the other hand, the Allies were in an equally difficult position. The Siegfried line was practically impregnable, while the Prime Minister was confident that they would not invade Belgium, primarily because they had promised not to do so, and secondly because they would face the same inconveniences as the Germans. In view of the foregoing, both opponents appeared to be facing a stalemate. There was a possibility, however, that as Germany was now in the hands of a dictatorship, which must continue to achieve successes, a long inactivity would provoke popular resentment and a loss in prestige, and in order to obviate this, Hitler might attempt, as an act of desperation, to force his way into Holland and Belgium. If this should take place, it is to be feared that in as thickly settled a country as Belgium, the destruction of life and property would be tremendous. In this connection, he wished to assure the President that the Belgians would fight it out to the end. He paid a high tribute to the character and intelligence of King Leopold.

752.62

Turning to the subject of the crisis of November 11, which had reached an extremely critical stage at the time of King Leopold's visit to Queen Wilhelmina, Mr. Pierlot said that the Italian Government had made representations in Berlin, urging the Germans to desist. The Spanish had done the same thing, but in a much more emphatic manner. General Franco had ordered his Ambassador at Berlin to inform the Germans that through their alliance with Russia and the ideologies represented by the latter, they had forfeited a large part of the sympathies which they formerly enjoyed. If they should attack Belgium, which had done them no harm, they would lose completely the remainder of these sympathies. Similar information was conveyed to the German Ambassador at Madrid, and at Brussels by the Spanish Minister to the German Ambassador, Herr von Bülow-Schwante. It is believed that these representations produced a definite effect.

On the subject of the economic situation in Germany, Mr. Pierlot believed that the Germans could hold out for a long time, but he did not think that they would obtain from the Russians anywhere near what they were probably expecting.

Italy, said the Prime Minister, was in a comfortable position. She has sold her neutrality at a very high price and is now busy making money and rehabilitating her currency. The first rift in the axis occurred during the visit of Foreign Minister Ciano to Salzburg, where he met von Ribbentrop. When hostilities broke out, the Italian people were decidedly opposed to any participation and in this view, they were supported by the Royal family. Mussolini eventually realized that if he

should

should try to force Italy into war, he might bring about a collapse of the Fascist regime, and he therefore bowed to public sentiment. It is clear, however, that Mussolini and Italy are interested in taking an important part in the eventual peace negotiations, thereby enhancing Italy's prestige, and that Mussolini is waiting to seize upon that opportunity.

In the event of Hitler's death, Mr. Pierlot pointed out that he had already designated his successor. It was possible, however, that dissension might take place among the various Nazi leaders, which would result in fighting and bloodshed. He appeared to be uncertain as to what part the army would take in such circumstances. There had been serious differences of opinion, he pointed out, both in the army and in the Nazi party on the subject of the contemplated invasion of Belgium and Holland.

In answer to the question as to what Belgium might do if Holland alone were invaded, Mr. Pierlot replied that Belgium's situation, with the German army along its entire northern border, would be critical in the extreme. He stated clearly that Belgium had no treaty of alliance with Holland and therefore was not obligated to go to the assistance of the latter. Belgium, however, might find itself in a situation so critical that its very existence would be threatened, and in such circumstances, would act promptly and vigorously, and if necessary call immediately for the French and British to come to the help of Belgium and The Netherlands. Nobody, however, could at this time make any definite assertions as to what Belgium would do.

Mr.

Mr. Pierlot asked me to convey to President Roosevelt Belgium's hopes that as a leading neutral he would show the way to the others, and to express to the President Belgium's gratitude for the moral and material assistance which had been given by the United States in the past.

Conversation with Foreign Minister Spaak.

I informed Mr. Spaak that I was leaving for the United States in response to instructions from the Department directing me to return to Washington for consultation concerning the contemplated commercial convention.

When asked to express his opinion about the political situation, Mr. Spaak said that the crisis of November 11 had passed and that matters were not so critical. He did not expect any German offensive at present but felt that Belgium's attitude of caution and preparation should not be relaxed.

Turning to the extension by the allied powers of the blockade against German exports, Mr. Spaak recognized clearly the injurious effect it would have upon Belgian industry and did not perceive any legal justification for it. On the other hand, the German Government's attitude towards Belgium was becoming increasingly severe. He doubted whether the German mine-sowing campaign would be successful, as the British would probably find some means of neutralizing it. He hoped, however, that it would be possible, for the welfare of Belgium and The Netherlands, to realize the suggestion of President Roosevelt, namely, to establish a safe sea lane through the mine fields, and requested me to convey this thought to the President when I reached Washington.

Respectfully yours,



Joseph E. Davies

gn.
JED:OW:VG
File 710

4
Received 7/10

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1939 DEC 19 AM 11 09

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

Brussels, November 28, 1939.

8
4
Pato
Eu
P4/D

No. 540

Subject: Conferences at Luxemburg and
Inspection of the Military
Activities along the Moselle.

[Handwritten initials]
DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 2 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Let - President
XC: mHX
1/3/40

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
DEC 27 1939
MR. WELLES

SECRETARY OF STATE
DEC 28 1939
NOTED

For the Secretary and
Under Secretary of State.

Strictly Confidential

ADVISED ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DURN
DEC 29 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF
SPECIAL RESEARCH
AUG 15 1942
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

With reference to the above-entitled matter, I beg leave
to report as follows:

On the 26th of this month, in the city of Luxemburg, I
had an extended conference with the Foreign Minister, Mr. Bech.
He is an unusual man, - very able, thoroughly liberal, and a
great admirer of the President of the United States and the
Secretary of State. Due in very large measure to the able
manner in which Mr. George Waller, the Chargé, has handled the

Legation . . .

24 0.0011 EW
2026

740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR, 1939 / *[Handwritten mark]*

JAN 11 1940

[Handwritten mark]

Legation in Luxemburg, the Government there feels every confidence in the United States and its representatives. The Foreign Minister spoke with utmost candour, and without his customary diplomatic reserve, due, in my opinion, to this fact. The following is the gist of his statements to me:

DISAFFECTION IN GERMANY.

762.800

There are a great many spots of unrest and critical disaffection all over Germany. Reports from the Hermann Goering steel works were: "We are folding up from hunger." In industrial circles there is similar disaffection. Some of the largest industrialists in Germany have expressed themselves to Bech in these terms: "Wir dürfen nich siegen" (We dare not win this war). There is great food scarcity but there is a subsistence level and in all probability there will be enough to exist on. The situation is illustrated by the statements which were made by two German soldiers who deserted just prior to the last planned offensive, swam the Oser River and are now interned, - or rather "confined as tramps," as Bech said, - in the local jail. These deserters, while they would not talk much, stated that there is much dissension, even in the army, as between the Nazis and the anti-Nazis; and that because of a fight which they had over that issue, they had been arrested and had broken jail and managed to desert. In answer to a question, they stated that in their opinion the whole German regiment to which they belonged would have deserted if they had only had the courage to swim the River.

POSSIBILITY OF INTERNAL REVOLUTION
IN GERMANY.

Despite these conditions, it is the Foreign Minister's opinion that there is no imminent probability of a successful

revolution in Germany for some time to come. This is for the reason that there is no outstanding leadership to unify these elements. He states this, however, with the qualification, "barring accidents," such, for instance, as the death of Hitler. In his opinion, in the normal march of things, there will be no possibility of a revolution until there is a decisive major defeat. Moreover, it is his opinion that if there is a revolution, the command of the situation will still be with the army and that therefore it will not necessarily mean the immediate cessation of hostilities or a quick peace.

PLANNED ATTACK ON BELGIUM,
HOLLAND AND LUXEMBURG.

There is no doubt that the decision had been made to attack at a very definite time on the morning of November 12th, and that the countermanding orders were given out just shortly before the appointed hour. Through Luxemburgers who had contacts with the German peasantry on the other side of the Moselle, the Foreign Minister said that he had received positive information that on the late afternoon of the 11th, each soldier had received a liter and a half of wine and had been served with stiff potations of rum in his tea, preparatory to attack, and that they were in a state of exhilaration almost amounting to intoxication, in preparation for the attack. In his opinion there were at least 70 divisions of Germans along the boundaries of these countries from the North Sea to the Maginot Line.

PRESENT PROBABILITY OF ATTACK.

In the opinion of himself and his Government, there would be no attack until the Spring. He qualified that, however, by the statement that if there were a severe stretch of cold weather

that froze the canals very hard before the 15th of December, there might be a German offensive into Holland, but that in his opinion this was very improbable because it would be so unusual as to be almost certain not to occur, and certainly not before the 15th of December.

OUTLOOK FOR THE WINTER MONTHS.

Hitler and his Government, in his opinion, have their backs against the wall, with none too much confidence in Russia, and confronting great diplomatic opposition from Italy and conflict of interest with Russia in the Balkans. In the West, he is balked by the Maginot Line. In his opinion, that desperation constitutes the greatest danger so far as immediate hostilities are concerned.

The German attitude toward Luxemburg, and, as he is informed, toward the other neutrals, has recently been characterized by definitely greater arrogance, high-handed demands and outright, menacing threats. A week ago, he stated, Germany had reduced coke shipments by 50%, and within the coming week he expected a still greater reduction. The steel industry of Luxemburg, which is its most important industry, is vitally dependent upon coke from Germany.

PROBLEM OF LUXEMBURG GOVERNMENT
IN CASE OF GERMAN INVASION.

His Government, he said, and he himself, had been laboring with great anxiety over the problem as to what advice he and his Government should give to the Grand Duchess in the event of German invasion of Luxemburg. The attack would obviously be sudden and the Germans would be in their capital within twenty minutes after the order to advance. He said that the conclusion

was that in the event of German success, Luxemburg would have no existence as an autonomous and independent free State, and that the only hope for Luxemburg lay with the success of England and France. It would from every point of view be advisable for the Grand Duchess to immediately leave Luxemburg and not try to stay during German occupation. The Grand Duchess felt deeply that it was her duty to her people, in case of invasion, to immediately address an appeal to the States that had guaranteed Luxemburg independence in '67, and simultaneously therewith appeal also to the League of Nations, to the Vatican and to President Roosevelt. In the event that such an appeal was issued and Luxemburg was occupied by the Germans, with the Grand Duchess still in the Duchy, she would immediately become a public enemy and be subjected to the greatest danger; whereas if on the contrary she did nothing at all because of duress or inability, it would result in her being unjustly considered as an accomplice to Germany. He was therefore of the opinion that the Grand Duchess should be advised by her Government to immediately leave the city of Luxemburg if the Germans were to cross the river, try to establish her Government elsewhere, remaining still on Luxemburg soil, but if that were not possible, to immediately go to France or Belgium.

In case of invasion of Luxemburg, his Government would immediately open their boundaries to France and invite them to come in, even though that might assure their country meeting the terrible fate of being "a battleground."

In this connection he stated that in view of the suddenness with which the attack might come and in view of the fact that undoubtedly all communication would be immediately cut with the

outside world, his Government would leave with Count d'Ansembourg, who is Chargé for Luxemburg here, an address to the various nations, to be sent to the countries aforesaid, immediately upon the occurrence of the event of invasion; and he asked me whether the American Embassy would be prepared to accept from Count d'Ansembourg such an appeal and transmit it to the Government of the United States. I told him that of course if his Government desired to transmit any message to the United States, as Minister to Luxemburg, I would be very glad to do so.

INTERVIEW WITH THE GRAND DUCHESS
AND PRINCE FELIX.

While in Luxemburg, I took the occasion to have an audience with the Grand Duchess at the Palace. I was received by the Grand Duchess and the Prince Consort, Prince Felix, quite informally. They were both gravely concerned over the situation and gave evidences of much anxiety. They were, however, calm and self-contained. They believed and hoped there would be no invasion, at least until Spring. The Grand Duchess again asked me particularly to express her great appreciation and gratitude to the President, to the Secretary of State and to the Government of the United States for courtesies and kindnesses shown to her son and Prince Felix during their visit to America last summer. She also spoke in terms of the greatest admiration for the noble efforts of the President and the Secretary of State in trying to preserve peace.

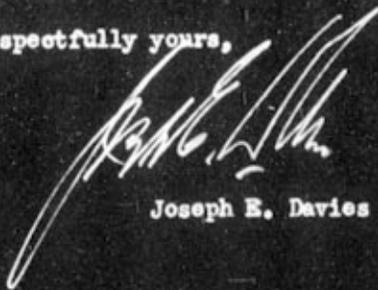
THE MILITARY FRONT
ADJACENT TO LUXEMBURG.

While in Luxemburg, I took advantage of the opportunity to

again motor up to the triangle which affords an excellent view around the village of Sierok. There was no activity either in the air or on the land. The Luxemburg officer in charge of the lookout post there stated that there had been very heavy artillery fire the day before. One could see the German trenches, pillboxes and various major entrances to underground passages leading to fortifications in the hills on the opposite side of the river.

I also motored up as far as the village of Remich. The Moselle there is very narrow, and the German road and railroad could be very clearly seen. I observed two German tanks moving slowly up the road towards Sierok. Apparently, however, no attention was being paid to them by the French. I was informed that last week our Naval Attaché, Captain Gade, and Mr. Hallam Tuok, an American resident of Brussels, saw quite a number of tanks from the same spot, the crews of which seemed to be moving them quite unconcernedly and without arousing any bombardment activity on the part of the enemy.

Respectfully yours,



Joseph E. Davies

qr.

File No. 710

JED:AFH

4 Carbon
710
RECEIVED

Shuman & MID

Le

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
NOV 29 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ED

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

CJ
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (B)

BRUSSELS
FROM Dated November 28, 1939
Rec'd 5:30 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

203, November 28, 6 p.m.

In Belgium army leaves were again canceled Sunday
and it was reported that the army again requisitioned com-
mercial motor buses but it was officially explained that
these were prompted only by the necessity of manoeuvres
and that the cancellation of leaves was only for that day.
Both the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister stated to me
that there was no change in the situation and that the
situation appeared calmer but that Belgium was remaining
vigilant as long as there was such a concentration of
troops on her eastern borders. The general opinion in dip-
lomatic circles here is that there will be much German
activity in the air and on the sea against England in an
attempt to blockade England and compel the neutrals to di-
vert their trade to Germany; a most severe economic pres-
sure upon Holland and Belgium, coupled with a menacing at-
titude by Germany; much diplomatic activity and definite
economic and political pressure in the Balkans this winter;
but no major land operations until spring.

*740.0011EW
203
11-28-39*

740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 1101

*REC'D - 1939
PT. END - 1*

GWR

-2- #203, November 28, 6 p.m., from Brussels

I have just returned from an inspection of conditions along the Luxembourg border. There was no military activity visible along that front. A high official advised me that the Luxembourg Government did not expect that a German offensive might occur before the end of February unless there was some sudden change in the German plans or very cold freezing weather before December 15 might induce Germany to attack Holland. The Belgian Minister in Luxembourg advised me that according to the best information at his disposal no active land warfare would commence until Spring.

DAVIES

EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

8
Page

EW/PM
11-20-39

FROM

BRUSSELS

Dated November 29, 1939

Rec'd 3:25 p.m.

CJ

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

Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sent to White House 9:40 AM Nov 30 39



205, November 29, 5 p.m.

TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE. /1101

Conference had here today with the King confirms yesterday's telegram No. 203, November 28, 6 p.m. He considers the situation to be unchanged from the military point of view and that in all probability there will be no major land offensives until February. The present mild wet weather and shortness of the winter days he considers to be definitely favorable factors. Nevertheless every possible precaution and vigilance is being employed against any possible surprise,

DAVIES

PEG

REC 1 1939
PTLBD

7400011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 1105

GMR

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.



LEGAL ADVISER
JAN 25 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 11 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OFFICE OF THE ADVISER IN
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
JAN 25 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Brussels, November 29, 1939.

Subject: Observations as to the War Situation
After Three Months of Hostilities as
Seen from this Observation Post.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS
JAN 23 1940
ONI
MID

1940 JAN 10 PM 4 04

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RESISTANCE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Sir:

Supplementing the periodical general survey which,
from time to time, I have sent to the Department, I beg
leave to submit the following:

There now appears to be one of the characteristic
periodic lulls in German activities. On the Western
Front the situation has developed into a state of siege.
As against England, the German submarines appear to be less
active, allegedly being in their home ports for the purpose
of training new crews for the new complement of undersea craft.
The mines, magnetic or otherwise, seem also to have been
fairly well swept up and a neutral passenger ship has this
week left Rotterdam for New York via the North Sea. Activity
seems to have shifted to the East with the Soviet attack
on Finland and with renewed diplomatic activity in the
Balkans.

740021 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 1455

GM/R

DIVISION OF
TRADE AGREEMENTS
TA
JAN 31 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT TO THE
FEB 1 1940
COUNSELOR

While

FEB 3 1940

STAMPED

While in the face of the situation there does not seem to have been much "getting on" with the war in the West during the past several weeks, still, as a matter of fact, the forces are grinding down irrevocably to the final issue and to the day when one side or the other will project an "all in" offensive and start the real war.

The following is a perspective on the war situation as seen from here since my last general summary. It is developed under the following:

- 1 - The German Peace Offensive - Its Failure
- The Definition of War Aims .
- 2 - Result of Submarine and Air Attacks on Great Britain.
- 3 - Threats to the Neutrals.
- 4 - The Crisis of November 12th.
- 5 - Russia and Germany.
- 6 - The Balkans - Russia, Italy, Germany.
- 7 - Hitler's Present Situation.
- 8 - Internal Conditions in Germany.
- 9 - The Blockade - Imports and Exports.
- 10 - The Italian Position.
- 11 - The Present Situation.
- 12 - Indications as to Spring Offensives.
- 13 - Air Armada Attack on Great Britain.
- 14 - Duration of the War.

The German Peace Offensive - Its Failure
- The Definition of War Aims:

Germany projected her peace offensive with vigor. Overt threats and menaces were used by the German Foreign Office against the neutrals in an effort to force them to play its peace game. Hitler has found it difficult to believe that his peace offensive has failed; but there are indications that he now appreciates that France and England are not ready to make peace on his conditions.

Peace is impossible now and will be for some time. The reason is simple. Germany will tolerate no peace except upon a recognition of the status quo with the confirmation by the Western Powers of the re-alignment in Eastern Europe, which Hitler has projected as a fait accompli and which he maintains is only a just rectification of the "malevolent" Versailles Treaty. The only basis upon which the Allies could consider peace discussions now would be an antecedent agreement by Germany to measurably restore the "status quo ante" and thereafter sit down at the conference table to discuss, through reason and negotiation, what would be a fair adjustment of these conditions and one which would contribute most to the future peace of Europe. Such conditions precedent would involve the withdrawal of German armies from Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland except those only sufficient in size to police these countries. Such, at least, would appear to be the clear indication of Chamberlain's and Daladier's statements. If such a proposal were submitted to Hitler now he would drop dead with apoplexy. England could treat with Germany on no less

a condition precedent, now that she has set her hand to the plow. The French, I fear, would not even be so benevolent. There are increasing indications that the spirit of the French is a realistic, cold-blooded, hard-boiled determination not to quit until they have carved Germany up in such a way as to make sure beyond pre-adventure that the next two or three generations of Frenchmen will be free from the menace of a German domination.

Any attempt at defining war aims or at getting down to a basis for a practical discussion of peace is now, in my opinion, completely out of the range of possibility.

Nor would the elimination of Hitler help matters much. The German military organization would still carry on at least for a time in order to try to make peace while Germany was still intact and a power to be reckoned with at the peace table.

It will, as it appears from this observation post, require time to bring both sides to a realization that this war in grim reality will destroy the winner as well as the loser -- unless that winner might, perhaps, be Germany. If Germany were victorious it is conceivable that she might be sufficiently ruthless and powerful to place in bondage a sufficient number of nations and men as to enrich her by the exploitation of the victor. There is doubt that the German people would perpetrate such a crime. But the ruling class and the philosophies of Germany today preach a doctrine which permits of no other conclusion, if it is carried to its logical and extreme conclusion.

Result

Result of Submarine and Air Attacks
on Great Britain:

As the possibility for peace faded, Germany directed her efforts to trying to alienate France from Britain through propaganda and to blockade England. As her efforts directed toward the first objective became obviously impracticable, the second purpose was projected with increasing vigor. Germany's air and submarine attacks thus far seem to have been measurably and successfully resisted by the British.

The German project of the sowing of mines -- floating or magnetic -- in the sea lanes surrounding Great Britain has been more serious. While the record discloses that the neutrals have suffered more than the British in loss of tonnage by reason thereof, it is nevertheless considered here that the net result has been disconcerting, to say the least, for the British. Britain requires not only her own but neutral tonnage to keep her supplied with the necessities of life itself. Britain's protestations that she has and will master this menace has been generally accepted but with some dubiousness.

Threats to the Neutrals:

Simultaneously Germany has been conducting a vigorous campaign directed against the neutrals, particularly Belgium and Holland, to induce them to resist the British blockade by more than a mere paper resistance. It has been accompanied by the open threat that unless these neutrals are prepared to protect their own sovereignty and their neutral rights, Germany will have to protect them for them. Coincident with this menace, France and

Britain

Britain have been pressing vigorously for staff conversations with the Belgian Army. The result has been a terrorization (and that is not too strong a word) of the Dutch and Belgian Foreign Offices by the Reich. This was behind the hurried trip of King Leopold to The Hague and the subsequent joint offer to mediate a peace by Leopold and Queen Wilhelmina.

Holland is generally considered here to be in greater jeopardy than Belgium. The Reich finds in Holland not only better sea bases for submarine attacks on Britain, but that Holland also affords air bases closer to England. From such bases German fighting planes would have a cruising radius they now lack. Germany's fighting planes are now considered not to have sufficient gasoline capacity to accompany their bombers in attacks upon Britain. This probably accounts for the high mortality of the German bombing planes over and off England.

The Crisis of November 1931:

I have been told reliably that it was the opinion of the Italian Ambassador to Berlin -- Signor Atolico, who is supposed to be the closest foreign diplomat to Hitler, that the latter and his officers, in August and September, had made plans for attack only as to Poland. With Poland mopped up, it is said, they were surprised and non-plussed to find that they had a western war on their hands and had no plans for such a campaign. This, it is said, accounts for the apparent hesitancy of Hitler during the past several weeks. Much speculation

has been indulged in here as to what Germany was planning to do. Among other things it was thought that Hitler was considering:

1 - Whether to attempt to assault the Maginot Line direct or project a von Schlieffen attack with the penetrating pinchers coming north and south of the Maginot Line, or;

2 - Whether to leave France unmolested and confine his attack to England, or;

3 - Whether to take over Holland as a base for a more effective attack against England, or;

4 - Whether to confine the attack to Holland, or include Belgium, also, in the plan, or;

5 - Whether to confine the Reich to a defensive land campaign only and wear out the capitalistic system of the Western Powers and through attrition drive them to accept the peace.

The first week of November, however, found assembled opposite the Dutch and Belgian borders all of the crack German divisions which had fought in Poland. They were massed in a formation which indicated that the concentration was not for winter quarters or a defensive line but was a formation for purposes of attack. The character of the deployment of the men and material indicated a plan for a simultaneous attack against Holland and through Holland into Belgium and through Luxembourg to turn the Maginot Line on the north. It was apparently originally planned for Thursday, November 9th. The overtures of Leopold and Wilhelmina were successful in postponing it a few days until November 12th. That time was employed by the Dutch and Belgians to inundate parts of their territories. In the meantime, there were repeated and undoubtedly deliberate reconnaissance flights by German planes over Belgium daily for a week. These flights

disclosed

disclosed the fact undoubtedly that Belgium had already mobilized its army, that it was already assembled on the defenses facing the Germans, that the French and British forces were poised on the Belgian border ready to jump in from France. Belgium's defenses were also disclosed as of a character that indicated a very stiff resistance might be encountered which might be disastrous to a quick German penetration, which was necessary for German success and without which there might be military disaster.

The zero hour was set for the morning of November 12th, and the countermanding order came only a few hours before that. Luxembourgers, who were very close to the German lines, reported that on the afternoon of Saturday, November 11th, the German troops were issued two liters of wine each and strong potations of rum in their tea at supper and later -- all in anticipation of an attack.

Something stopped it. It is currently accepted here that what stopped it was the fact that Belgium was so well prepared. For this, the King of the Belgians is given exclusive credit, as he is held to be responsible for this condition.

The result is that there is still a state of seige on the Western Front. The consensus of opinion is that there will be no land offensive by the Germans until spring, possibly beginning the latter part of January or February. There is no assurance as to this, however, because the military situation has not changed and the threat contained in the character and disposition of the German troops is just as menacing as ever.

Russia

Russia and Germany:

In the meantime, Russia has been "cleaning up" on her deal with Germany. She has been acting with feverish haste and taking no chances on any future promises to pay. She is getting her "bacon" now. The irony of it is that all of these military outposts that Russia is creating for her own protection are directed against Germany, her present ally.

Little Finland was the only neighbor state that had the courage to stand up to Russia but I feel that ultimately her fate will be the same as Poland. She will be proclaimed heroic by an admiring world opinion, but nobody will do much of anything about it. The Finns are tougher people and will put up a better fight than the Poles, but in the long run and perhaps sooner than is expected they will be overwhelmed.

My own judgment, from my observations in Russia, is that Russia's deal with Hitler was very specific but limited. Hitler proposed a restoration of Eastern Europe on a basis that would project a peace through the forceful rectification of the injustices of Versailles. That meant Stalin was to have White Russia, the Ukraine, the Baltic and certain Slavic influence in the Balkans adjacent to the Black Sea. It was a high price to pay; but Hitler paid it and is paying it. I do not think their deal contemplated any agreement on Stalin's part to support Hitler on the Western Front. The danger lies in the fact that the "monster grove on the meat upon which he feeds" and Russia, having tasted blood and its

own power, may not be content to stop. Of course, it is to Russia's interest not to see either the Western Powers or Germany completely defeated but only irretrievably weakened.

The Balkans - Russia, Italy, Germany:

There is great diplomatic and economic activity in the Balkans. In addition to the German threat, there is the new and additional menace of the Russian Bear. Four or five weeks ago the Italian radio was boasting of the formation of a so-called neutral bloc in the Balkans under the patronage and the aegis of Italy. Yugoslavia was supposed to be projecting a neutral bloc of Hungary, Rumania, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria and herself for common protection as against both Hitler and Stalin, based on an agreement that for the present each would set aside its claims as against the other to present a united front against a common danger. This project is now recognized to be ended and Italy is disclaiming any responsibility for the idea and is having nothing to do with it. This is largely because Rumania is now in a difficult position. Rumania can enter into no agreement that might offend Russia. France and England cannot help Rumania through the Dardanelles nor can General Wiegand's forces in Asia Minor help her if Rumania is attacked by Russia for the reason that Turkey has agreed to aid Rumania and France and England only as against Germany.

Russia, as early as last summer, had become a proponent of Bulgaria's claims to Dobruja, in Rumania, and it is quite within the range of probability that she

soon

soon as the Soviets clean up Finland they will turn their attention to Rumania and Bessarabia.

Some of these eastern countries appear to be very confident and, like Poland, conceive their power to be very strong. But Poland was a bitter example and I fear that Finland, also, will be. The result, in all probability, will be that Carol of Rumania will make his peace on the best terms possible and in a very short time be under the vassalage of Hitler and Stalin.

I was told that Russia's demands on Turkey included a military base that would control the Dardanelles similar to those in the Baltic. That is quite possible. Bulgaria is definitely under communist influence; Hungary is subject to the immediate threat of Germany, as are also Yugoslavia and Italy.

I expect to see rapid developments in the Balkans. It will be all to Russia's advantage, for Russia will not now permit the Germans to get a base in the Black Sea, either in Rumania or through Turkey.

Italy, Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia are a nucleus for some possible opposition. But they are in too great jeopardy to be effective. There is only one hopeful alternative. If Mussolini can trust Hitler not to interfere he might lead an anti-Russian defense in the Balkans, with or without Rumania's consent.

Hitler's Present Position:

This all spells out a situation none too advantageous for Hitler. He has given up the Baltic and uprooted and transplanted a Germanic civilization of 400 years; he

has

has cut himself off from the Ukraine; he is confined to an economic power only over Rumania, and, as well to only a limited influence over Bulgaria or Hungary. The Russian Bear will not support the Germans in the Black Sea. Considering the grandiose concept of "Liebensraum", which Hitler preached to his people and to the world, he now finds himself confined in a pretty small compass. His only "out" seems to be in the west for the immediate present. These conditions, perhaps, account in a degree for the apparent uncertainty of plans in Berlin.

Much depends upon what Hitler's agreement with Stalin really is. If it is an "all in" alliance and he can project into Russia his engineers and scientific men in the same manner that he did in Italy, Hitler will still find tremendous advantage in the Russian pact. But there are indications that the Russians will not permit this; that the Soviets are pursuing an independent policy based solely on self-interest and that Hitler is not too happy about it.

Internal Conditions in Germany:

Reports as to conditions in Germany are conflicting. There is a great deal of wishful thinking that a revolution will end the war within the next few months. There is no doubt that there is a shortage of foodstuffs there. Among the best informed people I know, the opinion is that while food is short there is, nevertheless sufficient for the army and a subsistence quantity for the civilian population and that foodstuffs are not a real deterrent for a long war. It is, however, conceded that the shortage will involve great hardship on the part of children and

the

the aged because of lack of fats and proteins.

Ambassador Bullitt informed me that the French know very little about conditions inside Germany. The best informed people with whom I have talked in Belgium, Italy, and England lead me to the belief that Germany is sufficiently supplied for two years of war with the essentials in both food and materials.

The principal possible shortage is generally considered to be that of oil, which does not lend itself easily to storage. From my own observations in Russia, I believe that Germany will find great difficulty in getting oil from Russia because Russia has not enough for itself. The total production of Rumania, I am told, is still insufficient to supply the requirements of six mechanized divisions or a huge air armada for more than a very short offensive. It is believed by many that the reason for the failure of the Germans thus far to launch a huge air attack is that a great deal of her oil reserves were used up in Poland and that the high command is conserving what is left for its supreme "all in" effort in the coming spring and summer.

The Blockade - Imports and Exports:

The British blockade, so far as imports are concerned, cannot starve Germany out. It can, notably in oil and some other war minerals, handicap and embarrass her. The Russian factor makes the present situation completely different from that of 1914 so far as a blockade of imports is concerned.

The blockade of German exports, however, may be more serious. Germany needs foreign exchange badly. Turkey and Greece, I am told, have refused to ship tobacco to Germany until remaining balances are paid in gold. All the Balkan States are said to be "fed up" with the barter system, which has resulted in their getting deeper in credit to Germany each year. Even Russia is reported to be exacting gold from Germany. Without the ability to send exports abroad to be converted into foreign credits, Germany will be seriously handicapped.

The Italian Position:

Italy is finding it profitable to be neutral. France has recently placed an order of four billion francs with Italian producers. Both England and France seem thus far to be satisfied with the Italian attitude. It remains to be seen how long Germany will be content with Italian neutrality. It may be that Italy will be confronted with that decision soon.

Italy is deeply fearful of Russian intrusion into the Balkans. Italy could project an anti-communist bloc in the Balkans and assume the leadership of it in defense of Rumania or against any other intrusion by the Soviets, unless by so doing she would incur the hostility of Russia's ally - Germany.

Italy is also hostile to the British blockade of German exports, for that hits Italian profits.

It is generally considered that Italy will be objectively realistic and will plump on the side of the heaviest batteries to be with the victor. It is possible

that

that her hand may be forced by Germany, vis-a-vis Russia or, possibly on the other hand, by the French in Gamelin's desire to secure a battlefield.

The Present Situation:

The concensus of opinion as to the present situation is that: (1) Germany will persist in the present conduct of aggressive irritation and attack on England during the winter; (2) will not inaugurate a land offensive against France for some time, and possibly not until spring; (3) will continue to incite neutrals to resistance of the British blockade; (4) will devote her attention to developing Germany's economic position in the Balkans and consolidating her position there; (5) will "play ball" with Russia and not interfere in Finland; (6) will probably make a supreme effort in the spring and summer, principally directed against England.

Indications as to Spring Offensive:

What the future holds is, of course, problematical, peculiarly in the case of Germany because of Hitler's psychology. There are reports, however, which indicate that the German military command is supremely confident of victory; that the German business community, even though hostile to Hitler, believes that Germany has sufficient supplies for at least two years; that most of the German submarines are now at their home bases for purposes of training crews for an additional 100 submarines which will be in the water by the first of the year; that Germany has 400 more submarines in the process of construction; that Germany's

airplane

airplane production capacity is 10,000 per month and that an armada of 30,000 to 60,000 planes will be available by May 1st, 1940.

Air Armada Attack on Great Britain:

German officials boast that they will completely destroy England and drive her to her knees begging for peace. They openly boast that they will project a large scale air attack on May 1st, 1940 which will completely destroy Britain and that England will be "mopped up" by mid-July.

All this may be a part of Germany's war of nerves, at which they are so adept. Nevertheless, I found that in Italy orders have already been issued for the closing of all schools on May 1st, in order presumably that they may be made available for military purposes; that all military leaves are to be cancelled there on that date and that plans have been made for a complete Italian mobilization then.

Duration of the War:

It is commonly stated in Europe that the real war has not yet started. In all probability, either one side or the other will project a real offensive in the spring. When that comes it will arouse feelings and passions and will greatly intensify the hatreds which are now already beginning to appear. The war will grow constantly more bitter. It is being said in some quarters that none of the belligerents can withstand the enormous expenditures which modern war will require. Human nature, however, has demonstrated its capacity to fight independently of economic

economic

economic conditions. Barring some unforeseen contingency of a miraculous character, my opinion is that this war will be a long and very bitter one. Nor will it depend seriously upon whether Italy will join the Allies. Mussolini can be safely counted on to join the winner "just in time to save the winner." How long the war will last will depend, in my opinion, upon how closely Stalin and Hitler have agreed, or will agree, to work together.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "W. Churchill".



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Brussels, December 15, 1939.

1940 JAN 3 PM 2 15

No. 562.

Subject: Conditions in Germany.

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 4 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Distribution Instructions
5 MID
ONI
JAN 12 1940

862.00/3926

562.00
JMC
295

CONFIDENTIAL

OFFICE OF THE ADVISER ON
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
HF, JAN 26 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ADVISE ON POLITICAL SITUATIONS
MR. DUNN
JAN 20 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE
JAN 11 1940
AHC

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

DEPT. OF STATE
TREATY ASSESSMENTS
TO
JAN 20 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JAN 8 9 1940

BTTL

I have the honor to state that lately the Embassy has obtained from sources considered to be entirely reliable reports relating to the economic situation in Germany and to certain aspects of that country's military plans.

This information tends to show that the morale of the German people is subject to a constant and increasing strain occasioned by the quality and quantity of the food and by the restrictions affecting clothing. Although the average German is provided with enough to eat to prevent any serious physical deterioration

862.00
JMC
295

rioration, it is difficult for him to obtain an adequate satisfying diet. Foreign travelers, especially the more favored ones, naturally receive better treatment, and this in many cases the German is compelled to observe.

The limitations placed upon purchases of clothing are especially annoying, as only an extremely limited number of any particular article is obtainable over a given period. Furthermore, as such purchases can be made only by means of ration cards, a person who is able to spend actual cash is unable to buy larger amounts, no matter how much he may need them.

Estimates as to the length of time during which Germany can hold out against her enemies under the present conditions naturally vary considerably. A moderate view appears to be a year or eighteen months. The chief supporters of the present régime are the younger elements in the population, and it is consequently to them that consideration must be given in making an appraisal of Germany's strength. Older persons are much less inclined to uphold Hitler, but representing as they do many shades of opinion, it would be most difficult for them to unite in order to present an effective opposition.

The military situation on Germany's western boundaries appears to have undergone slight modifications in the past weeks. Forty-five to fifty divisions continue to be maintained along the Belgian and Dutch frontiers, but it is asserted that these troops are no longer grouped in formations of attack directed at Holland and Belgium. This may be occasioned, of course, by the unpropitious season of the year and the frequent soaking rains which have fallen. Nevertheless, the fact that these large units are still in the same part of the country as they were during the critical days of November indicates that Germany has not given up its intention of threatening its two small neighbors and that

562.20
740.0011EW

if the winter months end before a negotiated peace has been concluded, Germany may not hesitate to invade these countries, in the desperate hope of dealing a mortal blow to its arch-enemy England. The importance which the German authorities attach to maintaining much secrecy in regard to the armies stationed in this part of the Reich is evidenced by the difficulty now being experienced in obtaining visas for direct travel from Brussels to Berlin. The Embassy has received entirely trustworthy information to the effect that most travelers who wish to go from Belgium to Germany are obliged to take an extremely roundabout road, first to Groningen in Holland, and from thence to Emden and Bremen before they can turn southwards.

With respect to Germany's intentions to invade the Netherlands, it may be of interest to the Department to learn that a traveler well known to the Embassy who returned to Belgium a few days ago stated that he had heard Germans discussing this subject as something that has been definitely decided by the authorities of the Reich, the only question being the date on which it will take place. On the other hand, a prominent German business man who visited Brussels very recently is said to have declared that he had never heard of the plan to attack Holland and Belgium during the first half of last November.

Respectfully yours,

Orme Wilson
Orme Wilson,
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

4
4 CARBON COPIES

Received *[Signature]*

qn.

OW/LGW



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Brussels, December 19, 1939

Handwritten marks and scribbles in the top right corner.

No. 566

Subject: Belgian Decision in the Event of an Invasion
of The Netherlands.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 21 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JAN 11 PM 12 26

CLASS FOR 3
Distribution Instructions
MID
ONI
JAN 23 1940

Handwritten initials 'CM'.

JAN 1 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Handwritten notes: 740.0011 EW, 740.0011, 740.0011, 740.0011

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JAN 22 1940
SECRETARY OF STATE

Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

I have the honor to report that on December 11, 1939,
Mr. Van Cauwelaert, Minister of State and President of the
Chamber of Deputies, made a speech before the Flemish Section
of the Catholic Party, in which he discussed Belgium's policy
of neutrality.

According to the account of his speech given in the
VIRGILIENSIE SIBCLE, Mr. Van Cauwelaert expressed the opinion
that an official policy of neutrality on the part of a Gov-
ernment did not deprive the individual citizen of the right

to

740.0011 EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 1939 / 1453

JAN 30 1940

GMR

to express his views freely, even in public, on the conduct of the war, nor could the Government's policy force a citizen to do violence to his conscience and adopt an attitude which reflected indifference to moral issues.

Owing to the important position occupied by Mr. Van Cauwelaert, and to the wide difference of opinion with respect to what action Belgium should take in the event of a German invasion of The Netherlands, the views which he expressed on this subject are of particular interest. According to the VINGTIEME SIECLE:

"Mr. Van Cauwelaert expressed astonishment that in certain Flemish circles it is believed that an aggression against Holland could in no way modify our position. Nothing is less true, affirmed the Minister of State, for 'our declaration of neutrality was voluntary. It was only the expression of our wish for independence. It does not deprive us of the right, in the face of events which would imperil the essential conditions of our existence, to renounce our neutrality, without permitting any nation whatever to conclude that we have failed in our obligations toward it.'

"And Mr. Van Cauwelaert concluded his statement by affirming that if the first task is to endeavor to keep Belgium from the horrors of war, our supreme obligation must be to assure the freedom of the country."

The report of Mr. Van Cauwelaert's remarks was warmly received by some papers, notably the pro-French GAZETTE. It was vigorously attacked, however, by the Flemish press. VOLK EN STAAT stated:

"The Flemish people have no patience with attempts to bring into this question such concepts as 'honor' and 'liberty'. They know only too well what such concepts are used for by war-mongers and profiteers. In 1914 Holland remained neutral while Belgium was attacked, but rendered us great services during the struggle. The Flemish people must hold fast to their neutrality. If we ourselves are actually attacked we shall defend ourselves, but it must be clear that we ourselves are being attacked."

Again attacking Mr. Van Cauwelaert's statement, VOLK EN

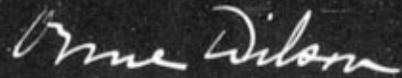
STAAT said:

"He considers that an attack on Holland would be sufficient reason for Belgium to go to war with Germany on the grounds that the vital interests of Belgium would be thereby endangered. By this statement he is bringing the neutrality of Belgium into grave danger in the most inopportune way. It is a deliberate attack on our neutrality. He himself will not be among those who would have to die and he gives no thought to the thousands who might be sent to their death as a result of such a policy. Our position is definite; only an unprovoked violation of BELGIAN territory could warrant surrender of our neutrality."

These remarks are significant in view of the attitude of friendship towards The Netherlands assumed by the more radical Flemish Nationalists and their advocacy of a "Greater Netherlands". It is rumored that the VOLK EN STAAT may be subsidized by Germany, and such opinions as those quoted above favoring the neutrality of Belgium in the event of a German attack on Holland lend strength to such a belief.

The Catholic STANDAARD contented itself with saying that Belgians should not allow themselves to be taken in by discussion of such questions and that they should follow the advice of King Leopold to avoid making statements which might injure the interests of the country.

Respectfully yours,



Orme Wilson,
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

gn.

JCHB:VG

File 711.1

Copy to The Hague.

Read to Major Butler - MID

LC
JP
EU

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JT
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (B)

BRUSSELS

FROM Dated January 10, 1940

Rec'd 4:52 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

10, January 10, 6 p.m.

My despatch No. 562 of December 15.



740001EW

According to reliable information obtained from official sources German military forces along Netherlands and Belgian frontiers number now about 55 divisions. Usual rumors of planned German offensive are in circulation but no evidence of increased tension in Belgium although full military vigilance remains unrelaxed.

Copy to the Hague.

WILSON

JRL:NPL

RECORDED FOR JAN 11 1940 / 1449

JAN 13 1940
FILE

GMR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

L.C.

EU
PA/S

FROM

ADVISED ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DURN
JAN 16 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RR
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone (BR)

Brussels

Dated January 14, 1940.

Received 10:30 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sumner L. M. A.
W. H. C.
EDHO
JAN 15 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

15, January 14, 9 p. m.

My 14, January 13, 4 p. m.

Belgian Government this morning called up further
troops under phase "D" of plan of mobilization. This is
the last phase before a general mobilization and involves
about 25 or 30,000 soldiers.

CONFIDENTIAL. Situation is still tense. Although
some of my diplomatic colleagues expressed to me their
optimism I consider that it is still too early to arrive
at a definite opinion.

ROW

WILSON

740001 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 1479

JAN 19 1940

FILED

GMR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JT
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C) (br)

BRUSSELS
FROM Dated January 15, 1940
Rec'd 4:44 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

17, January 15, 7 p.m.

My 15, January 14, 9 p.m.

Situation is calmer today and there is a distinct lessening of tension. In addition to the military precautions taken over week-end hundreds of persons were evacuated from the districts bordering on Germany and the King assumed command in person of the Belgian army. It is also reliably reported that a number of important Belgian factories such as the National Arms Works and the Cookerill Works both situated near Liege are being transferred to the western part of Belgium.

The cause of this crisis is attributed not only to the unusual German airplane activity but also to the discovery of documents on a German aviator captured in the province of Limburg indicating German interest in Belgium's fortifications and to the alleged regrouping of German troops on the Dutch-Belgian frontier.

Secretary General of the Foreign Office told me this afternoon that Foreign Minister Spaak called the French and British

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 16 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

U - LIAISON OFFICE
JAN 17 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

740001 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 1483

GMB

-2- #17, Jan 15, 7 p.m. from Brussels

British Ambassadors late Saturday night and told them that he had just received information from various quarters including the Belgian Ambassador in Berlin that the German armies were expected to invade Belgium at an early date.

The Military Attache requests me to transmit the following: total strength of Belgian army now exceeds 700,000 men. Belgian frontier alert system intensified.

WILSON

EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

WFO
DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 17 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

W
H
PA-D

RFP
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (C)

FROM Brussels
Dated January 16, 1940
Rec'd 9:20 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

SECRETARY OF STATE
JAN 17 1940
NOTED

ADVISOR OF FOREIGN RELATIONS
Mr. DUNK
JAN 17 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

21, January 16, 8 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY AND UNDER-
SECRETARY.

740.0011EW

1483

My telegram No. 17, January 15, 7 p.m.

Have just been informed in the strictest confidence
by the Secretary General of the Foreign Office that the
principal reason for the sudden tension and military
measures of last Saturday was the discovery of certain
papers carried by a German colonel who was traveling
from Munster in Westphalia to Cologne on the airplane
which made a forced landing at Mechelen in Limburg.

These papers revealed a complete and detailed plan
for an attack on Belgium with only the date missing. The
plan also mentioned the advisability of making the of-
fensive in freezing weather.

The Secretary General added that there are about 41
German divisions along the Belgian frontier one of which
arrived very recently. He hoped that the slippery condi-
tion of the roads, the frozen waterways in Germany and the

run-down

FILED

/ 1493

GMR

RFP -2- #21, January 16, 8 p.m. from Brussels

run-down state of the German railroads would tend to discourage any plans of military operations.

WILSON

CFW

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JT
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (br) (C)

BRUSSELS

FROM

Undated

Rec'd January 17, 1940
10:09 p.m.



Secretary of State,
Washington.

23

CONFIDENTIAL

Our January 1.

The movement of German troops in concentration on the Dutch - Belgian frontier became accelerated and on January 10 a German warplane with two German officers made a forced landing at Mechelen, Belgium. In their possession was found a map purporting to have been issued by the German General Staff which set forth a military plan of an attack on Holland, Belgium, and France. A very reliable source informs me that the date for this attack was January 15-17. The Belgian Government upon this information mobilized additional troops under phase (D) of mobilization plan and tension reached most acute stage on the 14th. Since there has been no attack and there has been no further evidence of aggressive action tension is gradually subsiding. British troops mobilized for action along the entire Belgian frontier on the 14th and 15th and poised for attack at four hours notice were withdrawn

740.00114

740001 EUROPEAN WAR 1939

/ 1511

FILED

GMR

-2- #23, from Brussels

withdrawn and retired to billets on the morning of the 16th;
and the general sentiment is that the crisis has been averted
for the time.

(END SECTION ONE)

CUDAHY

NPL:EMB

EU

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JT
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (br) (B)

BRUSSELS
FROM Undated
Rec'd 9:55 p.m.,
January 17, 1940

Secretary of State,
Washington.

23, (SECTION TWO)

Basically the situation remains the same. It is known that 60% of the German military strength in the west is marshaled opposite the Dutch-Belgian frontier and that 80% of the mechanized units are in readiness for action in this area. 46 German divisions are on the Belgian frontier. The belief is expressed that the attack awaits favorable weather conditions. Until now fog and unfavorable traction for motor vehicles have been factors against a lightning stroke which to be successful must have clear visibility and firm ground.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. The King today gave me the impression of being calm and expressed the hope that his country would escape invasion on the basis that neither Germany nor France and England could dare march across the Belgian frontier thereby incurring the hostility of such powerful neutrals as Italy and the United States with the possible intervention of these countries on the side of Belgium.

CUDAHY

NPL

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HSM A portion of this telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br.)

FROM Brussels

Dated January 20, 1940

Rec'd 10:25 a. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

25, January 20, 11 a. m.

Division of Intelligence
JAN 22 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

With reference to the Embassy's confidential telegram 23, January 17, 6 p. m., (GRAY) a number of speculations have been advanced: one, that the forced landing of German officers was a deliberate plant in the war of nerves with the objective of stampeding the Belgian Government into precipitously calling for French and British military aid. Germany could then argue that the neutrality of Belgium had been violated and could cross the frontier confident of its moral position in so doing. Another assumption is that the incident is evidence of a conspiracy in the army to oppose Hitler in his determination to attack through Belgium and Holland. It is known that there is decided opposition in the German staff against such an attack and forced landing. With revelation of the plan of attack was a deliberate attempt among his own officers, it is advanced, to frustrate this project.

3400011

1511

7400011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 1534

JAN 23 1940

GMR

hsm -2- No. 25, January 20, 11 a. m., from Brussels

project. Despite these hypotheses the menace of German attack remains unchanged for concentration of the military units which commenced early in November still continues. The position of Belgium in maintaining its policy of strictest neutrality between Germany, France and Great Britain, is a very delicate matter for it is realized that on slight pretext Germany would declare Belgium had abandoned neutrality and thus justify the crossing of the frontier by German armies. It emerges that the moral issue involved is considered in some quarters of transcendent importance where it is believed that powerful neutrals like Italy and the United States may take sides against any power violating the neutrality of Belgium. (END GRAY).

CUDAHY

HFD

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Cum
EUPLAN AFFAIRS
JAN 29 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FROM

ADVISED ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
FEB 1 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

HSM
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased
before being communi-
cated to anyone. (C).

Brussels

Dated January 29, 1940

Rec'd 12:05 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

33, January 29, 1 p. m.

Naval Attache reports from unimpeachable source
that within short time exact date unknown contingent
of troops will leave France for Murmansk with objective
of joining Finnish military forces. It will be composed
of three divisions, one French, one Polish, one Canadian,
all fully equipped. Debarkation will be Murmansk not
to violate Swedish neutrality.

CUDA:RY

RR

FEB 5 1940

FILED

760D.61/1029

GML

760d.61
751.61
751.60d

PA/d
EU
MHC
PAC

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

lc
EU
FEB 5 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Stamps to file

FROM

HSM
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased
before being communi-
cated to anyone. (Br.)

Brussels
Dated February 2, 1940
Rec'd 8:30 a. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

34, February 2, 10 a. m. / 1544
Reference my telegram No. 30, January 23, 6 p. m.

While public tension has subsided view of Government
basic situation continues as reported. No immediate
change in German military concentration opposite border
and no relaxation in defense measures taken by Belgium.
High authority emphasizes that while no commitment this
country could not remain indifferent if Holland invaded.
Very credible source expresses belief that German military
plans should be clarified before middle March. Meanwhile,
Belgium determined to continue independent policy and
strictest neutrality.

Copy to Legation The Hague.

CUDAHY

FEB 5 1940

FILED

7406011 PROCEEDINGS WITH 1939 / 1593

GMR

VTC

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HSE
tc
Ed
Shown to M. L. S.
MAR 22 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FROM Brussels

Dated March 22, 1940

Rec'd 10:55 a. m.

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

U - LIAISON OFFICE
MAR 22 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,
Washington.

64, March 22, noon.

Competent authority informs me that German military preparations along Belgian-Dutch frontier continue. No marked increase in number of German troops has been observed but there is a ceaseless accumulation of ammunition and supplies. According to reliable reports, additional bridges over Rhine have been constructed. Military Attache states that all German mechanized divisions except one are concentrated on frontier of Netherlands and Belgium.

Fundamentals of the situation remain unchanged since my 34, February 2, 10 a. m., but Belgian public sentiment is not so tense as feeling exists that German attack is less probable.

Copy to the Legation, The Hague.

CUDAHY

KLP

MAR 27 1940

FILED

740.001 | EUROPEAN WAR, 1939/1859

GRR

Handwritten marks

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HSM
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased
before being communi-
cated to anyone. (Br.)

FROM Brussels
Dated March 22, 1940
Rec'd 11 a. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

65, March 22, 1 p. m.

762.61

During a conversation between prominent official of Foreign Office and a member of the Embassy the former intimated that according to trustworthy reports he had received Ribbentrop did not present any plan for peace negotiations during his recent visit to the Pope. Embassy's informant stated that Ribbentrop defended Germany's present relations with Russia and declared that his country was still a bulwark against bolshevism. He attempted to justify his government's policy towards German Roman Catholics; he also said that it was the Allies who wanted war and that in response to this Germany would fight them remorselessly.

Copy to Rome and The Hague.

CUDAHY

KLP



762.65/339

MAR 25 1940

FILED

B

JR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Brussels

Dated April 10, 1940

FROM

copy. a. a. a. 13 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.



75, April 10, 6 p.m.

The German invasion of Denmark and Norway has made a profound impression and evoked universal expressions of sympathy in the Belgian press. There is regret that the allies should have violated the neutrality of Norwegian waters, but no thought of comparing that action with the German invasion, particularly since the rapidity and violence with which the latter has apparently been carried out is looked upon as proof that it was premeditated.

From the strictly Belgian point of view there is some disposition in the press to regard the breaking out of hostilities in Scandinavia as decreasing the immediate danger to Belgium and the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the attack on Denmark and Norway is largely attributed to their military weakness, and the conclusion is very widely drawn that Belgium's best guarantee of remaining at peace lies in the firm practice of her policy of neutrality and maintenance unimpaired of her army and military defenses.

Copy to The Hague.

KLP

7

CUDARY

HSC
JF
EU

740,001 EW

740001 EUROPEAN WAR 1939/2064

FILED
APR 11 1940

GRR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Seen by Min ^{HSE} ~~AC~~ ~~SO~~
DIVISION
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
APR 12 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
PAID

AC
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (Br)

FROM Brussels

Dated April 11, 1940

Rec'd 5:43 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

77, April 11, 8 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
APR 12 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

749:0011EW

On Tuesday afternoon, April 9, the Foreign
Minister of the Netherlands informed Belgian Government
that Holland expected invasion by Germany within twenty-
four hours. Following the receipt of this information
British Charge d'Affaires and French Ambassador made
demarche on Belgian Foreign Minister asking him in
view of this information from Holland to send appeal
for British and French military assistance. This the
Belgian Government refused in accordance with policy
of independence and strict neutrality. Foreign Office
advises Dutch Foreign Minister did not indicate any
evidence for his belief in the invasion and it has not
to date received any such evidence.

The communique issued after the meeting of the
Cabinet on Wednesday the tenth (reported in my 74,
April 10, 3 p.m.) had for its purpose reaffirmation of
Belgian position and was designed to anticipate im-
pression

749:0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 2106

FILED

G/HC

- 2 - #77, April 11, 8 p.m. from Brussels

pression that Belgium might modify its unyielding neutral position in view of such utterances as that of Halifax on Wednesday (10th) in which he was alleged to have stated that neutral states not prepared to ask for help in time might not receive effective assistance. Foreign Office now reports tension in Holland greatly subsided and states there is no evidence of impending attack on the Belgian-Dutch frontier further than that reported by this Embassy.

Copy to The Hague.

CUDAHY

JBL:EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

le

JR

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

FROM

Brussels

Dated April 15, 1940

Rec'd 1:45 p.m.

Paraphrase to O and and m d 9

Secretary of State,
Washington.

*En: LC. AMR
4/16/40*

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
APR 15 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

79, April 15, 5 p.m.

740,0011EW

New developments are the cancellation of all army leaves, the calling up of considerable additional men to the colors and the posting of guards about the Ministries and public utilities. Military Attache reports no material change in German troop concentration opposite this frontier since my No. 77 of April 11, 9 p.m.

I have just seen the Foreign Minister who tells me the situation is parallel to that which existed during the "alertes" of November and January (telegrams 174 of November 8, 11 p.m. and 14 of January 13, 4 p.m.). He states the gravest danger is the pressure brought to bear by the British and French in an effort to force Belgium to appeal for their military assistance. This pressure might even go to the extent of provoking a German invasion, he stated, and said "he felt like a bleating goat set out as a bait in a pack of lions." He said he thought the British and French would stop at nothing short of a forced incursion on the country. He spoke about the treachery

U - LIAISON OFFICE
APR 17 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

APR 18 1940
RECEIVED

from

740,0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 22223

G/HC

-2- #79, April 15, 5 p.m., from Brussels.

from within at Narvik in Norway and said the purpose of guarding ministries and public utilities buildings was in anticipation of such treacherous action in Belgium. Copy to The Hague.

CUDAHY

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

BRUSSELS

FROM Dated April 18, 1940

Rec'd 2:35 p. m.

LC *EU*
HSC *JL*
Papier to ONI, MID
J. C. [unclear]
LC. [unclear]
4/19/40

Secretary of State,

Washington.

84, April 18, 3 p. m.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
APR 19 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The majority view is that no decision will be taken by Germany with reference to invasion of Belgium until the Norwegian situation is clarified and a definite military decision is reached. This is also the opinion of the Foreign Minister with whom I talked yesterday and who told me he expected to have a quiet week-end in the country. Meanwhile the morale here has been greatly stiffened by the British naval victory and the reported capture of Narvik. The Foreign Minister in a speech before the Senate Tuesday April 16 made the most vigorous and determined utterance since the outbreak of hostilities praising Norway for its valiant defense of neutrality and enunciating the determination of Belgium not to abandon its neutrality regardless of pressure. No speech of Mr. Spaak's has ever such unanimous praise from the press.

There is perceptible relaxation in tension here although the Foreign Minister admits no material change.

740 0011 EW

LIAISON OFFICE
APR 22 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

740 0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939/23 15

APR 23 1940
ATTN

GIR

REB -2-#84, From Brussels, April 18, 3 p. m.

the number of German troops opposite Belgian frontier or in any of the fundamentals. He said Belgian general staff reports some shifting of German troops to the south in the direction of the Grand Duchy Luxemburg but his information is that there remain 72 German divisions opposite the Belgian Dutch frontier which confirms the report of the Embassy's Military Attache. Copy to The Hague.

CUDAHY

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
APR 18 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

HE
EP - EU
RDC

FROM

EG
This message must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (Br)

Brussels
Dated April 18, 1940
Rec'd 11 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

85, April 18, 4 p.m.

Naval Attache reports Soviet Legation in
Brussels has received instructions to send no more
mail or couriers to Rumania and Soviet representatives
in Rumania have been instructed to withdraw all funds
and currency from Rumania.

CUDAHY

CSB

761.71
7226
701.6155
701.6171
740.10011EW

761.71/197

APR 22 1940

FILED

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

8
PatD
SW/PM
4-18-40
EMH

JR

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

FROM

Brussels

Dated April 18, 1940

Rec'd 1:30 p.m.

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MK. DUNN
APR 19 1940
DEPT. OF STATE

Secretary of State
Washington.

SECRETARY OF STATE
APR 18 1940
NOTED

87, April 18, 6 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF STATE ONLY.

740.0211EW

While the present crisis is believed to be passed there is a feeling that the lull is only temporary and that the threat of German invasion remains with the fundamentals of the situation unchanged.

The King sent for me this morning and asked me to tell the President that he considered the invasion of Belgium only matter of time. He asked me very earnestly to request the President to formulate a statement for publication to be issued at the time German invasion next appears imminent. In this statement it would be set forth that the United States could not view with indifference and would be profoundly shocked by a violation of Belgian neutrality and that Great Britain and France do not contemplate a peace for the destruction of Germany and the humiliation of the German people.

741
755-62

740.001 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 2708
Confidential File

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

-2- #87, April 18, 6 p.m., from Brussels.

FROM

I impressed upon the King that the effect of such a statement would be dependent entirely upon its timing. He said he realized this and would advise me when he considered the time opportune.

I believe the proposal for the President to make a statement that the United States could not view with indifference and would be profoundly shocked by a violation of Belgian neutrality is consistent with the position of the President but I would advise against any prediction or anything approaching a commitment in regard to the British and French peace terms.

CUDAHY

HPD

-2- ^{11/11}99, May 8, 6 p.m., from Brussels.

belief that an ultimatum will be presented to Holland demanding unopposed entry of German troops to that country. He believes that similar demands will be made upon Belgium but stresses that he has no evidence other than that herein stated upon which to base this belief. He assures me again that an invasion of Holland opposed by the Dutch will mean military intervention by Belgium.

Copy to The Hague.

CUDAHY

DDM

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

AC
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (C)

Brussels

FROM

Dated May 9, 1940

Rec'd 4:20 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

100, May 9, 5 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE
SECRETARY OF STATE.

I have just conferred with the King. He does not
anticipate an attack on this country at the present
time. He expressed the opinion that the alarm in the
Netherlands is another exhibit of the war of nerves
and points out as significant, in support of this
belief, that the envoys mentioned in my telegram No.
89, May 8, 3 p.m., and reported by the Belgian Ambassa-
dor in Berlin as having left Berlin yesterday for the
Hague have not yet been (?) reported at the Hague.

He assured me he would keep me advised of devel-
opments and when convinced that an invasion of Belgium
was imminent would inform me so that I could telegraph
you for timing action suggested in my 87, of April 18,
addressed to the President and Secretary of State.

CUDAHY

Info
Eastman
W/PM
5-10-40

Put to file
Central
SECRETARY OF STATE
MAY 10 1940
NOTED

740.8211EW

7400011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939/2775

FILED

Confidential File
GMR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ke
SMA *EW*
HL

FROM

CK
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (Br.)

Brussels

Dated May 10, 1940

Rec'd 5:32 a.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

File
DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAY 10 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MID 4 5 1

RUSH

102, May 10, 2 a.m.

Have just been advised by Foreign Office that there
is great movement and concentration of German troops
on Dutch, Belgian and Luxemburg frontiers. This
activity was first reported at 9 o'clock tonight and
is still continuing and is believed to be anticipatory
to general attack at dawn.

CUDAHY

REP

740,000 EW

740,000 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 /2766

U - LIAISON OFFICE
MAY 11 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MAY 14 1940

FILE

GMR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

GRAY

LC
AF
HWS
RPS
EU
VL
←



FROM

Brussels

Dated May 10, 1940

Rec'd 8:58 a.m.



Secretary of State
Washington.

103, May 10, 9 a.m.

I talked by telephone at 2 a.m., with the Foreign Minister of Luxemburg and our Charge Waller who told me there was a large concentration of German aircraft over Luxemburg, shots had been exchanged across the frontier and a general attack was considered imminent. At 4:10 a.m., the Belgian Foreign Office called to inform him airdromes in Holland had been attacked by German military planes at 5:15 a.m., a general German aerial attack occurred on Brussels, one bomb demolished a residence close to the Embassy.

The Foreign Office tells me the Belgian Government asked for French and British military assistance at 6:30 a.m., and he has been informed that French and British forces are responding to this appeal.

He said that no warning note or demand from Germany before attack on Belgium and that he has not seen or heard from the German Ambassador. He states Belgian Government has no intention of leaving Brussels.

It

740.0016
740.0016
740.0016



755.62
455.01

740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 2785

MAY 14 1940

RECEIVED

u

-2- 103, May 10, 9 a.m., from Brussels.

It is reported in newspaper circles that there is fighting on the Albert Canal and south along the frontier to Luxemburg.

CUDAHY

RR

Handwritten initials: KC, EU, etc.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HSM

GRAY

FROM

Brussels

Dated May 10, 1940

Rec'd 12:25 p. m.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAY 10 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,
Washington.

Handwritten: TO ONI, MID

104, May 10, 10 a. m.

I have just been informed by Foreign Office that at 8:40 this morning the German Ambassador called on the Foreign Minister at the Foreign Office and stated that because of the French and British threat to the neutrality of Belgium the German Government had decided to take military measures for the safeguarding of their neutrality. The German Ambassador stated that a great German force was massed on the Belgian frontier entirely adequate to protect the country and ensure its neutrality that if the Belgian Government permitted the entry of German troops the German Government would give its guarantee to respect Belgian neutrality also guarantee the safety of the King and the permanence of the Crown. The Foreign Minister refused to listen to the reading of the Ambassador's statement setting forth this declaration and with great spirit expressed his repugnance at the ruthless tactics of the Germans in attacking the open city of Brussels without any note or warning of any description.

Handwritten: 740-0011EW

*Stamp: RECORDED
MAY 11 1940*

740001 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 2795

*Handwritten: 740-0011EW
25-5-40*

GRR

CUDAHY