

France 4/30/38 - 7/25/38

38  
2  
3  
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

OFFICE OF THE ADVISER IN  
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated April 30, 1938

Rec'd 3:13 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH

677, April 30, 7 p. m.

CONFIDENTIAL.

I have just had a talk with Rochat. He said that the French delegation was delighted with the results of the conversations in London. They had found the friendliest possible attitude on the part of the British and an evident desire to understand the French point of view and to cooperate fully and frankly with France on the entire field under discussion.

He said that Czechoslovakia had, of course, been the most urgent problem. Here there had been differences of view between the British and the French. The British were seriously concerned over the Czech situation, the French even more so.

(END SECTION ONE)

NPL-RGC

WILSON

MAY 3 - 1938

FILED

741.51/279

FP

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated April 30, 1938

Rec'd 5:10 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH

677, April 30, 7 p. m. (SECTION TWO)

The French feel that a policy of adding concession to concession merely whets the appetite of the Germans behind Henlein and risks weakening the Czech position to the point where it may collapse. The British, anxious to avoid a situation which might develop into war and drag them in, would like to be sure that every possible concession has been offered short of such as would infringe the independence of the state. It was decided that Great Britain would make a demarche in Berlin urging that the problem be settled by peaceful negotiation. This demarche would in diplomatic guise retrace the position stated by Chamberlain in the Commons on March 24, namely, that if war should break out because of Czechoslovakia no one could say how far it would

741.51/279

FP

REB

2-#677, From Paris, Apr. 30, 7p.m.  
(Sec. Two)

would spread or what countries would be involved. Rochat said that the French attach great importance to the fact that the British have agreed to take this step. They feel that there has been a healthy evolution since March 11 as regards British thinking concerning Czechoslovakia. It was also agreed that both the British and the French would urge Benes to consider again the question of concessions to the German minority and see if he could not pull some further concession out of the hat which could be offered Henlein at about the time the British make their demarche in Berlin.

I asked whether it had been the impression in London that Benes' scheme of concessions did not go far enough. Rochat said that there had not been time to examine carefully Benes' proposals.

WILSON

NFL

RGC

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated April 30, 1938

Rec'd 5 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH

677, April 30, 7 p. m. (SECTION THREE)

It was considered both by the British and by the French that Benes was making a genuine effort to meet any reasonable demand on the part of the German minority. In asking him to consider whether he could add to his list of concessions they were not suggesting any specific item or bringing any pressure to bear.

I asked about the French proposal to prevent "economic strangulation" of Czechoslovakia. Rochat said that it had been agreed to have this subject studied by experts. He said that it was realized today that if France and England some years ago had taken measures to render Austria less dependent economically on the Reich, Austria might be alive today. I asked whether

741.51/279

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REB

2-#677, From Paris, Apr. 30, 7p.m.  
(SEC. THREE)

whether as a practical matter France could in fact increase her purchases from Czechoslovakia to any appreciable extent. Rochat admitted that this would be very difficult since the two countries compete in many lines of production (I have the impression that this economic proposal will not get far). I asked if there had been discussion in London of an approach to the Polish Government regarding an outlet for Czechoslovak commerce through Poland. He said that the matter had not (repeat not) been <sup>mentioned</sup> ~~mentioned~~.

Rochat added that the French delegation had reaffirmed to the British the intention of the French Government to live up to its treaty commitments in case of an aggression against Czechoslovakia.

(END SECTION THREE)

WILSON

NPL

RGC

(#) Apparent omission

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

MB

This telegram <sup>1-1224</sup> must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

FROM Paris

Dated April 30, 1938

Rec'd 6:24 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

RUSH.

677, April 30, 7 p.m. (SECTION FOUR).

I asked if there had been discussion of preparing the way for negotiation with Germany. He said that the British had not made any proposal to the French in this respect. He said that obviously Chamberlain intended to sound out the Germans as to a basis of settlement whenever the moment seemed opportune, and in this he would meet no objection from the French.

Rochat said that there had been complete agreement on the question of completion of military defense measures. It had been agreed that there would be general staff talks. I asked if this had not also been agreed in March 1936 after the breach of Locarno. Rochat said that this was true but that nothing had then come of it. The general staff conversations will now <sup>begin</sup> ~~begin~~ within a few days covering cooperation of the armies, navies, and particularly the air services and these conversations will be actively pursued.

Questions

741.51/279

FP

2- No. 677, April 30, from Paris.

Questions relating to the use of French air bases and French ports by the British, and to connections in purchases of raw materials, stocks of gasoline, air planes from America, et cetera, will be studied by technical experts.

(END SECTION FOUR).

WILSON

NPL:RGC

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM Paris

Dated April 30, 1938

Rec'd 6:35 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH.

677, April 30, 7 p.m. (SECTION FIVE).

As regards the Franco-Italian negotiations the British have promised their fullest support in overcoming difficulties. With Hitler arriving in Rome on May 3 it is clear that time is lacking to reach agreement before the meeting of the Council on May 9. It is confidentially expected, however, that complete agreement will be reached before long and an ambassador sent to Rome.

Lochat said that there had been discussion of the procedure at Geneva to deal with the recognition of the Ethiopian conquest. The British will sound out the different delegations on the outside chance that unanimity might be found on some formula. If this is impossible then there will be a declaration which can be approved by a majority vote in the sense that each state should be free to take the action it judges appropriate. I asked if there was any indication that the British might recognize immediately after

741.51/279

FP

2- No. 677, April 30, from Paris.

after Geneva. Rochat said that it was his impression that the British intended to delay recognition in accordance with the Anglo-Italian note of April 16, until a settlement of the Spanish question permits the entry into force of the Anglo-Italian agreement.

As regards Spain, Rochat said that there would be a meeting of the Non-intervention Committee shortly to consider the despatch of commissions to Spain to make a census of so-called volunteers there in accordance with the resolution before the Committee on November 4 last. It will be necessary to obtain the approval of the Committee and of the two parties to the Spanish conflict to the despatch of these commissions. The French Government has agreed to the reestablishment of land control as soon as the commissions have arrived in Spain and begun the work of making a census of volunteers with the understanding that if within approximately thirty days thereafter the effective withdrawal of volunteers have not begun their land control may again be suspended. I asked if there had been discussion of German economic penetration in Spain. Rochat said that this question had been put aside and it had been agreed to concentrate all efforts on getting ahead with the withdrawal of volunteers.

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

MB  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
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to anyone. (C)

FROM Paris

Dated April 30, 1938

Rec'd 8:12 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUBH.

677, April 30, 7 p.m. (SECTION SIX).

The question of Swiss neutrality rights had been discussed and it had been agreed that the British and French would support a proposal at Geneva treating the Swiss position as a "unique" case and recognizing that Switzerland should be relieved from any obligation to enforce economic or financial sanctions as she had already been relieved from the enforcement of military sanctions. The formula would be so drafted as to apply only to Switzerland and to prevent any other state from availing itself of the same special treatment.

I inquired if there had been discussion of credits, or financial assistance in the purchase of armaments or airplanes. Lochat said that Bonnet had discussed financial questions with Simon but he did not know what the upshot was.

I asked if there had been any discussion of the Far  
East

741.51/279

FP

2- No. 677, April 30, from Paris (SECTION SIX)

East. Rochat said that there had been very little because time was lacking. Yesterday had been entirely taken up with consideration of Czechoslovakia. They had ended their discussions about 5:30 in the afternoon in order to fly back to Paris without further delay in view of reports of bad weather and the discussions had wound up in the usual last minute rush and confusion. Bonnet has just sent word to me that as there will be Cabinet meetings on Monday he must set my appointment over to Tuesday.

Copied by air mail to London, Rome, Berlin, Praha.

END MESSAGE.

WINSON

NFL:JCG

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DEPT. OF STATE  
MAY 9 1938  
Handwritten initials: *File*

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

FROM Paris

Dated May 7, 1938

Rec'd 2:25 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

728, May 7, 5 p.m.

CONFIDENTIAL.

The Italian Charge d'Affaires told us last night that the Franco-Italian negotiations should be concluded about the middle of this month and it was expected that a French ambassador would be sent to Rome by the end of the month.

Prunas said that it would be impossible to exaggerate the importance of the Anglo-Italian agreement. It had removed mutual suspicion and fear which were leading straight to war. Italy would now be glad to see her relations with France on an equally satisfactory basis. The Italian Government is most desirous of seeing France become again stable, prosperous, and strong, since, if ~~it~~ <sup>France</sup> should continue to suffer from the weaknesses and disorders inflicted by the Popular Front, it would be impossible to prevent German domination of Europe.

While he had no information about conversations of a political

751.65/385

MAY 9 1938

FILED

G/HC

-2- #728, May 7, 5 p.m., from Paris.

political character that may have taken place between Hitler and Mussolini, he was quite sure that there would be no military agreement; this despite the possibility that such an agreement might be sought from the German side.

Copy to Rome, Berlin.

BULLITT

EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM

Paris

Dated May 11, 1938

Rec'd 8:30 a.m.

HM

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

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

745, May 11, noon.

My 759, May 9, 7 p.m.



The impression I derived from my conversation with Daladier regarding possible French action in case of a German attack on Czechoslovakia was confirmed last night when Chautemps expressed to me his belief that aside from protesting France would do "absolutely nothing".

On the other hand Leger said to me yesterday that if Germany should attack Czechoslovakia France automatically would go to war at once and England inevitably would be obliged to follow.

I have talked with many other French politicians since my return and I believe that the point of view expressed by **Leger** is much further away from reality than the point of view expressed by Daladier and Chautemps.

Incidentally

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EU

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MAY 17 1938  
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CONFIDENTIAL FILE

G/HC

-2- #745, May 11, noon from Paris

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Incidentally Paul Reynaud does not expect the present financial and economic difficulties of France to be worked out satisfactorily in the immediate future and looks forward to a day when he will be Minister of Finance in a cabinet of National Union that will extend from the Communists to the extreme Right.

BULLIEN

MPD



EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Paris, May 11, 1938.

No. 2242

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
JUN 8 1938  
M

ADVISED ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. HORNBECK  
MAY 28 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Subject: The Far East.

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in confidence DT

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ADVISED ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. DUNN  
JUN 1 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Today  
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with copy  
for Hornbeck

RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1938 MAY 21 AM 10 58

OFFICE OF ARMS  
AND  
MUNITIONS  
CONTROL  
JUN 1 1938

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Division of  
FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS  
MAY 23 1938  
Department of State

761.94/1045

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Commercial O.M. (A. & O.)  
To

Sir:

1/ I have the honor to enclose for the Department's information a copy of a memorandum containing data with regard to the Far East obtained by an officer of this Embassy.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

Edwin C. Wilson  
Edwin C. Wilson  
Counselor of Embassy

In quintuplicate

Enclosure:  
1/ Memorandum

LH/jwd

4- FROM O.M.  
Received  
J. J. N.

JUN 13 1938

FILED

Helping  
Hornbeck  
Lobato  
6/4/38  
CR

Enclosure No. 1 of despatch No. of  
May 11, 1938, from the Embassy at Paris.

Paris, May 6, 1938.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE AMBASSADOR:

From: Lawrence Higgins.

Subject: The Far East.

On his return yesterday from vacation Edgar Mowrer went through Geneva and saw the "Russian Under Secretary of the League, Sokolin" there, who told him that during the winter the Russians have built up their Far Eastern Army so that now it is prepared to resist any Japanese attack. Sokolin does not, however, think that the Japanese will now take on the Russians in addition to the Chinese, even though he estimates the strength of the Japanese forces as half a million in Manchukuo and a million in the rest of China. Sokolin also said that aside from the planes delivered to the Chinese there were one hundred and fifty piloted by Russians and operating as a special and distinct corps. It was this air force which carried out the raid on Formosa. The Japanese Ambassador at Moscow protested on its account, but no heed was given to his protest.

893.248  
793.94

L.H.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

*File*  
*PM*  
*PH*  
*TD*

FROM

JR  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (D)

Paris  
Dated May 17, 1938  
Rec'd 8:10 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

SECRETARY OF STATE  
MAY 17 1938  
NOTED

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
MAY 17 1938  
MR. WELLES

777, May 17, 1 p.m.

PERSONAL AND SECRET FOR THE SECRETARY.

The Czechoslovakian situation is so critical that  
while I will concede there is an excellent chance of  
a peaceful settlement, I nevertheless believe the  
Department should be prepared to face a major European  
war before August 15.

BULLITT

HPD

*7600*  
*7600*  
*7600*

760 F. 62/265  
Confidential HPD

MAY 20 1938

FILED

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAY 23 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JR

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

FROM PARIS

Dated May 21, 1938

Rec'd 8:05 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

807, May 21, 7 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

The Polish Ambassador Lukasiewicz, who returned yesterday from Warsaw, stated to me that without question Poland would declare war immediately on the Soviet Union if the Soviet Union should attempt to send troops across Polish territory to support Czechoslovakia. He stated that if Soviet airplanes should cross Polish territory en route to Czechoslovakia they would be attacked at once by Polish planes. He stated that there was a considerable concentration of Polish planes close to the Polish-Rumanian frontier for the specific purpose of attacking Russian planes attempting to cross in this neighborhood.

The Polish Ambassador went on to say that if Russian troops should attempt to cross Rumania en route to Czechoslovakia he was certain that the Rumanian Government would declare war at once on the Soviet Union (see my telegram No. 773, May 16, 5 p.m.) and that Poland would declare

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MAY 23 1938

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-2- #807, May 21, 7 p.m., from Paris.

declare war simultaneously on the Soviet Union in accordance with the Polish-Rumanian alliance. He added that if Soviet planes should attempt to cross Rumania it might be impossible for the Rumanian air force to stop them; but that it was not excluded that the Polish air force would send sufficient planes to Rumanian territory to assist the Rumanians in attacking Russian planes which might attempt to cross Rumanian territory.

It seems fairly clear therefore that Bonnet's prediction is well founded that an attempt by the Soviet Union to bring aid to Czechoslovakia would result in declarations of war by both Poland and Rumania.

My feeling with regard to the gravity of the present situation has not diminished.

BULLITT

ROW:EMB

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAY 23 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM Paris

Dated May 21, 1938

Rec'd 8 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH.

808, May 21, 9 p.m.

Osusky who returned a few days ago from Praha has just informed me that the concessions which the Czechoslovak Government will make to the Sudeten will be: (one) use of German as an official language, in the law courts et cetera; (two) complete control by the Sudeten of their own schools, (three) representation of Sudeten in local administration in the proportion that their numbers bear to the whole population. "They are", said Osusky, "to be treated no longer as a minority but as a nationality".

I asked him if he expected the Sudeten to accept these conditions. He said that when he had left Praha the Czechoslovak Government had believed that these concessions would be accepted; but that the picture had changed since then. Hodza had invited Henlein to come to Praha for a discussion and Henlein had disappeared.

Hodza

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CONFIDENTIAL FILE

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MAY 23 1938

G/HC

-2- #808, May 21, 9 p.m., from Paris.

Hodza had ordered the Czechoslovak police to discover where Henlein was.

In the course of the next ten days the Czechoslovak Government would announce these concessions whether or not the Sudeten should accept them.

The mobilization of one class of reserves of the Czechoslovak Army had been decided upon, Osusky said, about a week ago and was not (repeat not) a reply to the German stationing of troops on the Czech border yesterday. The Czechoslovak Government had decided that the defenses on the German border were inadequately manned and that it must call out one class of reserves in order to avoid a surprise attack. (END OF SECTION ONE).

BULLITT

EMB:ROW

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (D)

FROM

Paris

Dated May 21, 1938

Rec'd 7:35 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

808, May 21, 9 p.m. (SECTION TWO).

Osusky said that the two Germans who had been shot in Bohemia today had been distributing Nazi propaganda and had tried to escape on motorcycles and had refused to stop when summoned to do so. They had therefore been fired upon and killed.

Osusky went on to say that Czechoslovakia was absolutely determined to fight to the last man in case German troops should cross the border. He added that under no conditions would the Sudeten be permitted to form "storm battalions" or to arm themselves.

I asked him if he did not believe war was imminent and he said that he feared we might be at the verge of a war which would end in the destruction of all Europe. He felt Germany could not be scared off unless England and France unitedly should evoke that they would march to defend Czechoslovakia. He said that he believed France would march but was doubtful about England.

-2- #808, May 21, 9 p.m. (SECTION TWO) from Paris.

7604.61  
I ventured to express the opinion that there could be no doubt about England. England would not promise to march in defense of Czechoslovakia. Osusky said that in that case war was inevitable. He expressed the belief that the Soviet Union would not be able to send troops to Czechoslovakia but that the Soviet air force might be of considerable assistance.

The impression I gathered from this conversation with Osusky was that the Czechs prefer to see their nation succumb in a conflagration which will destroy all Europe rather than to make the large concessions which alone would satisfy Hitler and the Sudeten. (END OF MESSAGE).

BULLITT

EMB:ROW

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAY 23 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

NY

GRAY

Paris

FROM

Dated May 22, 1938

Rec'd 10:35 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

809, May 22, 2 p.m.

I am informed by the United Press that Bonnet at press conference last evening stated that France sincerely hopes that the Czech minority problem can be settled in a friendly manner and while France hopes that Germany will do nothing to put France in a position where treaty obligations would oblige her to intervene, nevertheless, she will respect these obligations and provide the utmost assistance to Czech slovakia if it is a victim of aggression.

I am likewise advised by the United Press that at a press conference this morning Bonnet stated: (1) Czech slovakia has informed the French Government that among the 80,000 troops mobilized yesterday were some Sudeten Germans who joined their regiments and that it will not mobilize any more troops; (2) Czech slovakia will carry out an immediate investigation into the killing yesterday at Chab of two Sudeten Germans and will punish the guards responsible for this killing; in the event it is proven that they were at fault; (3) Czech slovakia has advised

Berlin

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FILED

MAY 23 1938

G/H/C

NY -2- No. 809, May 22, from Paris

Berlin that there is in force an arbitration treaty between Germany and Czechoslovakia in the settlement of disputes which it is hoped Germany will invoke (7) if necessary rather than use force; (4) Hitler is expected to return to Berlin from Berchtesgaden tomorrow or the day after. He has not seen Henlein who is reported to be at Cheb.

BULLITT

RR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HL Paris

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before communicated to anyone FROM Dated May 22, 1938

(D)

Rec'd 4:40 p. m.

Secretary of State

Washington

810, May 22, 6 p. m.

SECRETARY OF STATE  
MAY 23 1938  
NOTED  
MR. WELLES  
MAY 21 1938  
MR. WELLES

PERSONAL AND SECRET FOR THE PRESIDENT:

I addressed to you two days ago the following letter which cannot reach you by pouch for another week. Yesterday's events seem to me to justify telegraphing it:

Dear Mr. President:

I hope this letter will reach you before Europe blows up. At the moment it looks to me as if the Czechs had decided that in the long run it would be better for them to have general war rather than give the Sudeten a sufficient autonomy to satisfy either Henlein or Hitler. They will shoot some Sudeten and Hitler will march across the Czech frontier.

The question of whether or not all Europe shall go to war is therefore ceasing to be a question of finding a basis for compromise between the Czechs and Germany. It is becoming a question of whether or not France will march when the Germans cross the Czech frontier. Neither you nor I can decide that question for the French Government; but

WE

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CONFIDENTIAL FILMAY 24 1938 / HC

ML -2- Paris May 22, 1938 #810 4:40 p.m. Sec. 1

we can both have a certain amount of influence on the decision.

751.62  
I feel that it would be an unspeakable tragedy if France, to support Czechoslovakia, should attack the "Siegfried Line" between Strasbourg and Luxemburg which is the only point at which attack is considered possible by the French general staff. As you know French airplane production is now about 45 planes per month; British about 80 per month. The Germans, at worst, even when changing types, produce 300 per month and at best 500 to 600 per month. The French have no anti-aircraft artillery worth mentioning and are just beginning to produce it. There are only 30,000 gas masks available for the entire civilian population of France. The slaughter of the entire younger generation of France would be certain and every city in France could be leveled to the ground by German planes. The French even under such circumstances would hold out and the war would be a long one involving England and all Europe. There could be only one possible result; the complete destruction of Western Europe and Bolshevism from one end of the continent to the other.

The chances are today that the French will carry out their pledge to Czechoslovakia as a matter of honor--whatever the cost. If you believe as I believe that it is not in the interest either of the United States or civilization

ML ~~-2-~~ Paris May 22, 1938 #810 4:40 p. m. Sec.1

as a whole to have the continent of Europe devastated I think we should attempt to find some way which will let the French out of their moral commitment.

(END SECTION ONE).

BULLITT

EMB

5

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ML  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased before  
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(D)

Paris

Dated May 22, 1938

Rec'd 5:15 p. m.

Secretary of State

Washington

810, May 22, 6 p. m. (SECTION THREE).

The conference at The Hague would probably have to recommend that a plebiscite be held in Czechoslovakia to determine the will of the different peoples of that country. If the Czechs should refuse to hold such a plebiscite the French would have an escape from their desperate moral dilemma and general European war would be avoided.

You would be accused, or the man sent to The Hague as your representative would be, of selling out a small nation in order to produce another Hitler triumph. I should not hesitate to take that brick on my head and I don't think you should either if thereby you could avoid a general European war.

I could make this letter 50 pages long filled with explanations, but as between you and myself I feel no explanations are needed. You, at least, will know that I have not become either a cynic or a lover of Hitler. I have thought this matter over night after night and I am convinced that this highly unpleasant course is the one

that

ml -2- Paris May 22, 1938 #810 5:15 p.m. Sec.3

that we should pursue and the only one that offers a chance of success.

If you should consider that this proposal is sound I think you should work out at once your statement to the Ambassadors (?) so that you can spring it at a moments notice. The moment has not yet arrived; but it may soon.

It would be fatal I believe to communicate your intention to any government including the British. They would at once relax their own efforts to reconcile the Czechs and Germans because they would feel that at last they were getting the United States tied up in European political problems. Furthermore they would in confidence, tell all their friends in Europe and you could certainly in that event count on refusals from Hitler and Mussolini.

You would of course make it clear to the people of the United States that your action was directed toward this one emergency and that you had no intention of involving the United States in all the disputes of Europe.

In addition I believe that it would help immensely if you should call in St. Quentin and tell him that you hope France will not commit suicide and if you would authorize me to say the same thing for you to Daladier.

In any event as soon as you have considered this suggestion will you please send me a telegram containing

ML -3- Paris May 22, 1938 /810 5:15 p. m. Sec. 3

one word either "affirmative" or "negative".

Concluding paragraphs of letter not telegraphed  
since they are entirely personal.

BULLITT

ELB

S

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

CA  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone (D)

FROM

PARIS

Dated May 22, 1938

Rec'd 5 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington

810, May 22, 6 p.m. (SECTION TWO).

I do not believe that any general appeal for peace by you at the present time would be effective. Today the governments of both Germany and Italy hate the United States so heartily that neither one would accept any such proposal as you were thinking of making last January. Moreover there would not be time to summon representatives to Washington. Both Germany and Italy might however accept a specific proposal of a limited nature.

I am fully aware of all the objections to the suggestion which I am about to make. If you should act on it you would be accused of involving the United States in European politics and sacrificing another small nation to Hitler. But I feel that when the people of the United States realize, as they soon will, that general war in Europe is imminent they will not only accept but will demand some action from you which may promise to stop it.

If and when a German march across the border of Czechoslovakia seems imminent I think that you should take  
action

action of the following nature:

Call to the White House the Ambassadors of England, France, Germany, and Italy. Ask them to transmit to Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, and Mussolini your urgent invitation to send representatives at once to the Hague to attempt to work out a peaceful settlement of the dispute between Germany and Czechoslovakia. Add that if the four governments desire, a representative of the United States will sit with them. You should also make a personal appeal of the sort that you know best how to make referring to the fact that we are the children of all the nations of Europe, that our civilization is a composite of all the civilizations of Europe, that just as we are grateful for Shakespeare so are we grateful for Beethoven, that just as we are grateful for Moliere so are we grateful for Leonardo da Vinci, <sup>et cetera,</sup> that we cannot stand by and watch the beginning of the end of European civilization without making one last effort to stop its destruction; that you are convinced that the only result of general European war today would be an Asiatic despotism established on fields of dead.

After a general conversation with the four Ambassadors you might reinforce your action by personal conversations with each Ambassador stressing to the German Ambassador the fact that France will fight and England will fight, that

CA

--3--810 from Paris Sec. 2..

war in Europe today can end only in the establishment of Bolshevism from one end of the continent to the other, that your proposed conference will leave the Bolsheviks beyond the swamps which divide the Soviet Union from Europe and are Europe's real eastern boundary. I think that even Hitler would accept under such circumstances.

BULLITT

EN

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
MAY 27 1938  
ML  
MR. MESSERSMITH  
(D)

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. HORNBECK  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE  
MAY 24 1938  
MR. MESSERSMITH

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone.  
Dated May 22, 1938  
FROM Rec'd 6:35 p. m.

Secretary of State

SECRETARY OF STATE  
MAY 23 1938  
NOTED

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
MAY 24 1938  
MR. WELLES

WASHINGTON  
DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAY 31 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

May 22, 7 p. m. (SECTION ONE)

SECRETLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY AND UNDER SECRETARY.

Bonnet has just read to me a memorandum which the British Ambassador in Berlin presented to Ribbentrop last night. The memorandum stated inter-alia:

The British Government had been urging moderation on the Czech Government.

The French Government had informed the British Government many times in the past few days that if German troops should cross the frontier into Czechoslovakia France would carry out the terms of her alliance with Czechoslovakia, mobilize at once and declare war on Germany.

The German Government was aware of the friendship and close collaboration of the British and French Governments and it was impossible to conceal the fact that if France should be drawn into war by Germany attacking Czechoslovakia Great Britain would be obliged to support France.

The limits of a war started in this manner could not be

Handwritten notes and initials: H, e, AM, BATS, BATH, EQ

760F.62/281

CONFIDENTIAL FILED

G/HC

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607162

MAY 19 1938

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741.50

be predicted. Countries remote from the original site of the conflict would be drawn in at an earlier or later date. ~~There~~ ~~was~~ was then a phrase couched in diplomatic language which meant, if it meant anything, that Great Britain would go to war in support of France immediately.

The memorandum ended with a description of the common interests of England and France and their common devotion to democracy and human freedom.

Henderson, the British Ambassador in Berlin, reported that Ribbentrop became livid with rage on hearing the contents of this memorandum. He called Henderson's attention to the fact that in addition to the two Sudeten killed yesterday the Czechs had wounded eighty more. He said that Great Britain should properly give her advice to the Czech Government and not to the German Government.

Ribbentrop finally concluded by saying that Germany would protect Germans on the Czech side of the frontier and that even though England were to take the course outlined in the British Government's memorandum, Germany would not hesitate to make war any more than she had hesitated in 1914.

BULLITT

EN

CA  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone (D)

PARIS

Dated May 22, 1938

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REC'D 6:25 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

FROM

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

MAY 31 1938

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

811, May 22, 7 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

Bonnet said that during the whole of last night he had been in agony as he had feared that Hitler would order immediate mobilization of two German classes in reply to the Czech mobilization of two classes. He said that the British would press the Czech Government tomorrow to make really great concessions to the Sudeten. I asked him if Osusky, the Czech Minister in Paris, had informed him as he had informed <sup>(ME?)</sup> him of the concessions that the Czech Government was prepared to make (see my telegram No. 808, May 21, 9 p.m.). He said Osusky had not given him this information and when I repeated to him the terms of these concessions he said that they would certainly be totally inadequate.

Bonnet said that the British Government would certainly press the Czech Government to make greater concessions than these and would demand that the Czechoslovak Government make concessions which would really satisfy for the moment both Henlein and Hitler. If the Czech Government should refuse to make such concessions after advice by the British, The French Government would say to the Czechoslovak Government that it fully supported these concessions and that the Franco-Czech Alliance would be placed in question if Czechoslovakia did not accord the concessions.

CA

BULLITT

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

Dated May 22, 1938

Rec'd 6:55 p. m.

FROM

Secretary of State

Washington

811, May 22, 7 p. m. (SECTION THREE)

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAY 31 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Bonnet, who was acutely disturbed, then implored me

to have our Government do what ever it could to work out a  
solution of the conflict. He asked me if it might not be  
possible for our Government to instruct our Minister at  
Praha to call on Benes and state that the Czechoslovak  
Government would not have the sympathy of the American  
Government if it should not attempt seriously to produce  
a peaceful solution of this conflict by making concessions  
to the Sudeten Germans which would satisfy Henlein and  
Hitler.

Bonnet then said to me that last night a telephone  
call had come from Charlottesville, Virginia, from the  
President to Daladier. Daladier had been unavailable and  
when he, Bonnet, had tried to get the President on the  
telephone at Charlottesville the reply had been that the  
President had already left for a fishing trip. I should  
be obliged if you would inform me whether or not this is

true

true as I was unable to offer any explanation of the reason for the call.

Bonnet went on to discuss the chances of France declaring war if the German troops should cross into Czechoslovakia. He was much depressed when I told him that Blum with whom I spent several hours today was passionately in favor of war and that Blum had predicted that all the Socialists would vote for war.

Bonnet said that the French Senate would vote unanimously against war. He feared, however, that the resistance of the Senate would be inadequate. If the Germans should mobilize the French would be obliged to mobilize. The Germans would probably then send an ultimatum to France. In the face of an ultimatum from Germany war would be inevitable.

BULLITT

EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ME

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

FROM

Paris

Dated May 22, 1938

Rec'd 6:40 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAY 21 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

811, May 22, 7 p.m. SECTION FOUR)

Bonnet again urged that our Government should  
reinforce the British action in Praha. He added that  
he was more convinced than ever that a French attack on  
Germany at the present time would result in the  
destruction of France. Again he predicted that Paris  
would be destroyed meter by meter by German air attacks.  
The Polish Ambassador had just informed him that Poland  
positively would not march against Germany. Rumania  
would not march. France's only assistance at the  
outset would be Negrin and Italian - a pretty pair!

I assume that the British Government is keeping  
you fully informed with regard to the efforts it is  
making in Praha and in Berlin. I believe that if  
the British Government should make in Praha as strong  
a demarche as it made in Berlin last night and if the  
Czechs should refuse to accede to the British demands

the

ME

2-#811 From Paris, May 22, 7 p.m.

the French would bring great pressure on Czechoslovakia.

But Benes can throw the Continent into war by shooting some more Sudeten. And the question is whether or not he has decided that it is in the interest of Czechoslovakia to provoke war now, when the support of France and England is almost certain. From a mass of reports, verbal and written, I am inclined to believe that Benes prefers war to real concessions. Under such circumstances I believe that a statement to Benes by the American Minister in Praha of the nature suggested by Bonnet is fully justified. If Wilson in Berlin could inform the German Government that such a demarche had been made in Praha Ribbentrop might listen favorably to urgings of patience, in spite of the German Government's hatred of the United States.

BULLITT

RGC

JR

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

This telegram must be Paris  
closely paraphrased before being communicated  
to anyone (D)

Dated May 30, 1938

FROM Rec'd 10:24 a.m., 31st.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

850; May 30, midnight (SECTION ONE)

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.



Reference to my telegram No. 846, May 30, 1 p.m., contrary to Bonnet's statement to me last night that Osusky had told him that the concessions which the Government of Czechoslovakia would make to the Sudeten would go far beyond those indicated in my 808, May 21, 9 p.m., Osusky, Czech Minister to Paris, who returned last night from Praha, said to me today that the concessions would be precisely those outlined in my telegram under reference.

He said that the Sudeten would be offered (one) the use of the German language as an official language for all purposes, (two) that they would be given control not only of the program of education in the Sudeten schools but also of the expenditure of the school budgets -- with reservations for protection of the Czech and non Nazi minorities in the Sudeten region, (three) that they would be given a proportionate share

in

760F.52/399 (SEC. 1)

FILED

CONFIDENTIAL FILE G/H/C

MAY 1 - 1938

-2- #850, May 30, midnight (SECTION ONE) from Paris.

in domestic administration, finance, interior, et cetera.

I asked if the Sudeten would be permitted to have their proportionate share in the officers corps of the Czechoslovak army. Osusky replied that this question had not yet been raised by the Sudeten and that it would of course have to be examined with extreme caution.

Osusky said that although Henlein had not returned personally to talk with Hodza two of his representatives had been in constant contact with Hodza. Hodza had conferred with them again yesterday, and had telephoned to Paris today to say that he was hopeful that Henlein would accept the concessions indicated above as the basis for settlement. Hodza moreover had said that he expected Henlein to call on him again next week.

BULLITT

CSB

EU

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EDA  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased  
before being communi-  
cated to anyone (D)

1-1226

FROM

PARIS

Dated May 31, 1938

Received 11:26 a.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAY 31 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

850, May 31, midnight (SECTION TWO)

Osusky added that whether or not Henlein should accept these concessions it had been decided that they would be offered to the Sudeten and would be presented to the Czech Parliament in the form of government sponsored draft laws and voted in the month of June or July at the latest.

Osusky asserted that Henlein and the other Sudeten leaders had been greatly impressed by the treatment accorded by Hitler to Seyss-Inquart and the other Austrian Nazi leaders. Henlein and the other Sudeten leaders realized that if Germany should take over the Sudeten districts they would become citizens and the Sudeten districts would be administered by emissaries from Berlin.

Osusky added that the elections of last Sunday and yesterday had demonstrated that there were still many Germans in the Sudeten districts who did not desire to become

750F.62/359 (SEC.2)

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WHITIN G/H/C

EDA - 2 - #850, May 31, midnight from Paris Section two.

become slaves under a Nazi dictatorship but preferred to live as free men. He asserted that the sincere Roman catholic Sudeten who had been overwhelmed by the cowardly obeisance of Cardinal Innitzer to Hitler had begun to recover their courage and that the Catholic church element might prove to be a strong force for the preservation of Czechoslovakia as a free and independent state.

Perhaps the most important statement that Osusky made was that the Czechoslovak Government had decided to accord to the Polish minority in the Teschen district and to the Hungarian minority in Slovakia the same privileges that would be accorded to the Sudeten. I asked if the same privileges would be accorded to the Ruthenian minority and he stated the Ruthenians were too primitive and uneducated to be able to take governmental responsibility.

BULLITT

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
JUN 1 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JR  
1-1836  
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (D)

FROM Paris

Dated May 30, 1938

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
JUN 1 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Rec'd 1:12 p.m., 31st.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

850, May 30, midnight. (SECTION THREE).

Osusky said that there was one thing which the Government of the United States might be able to do which would be of great help to Czechoslovakia. A large portion of the population in the Sudeten regions of Bohemia had become Nazi owing to economic misery. This was due to the fact that world trade had collapsed and the great exporting industries of the Sudeten area -- glass, porcelain and textiles -- were unable to sell their wares abroad. He expressed entire satisfaction with the terms of the recent trade agreement between the United States and Czechoslovakia; but added that the Czechoslovak Government was informed that the American Jews, especially the large department store owners, were at the present time refusing to make normal purchases of Czechoslovakian glass porcelain and textiles because these articles were produced in regions which were largely controlled by Henlein. The aversion of

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JUN 2 - 1938

7507-62/369 SEC. 3

CONFIDENTIAL ET F G/HC

-2- #850, May 30, midnight (SECTION THREE) from Paris.

of American Jews to German goods had been extended to include goods produced in the Sudeten districts. He hoped that the American Government, without seeming to take any action whatever, might be able to convey to the American Jews who were normally purchasers of these articles that they would be doing the greatest possible service to Hitler if they should refuse to buy goods from the Sudeten regions and thus increase the economic misery which was pushing the Sudeten into the arms of Hitler.

BULLITT

HPD

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAY 31 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JR

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

FROM Paris

Dated May 30, 1938

Rec'd 1:18 p.m., 31st.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

ADVISED ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
JUN 1 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

850, May 30, midnight (SECTION FOUR).

Osusky said that the Czechoslovak Government was fully aware that while the Russians might be able to send planes to Czechoslovakia without provoking grave international incidents by flying at night to Czechoslovakia along the exact border between Poland and Rumania any attempt by the Russian army to march across either Poland or Rumania would lead to immediate declarations of war against the Soviet Union by both Poland and Rumania.

In conclusion Osusky said that the publication of the memorandum which Henderson had read to Ribbentrop on May 21 had produced such a shock in German Government circles that there was a definite chance that Czechoslovakia would be permitted to work out in peace a reconciliation of the problem presented by the German, Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia. He believed moreover that such a reconciliation, used constructively, might be the starting

JUN 1 - 1938

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760F.62/369

SEC. 4

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

G/HC

-2- #850, May 30, midnight (SECTION FOUR) from Paris.  
starting point for a general reconciliation in Europe  
and the basis for peace on the Continent. (END OF  
MESSAGE).

EULLITT

HPD

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. DUNN  
JUN 11 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
JUN 10 1938  
MR. MOORE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ML  
This telegram must be  
closely-paraphrased before  
being communicated to **FROM.**  
(D)

Paris  
Dated June 8, 1938  
Rec'd 4:45 p.m.

PAID

Ed

Secretary of State,  
Washington

NOTED

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUN 9 1938  
MR. WELLES

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
JUN 13 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

899, June 8, 6 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY

Francis-Poncet, French Ambassador to ~~Paris~~ <sup>Berlin</sup>, who

has been in Paris for the past three days and will re-  
turn tonight to his post, expressed to me this morning  
most serious apprehension with regard to the Czechos-  
lovak situation.

He described at length his recent conversations  
with Ribbentrop and said that those conversations in-  
variably ended by Ribbentrop striking the table and  
saying that Germany was now a nation of 75,000,000  
with the strongest army in the world, which could crush  
any opposition, which it was entirely ready to use and  
would use in defense of the Sudeten Germans. Francis-  
Poncet said that he invariably reminded Ribbentrop that  
it was his duty as Minister for Foreign Affairs not to  
prepare war but peace and that if Germany should attempt  
to gain her aims by war she would get a reception from  
France and England which would surprise her and that the

FILED  
JUN 11 1938

70045-02/401

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

G/H/C

United

ML -2-Paris June 8, 1938 4:45 p.m. #899 6 p.m.

United States would be in the offing.

Poncet said that under such conditions as these it was of course extremely difficult to carry on diplomatic conversations. He was nevertheless about to make a final effort. He had suggested to the French Government during this visit that he should be empowered, on his return to Berlin tonight, to propose to the German Government that there should be an informal tripartite discussion between representatives of England, France, and Germany--preferably Henderson, Ribbentrop, and himself--to attempt to work out a settlement of the German-Czech conflict on the understanding that if it should be possible to reach agreement the Czechs would be told by England, France, and Germany unitedly that they would have to accept the settlement. Poncet said that he would approach this matter with the greatest delicacy and the utmost secrecy.

(END SECTION ONE)

BULLITT

RPL

S

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ML

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

Paris

Dated June 8, 1938

Rec'd 5:35 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

899, June 8, 6 p. m. (SECTION TWO).

200  
869/00

I asked him what basis of solution he would suggest. He said that he would suggest immediate and full autonomy for the Sudeten regions.

Poncet added that the German press had been instructed to keep excitement about Czechoslovakia at whiteheat and that he expected some sort of a political move by the Germans and the Sudeten against the Czechs about June 14 immediately after the results of next Sunday's elections should become known. He thought that it was possible that the Sudeten might announce that since the elections were the equivalent of a plebiscite showing that nearly 95 percent of the Sudeten were Nazis of Henlein's party, they should be given immediate autonomy and if such autonomy should be refused they would take it. Poncet hoped that his diplomatic move in Berlin might anticipate and prevent such action by the Sudeten.

He went on to say that all his information indicated that Benes would not offer the Sudeten a sufficient

degree

CONFIDENTIAL

ML -2- Paris June 8, 1938 #899 5:35 p.m. Sec. Two

degree of autonomy to satisfy them even for a moment unless the greatest possible pressure should be placed on him. He alluded again to the possible danger that the Czechs themselves might decide that Czechoslovakia would never find a more favorable moment to fight than the present moment and might therefore precipitate an incident in the Sudeten regions which would bring the German troops across the border and force France to march.

BULLITT

EDL:NPL

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

LMS  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (D)

FROM Paris  
Dated June 8, 1938  
Rec'd 6:10 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

899, June 8, 6 p. m. (SECTION THREE)

Poncet said he feared equally that some Sudeten-German might decide to precipitate a war; or that some Emissary of Goering might order the Sudeten leaders to precipitate war.

In conclusion Poncet said that he felt that we were just now beginning to enter a period in which war would be imminent for a number of months. He expected a series of crises. He considered it improbable that the Germans would provoke war deliberately before the 15th of July when their major crops would be harvested. A bloody incident in the Sudeten regions might, however, precipitate war at any time.

I saw Bonnet again last night at dinner. He had no further information with regard to any immediate concessions by the Czechs to the Sudeten.

In spite of the momentary calm I continue to believe that the situation is most serious. It is perhaps unnecessary

LMS 2-No. 899, June 8, 6 p. m., Sec. 3, from Paris

unnecessary to add that your speech at Nashville has been regarded throughout Europe as a powerful factor for peace. Bonnet, Poncet and other Frenchmen have spoke of it in the highest terms of praise and from a gentleman who has just come from Berlin, where he has close connections with the German army, I gathered that your words had inserted a large question mark in the calculations of the German Government.

(END OF MESSAGE)

BULLITT

EDA:ROW

LMS 2-No. 899, June 8, 6 p. m., Sec. 3, from Paris

unnecessary to add that your speech at Nashville has been regarded throughout Europe as a powerful factor for peace. Bonnet, Poncet and other Frenchmen have spoke of it in the highest terms of praise and from a gentleman who has just come from Berlin, where he has close connections with the German army, I gathered that your words had inserted a large question mark in the calculations of the German Government.

(END OF MESSAGE)

BULLITT

EDA:ROW

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. MUNN  
JUN 16 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CA This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone (D)

PARIS  
Dated June 14, 1938  
Rec'd 5:18 p.m.

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
JUN 21 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State  
Washington

SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUN 15 1938  
NOTED

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUN 15 1938  
MR. WELLES

Handwritten initials: J, e, PAID, Eu

934, June 14, 7 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY

JUN 21 1938  
RUS. MOORE

Bonnet expressed to me today much more cheerful  
opinions on the general situation in Europe than those  
he has held for some time.

He said that it was due to French pressure that the  
Czechs had agreed to accept Benin's memorandum as the  
basis of discussion. Gausky, Czechoslovak Minister to  
Paris who returned from Praha last night had informed him  
that Benes was now prepared to give the Sudeten complete  
local autonomy with the right to elect not only their  
own municipal and regional councils but also to have a  
general assembly which would represent the entire Sudeten  
district.

Bonnet added that Benin had also demanded repre-  
sentation in the Sudeten general assembly of the German  
minorities in other portions of Czechoslovakia and also  
that this general Sudeten assembly should have the right  
to elect one representative who ipso facto should be a  
member of any Czechoslovak Ministry which might be formed.

This,

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CA

--2--934 from Paris (Section 1)

This point Bonnet said would probably have to be rejected as it might mean that Germany would have a representative in any Czechoslovak Government. In any event the German-Czech conflict had now reached the stage of negotiation and that was <sup>an</sup> enormous advance.

BULLITT

NPL EMB

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

CA

This telegram must be closely rephrased before being communicated to anyone (D)

PARIS  
FROM

Dated June 14, 1938

Rec'd 5:38 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

931, June 14, 7 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

Sir Eric Phipps had just informed him that the British Government was fully prepared to continue to act in absolute diplomatic unison with the French Government and that if France should be obliged to go to war because German troops should cross the frontier of Czechoslovakia Great Britain would march with France.

Bonnet went on to say that now that the French and British had driven the Czechs to this conciliatory attitude it remained equally necessary for them to persuade the Germans to act in a conciliatory manner toward the Czechs. The French and British Ambassadors in Berlin would cooperate closely in counseling moderation. They would attempt to work out with Ribbentrop a fair compromise of the German-Czech conflict (see my 899, June 8, 6 p.m.). He added that of course it would be most helpful if the American Ambassador in Berlin in the course of any conversations he might have with members of the German Government should express the great interest of the

United

CA        --2--934 from Paris (Section 2)

United States in a peaceful settlement of this dispute. I replied that while no official demarche could be expected from the United States I was certain that no American Ambassador could take any other attitude in casual conversation.

BULLITT

NPL EMB

CA

**TELEGRAM RECEIVED**

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

PARIS

FROM

Dated June 14, 1938

Rec'd 7:30 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

934, June 14, 7 p.m. (SECTION THREE)

In conclusion Bonnet said that for the first time since the 20th of May he had begun to have a feeling that the Czecho-German conflict might be worked out peaceably. He felt moreover that if it should be possible by cooperation between Great Britain France and Germany to arrive at an agreement in this matter, the basis might thus be laid for further conversations which might bring something like an atmosphere of peace to Europe.

In connection with his hope that the European atmosphere might clear Bonnet stated that he had the best reason to believe that the Barcelona Government was now ready to make peace. He asked me if I felt it was <sup>entirely</sup> ~~entirely~~ impossible for the United States to take an active part in bringing about peace in Spain. I replied that I doubted greatly that the American Government would participate in any effort at mediation.

I asked Bonnet if he had any indication that Franco would be prepared to make peace on any other basis than unconditional surrender. He replied that he felt Franco's position was far from perfect. There had been a great change

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CA

--2--934 from Paris (Sec. 3)

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852-24

change in the past week in the Russian attitude toward the Spanish conflict. The Russians were now convinced that the Japanese were making such a tremendous effort against China that a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union was no longer within the realm of possibility. They were therefore ready to intervene on a much larger scale than heretofore in the Spanish conflict. If the French should open the frontier to Russian shipments to Barcelona the Russians were prepared now to send to Spain such great quantities of munitions and so many airplanes that the Barcelona Government would be able to hold out indefinitely. The French therefore could say to Franco that if he should not be willing to accept terms of peace at the present moment they would open the frontier and permit the Russians to ship to Spain everything that they might wish. Under the circumstances he felt that the moment was ripe for an effort at mediation and he intended to try out the ground.

BULLITT

NPL EMB

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

CA

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

FROM

PARIS

Dated June 14, 1938

Rec'd 7:23 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington

934, June 14, 7 p.m. (SECTION FOUR)

With regard to the recent flights over French territory of airplanes from Spain Bonnet repeated that it had been definitely determined that the second flight was composed of Russian planes. He added that the bombs which had been dropped by the first flight of planes were also Russian but it had been impossible to determine whether the planes carrying them had belonged to the Barcelona Government or to the Franco Government. The exact identity of the raiders therefore remained a mystery.

751.67  
Bonnet expressed entire optimism with regard to the Franco-Turkish dispute in respect of the Sanjak. He said he felt that an accord had now definitely been reached. Indeed he expected this dispute to bring about much closer relations between France and Turkey than those that had existed heretofore. France and Turkey would soon sign a treaty of amity. They would then agree on the boundaries between Turkey and the Sanjak, and Syria and the Sanjak. The Sanjak under a condominium would have an autonomous

CA

--2--934 from Paris (Section 4)

autonomous government the parliament of which would consist of 22 representatives of the Turkish population and 18 representatives of the Syrian population. There would then be conversations between the Turkish and French general staffs with regard to the defense of the Sanjak and these conversations might result in close military cooperation in other spheres.

END OF MESSAGE

BULLITT

PL EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED  
JUN 26 1938  
MR. MOORE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUN 27 1938  
FR  
MR. MCGERSMITH

DIVISION ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. DUNN  
JUN 23 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUN 23 1938  
NOTED

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUN 24 1938  
MR. WELLES

*Handwritten marks:* //, U, D, AM, PAID, Et

DIVISION EG  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

This message must closely paraphrase before being communicated to anyone. (D)

Paris  
Dated June 23, 1938  
Rec'd 8:55

Secretary of State  
Washington.

987, June 23, 11 a.m. (SECTION ONE)  
STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

Daladier said to me yesterday that he considered the present appearance of an improvement in the general European situation a mirage. Nothing had yet been settled and he was not optimistic that any settlement could be achieved. He believed that the Czechs would make a reasonable offer to the Sudeten but he had no confidence that this offer would be accepted either by the Sudeten or by Hitler. He believed that while France should continue to insist that the Czechoslovak Government should make the most reasonable offer possible to the Germans, France should not hesitate to go to war if Germany should invade Czechoslovakia after such an offer should have been made.

I asked if he were sure that the Czech offer would be a reasonable one. He said that he felt confident that it

*Handwritten:* 607-62

760F.62/442

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EP

Confidential

-2- #987, June 23, 11 a.m. (SECTION ONE) from Paris

it would be. I asked if this confidence was shared by the British Government and if he were certain that the British Government would stand by Czechoslovakia in case the Sudeten and Hitler should reject the Czech proposal and attempt to use force.

He then replied that it would make no difference to him what the British conclusion might be. ~~(\*) THE~~ *The* French Government should judge the offer reasonable and the Germans should then attempt to use force against Czechoslovakia, France would go to war immediately whether England liked it or not. France could not preserve her honor if she should run away from war.

BULLITT

GW:KLP

~~(\*) Apparent omission~~

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

This telegram must be **FROM** Paris  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (D)

Dated June 23, 1938

Rec'd 10 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

987, June 23, 11 a.m. (SECTION TWO)

As you will observe there has been a great  
stiffening in Daladier's personal attitude.

I participated later in a conversation between  
Daladier and Osusky, Czechoslovak Minister to Paris.  
Daladier began by thanking Osusky for the great  
efforts he had made to persuade the Czechoslovak  
Government to make large concessions to the Sudeten.  
He said that he realized the task which the French  
Government had imposed on Osusky was a most disagreeable  
and difficult one. He added for my benefit that the  
French Government had had the question of the concessions  
which the Czechoslovak Government should make to the  
Sudeten studied with the utmost care. The French  
Government had then informed Osusky of the nature of the  
concessions it would expect the Czechoslovak Government  
to make and had asked Osusky to go to Prdha and see to  
it that these concessions should be made. He (Daladier)  
was

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FP

CONFIDENTIAL

-2- #987, June 23, 11 a.m. (SECTION TWO) from Paris.

was entirely ready to support Czechoslovakia to the limit if these concessions should be made and Germany should refuse to be reasonable.

I then suggested that I had heard yesterday from a man who had talked with Benes two days ago that the concessions might be rendered illusory by a system of gerrymandering. I had been told that Benes proposed to organize the country on the basis of three large districts: Bohemia in which the Sudeten minority would be outnumbered greatly by the Czechoslovak majority; Moravia in which the Polish and German minorities would be greatly outnumbered by the Czechs and Slovaks; Slovakia in which the Hungarian and Ruthenian minorities would be greatly outnumbered by the Slovaks.

BULLITT

RR:HPD

f

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM Paris

Dated June 23, 1938

Rec'd 11:55 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.



987, June 23, 11 a.m. (SECTION THREE)

*Osusky*  
~~Daladier~~

admitted that this would be the solution proposed; but argued that there was nothing unnatural in the arrangement and finally stated flatly that there would be no autonomy offered to racial areas. There would be complete administrative autonomy for villages, municipalities and departmental districts; there would be autonomy for schools with control of school budgets by the local authorities; but the Ministry of National Education would not be abolished and would have oversight over school programs.

In the ensuing discussion it became evident that Daladier's personal acquaintance with the geographic and racial problems of Czechoslovakia was not profound and that he had absolute confidence in Osusky whose assurances that the Czechoslovakian Government would make the fullest and most generous concessions possible carried, to him, complete conviction.

Osusky

760F.62/442

-2- #987, June 23, 11 a.m. (SECTION THREE) from Paris.

Osusky stated that the proposals of the Czechoslovak Government would be presented to the Sudetens before the 1st of July. Whether the Sudetens should accept them or not they would be presented in the form of papers to the members of the Czech Parliament immediately after the 1st of July and would be voted on by the Czechoslovak Parliament shortly after July 15.

Osusky said that he had received from his Government today the information that the leaders of the Sudeten had appeared to be relatively reasonable and conciliatory in their most recent conversations in Praha. For the moment therefore it appears that the Czechoslovak Government will have the full support of the French Government for the concessions that it will propose--which may or may not be sufficient to produce a temporary appeasement.

BULLITT

HPD

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated June 23, 1938

Rec'd 1:41 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.



987, June 23, 11 a. m. (SECTION FOUR)

Day before yesterday I had a long conversation with Osusky in the course of which he explained in detail the demands of the Sudeten and the attitude of the Czechoslovak Government toward these demands. The only new development concerns the demand of the Sudeten for a German National Assembly in which all Germans living in the area along the German frontier or otherwise in Czechoslovakia should be represented and the supplementary demand that the President of this assembly should be ipso facto a member of any Czechoslovak Government.

Osusky said that the Czechoslovak Government had decided definitely to reject the demand that the President of any such assembly if one should be permitted should be ipso facto a member of the Government. As to whether or not such an assembly should be permitted had not yet been decided definitely. Hodza had said to the representatives

REB

2-#987, From Paris, June 23, 11a.m.  
(Sec. Four)

representatives of the Sudeten that he could see no reason for such an assembly and had asked them to specify in detail what such an assembly would do if one should be formed. He had not yet received a report from the Sudeten leaders.

Osusky asserted that if such a reply should be forthcoming and should show good grounds for the existence of such an assembly it would be considered seriously.

In view of Osusky's statements to Daladier in my presence last evening, however, I am inclined to believe that the Czechoslovak Government has already decided that there shall be no such assembly and it seems possible that this will be the point of acute dispute. (END MESSAGE)

BULLITT

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. DUNN  
JUL 8 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SM  
P#17

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

Paris  
Dated July 7, 1938  
Rec'd 1:45 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUL 8 - 1938  
NOTED

1076, July 7, noon.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

I discussed with Bonnet last night the situation in Czechoslovakia. He said that no one actually knew what Benes finally counted on to do. He felt confident, however, that British and French pressure in Praha would in the end compel Benes to make a reasonable offer.

His most recent information indicated that Hitler did not wish to risk general war this summer. Francois-Poncet was still most pessimistic, but he felt that Poncet's pessimism was perhaps exaggerated. He then said, as Lebrun said to me a few days ago, that the question of the Sudeten had been in the field of negotiations for so long that he believed it would remain in the field of negotiations and not pass into the field of military occupation.

On this point there has been an appreciable change of opinion in France during the past two weeks. Blum and many other leading political figures are now convinced

that

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COLLECTORIAL FILE

EP

-2- #1076, July 7, noon, from Paris.

that Germany will not strike this summer. There is no particular basis for this decrease in pessimism beyond a general estimate of a vast number of small factors.

In general the Government, from Daladier down, and political and banking circles, expect that the summer will be comparatively tranquil. Unless there should be some unexpected change in the economic and financial situation, the Government should be able to remain securely in office until the end of September. At that time the Treasury is likely again to face great difficulties.

BULLITT

CSB



EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 2573

Paris, July 8, 1938.

Subject: Czechoslovakia and the Sudeten  
problem.

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

Sir:

1/ There is enclosed, as of possible interest to  
the Department, a copy of a memorandum, prepared by  
an officer of the Embassy, of statements by Mr. H. R.  
Knickerbocker, an American journalist, regarding  
Czechoslovakia and the Sudeten problem.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

*W.P. Coe*  
*Maynard Barnes*

Maynard B. Barnes,  
First Secretary of Embassy.

Enclosure:  
Memorandum of statements  
by Mr. H. R. Knickerbocker.

In quadruplicate  
IH/lhh

760F.62/486

FILED  
JUL 25 1938

GML

Paris, June 28, 1938.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE AMBASSADOR:

From: Lawrence Higgins.

Subject: Czechoslovakia.

H. R. Knickerbocker, Hearst papers correspondent, has just returned from Czechoslovakia, where he has been since prior to May 21. He travelled extensively, part of the time in company with his old friend, Jan Masaryk, was shown over the Skoda works, had interviews with Henlein party leaders at Reichenberg, with high army officers, with Krofta, Hodza, and Benes.

From his impressions I have selected the following as of possible interest to you. Knowing Knickerbocker well, you will know what reservations to make.

President Benes, whom he says he has known for six years, told him in confidence that Czechoslovakia would fight against German employment of force, whether or not France or Great Britain came in, but he wished Knickerbocker to help him inculcate the belief among the French and British that if they did not come to his country's assistance he would make terms with Germany whatever her terms might be.

Knickerbocker has not the slightest doubt that the Czechs will fight. They realize that they would suffer the fate of Serbia in 1914-15, but they believe that, as with Serbia, out of the ashes of a general war will rise a greater Czechoslovakia.

Moreover,

Moreover, the Czechs have great confidence in the power of resistance of their army. The reservists called into active service at the time of the May crisis brought its effectives from 180,000 to 300,000. The standing army will be henceforth maintained at this latter figure permanently, first through rotation of classes or part classes of reservists, and secondly through the application of three-year service in the fall. The entire army is being kept on the alert read, to move instantaneously into battle positions close to the frontier. Knickerbocker shares the general impression of the excellence of the Army's equipment. He said that its mechanization is more advanced than that of any army in Europe, and that the allotment of automatic rifles to infantry units is larger than in the German Army even. He was told by the competent authorities that it could hold out alone against the German Army for two months. (Loder told me recently that he thought it might be able to hold out six months: my own opinion is that against the German Army supported by an undivided German air armada at its present strength, the probabilities of Czech resistance would be considerably less than two months.

Knickerbocker says that both the Nazis and Czechs accept war as ultimately inevitable. He knew little of the nature of the Henlein demands or of the Government's offered concessions, taking little interest in them, because he considers the current negotiations as "cover-up", and of no decisive bearing on the situation. The really important

important point is whether Hitler decides to go to war or not.

Knickerbocker was told that as yet the Germans had not attempted any "economic squeeze", - the reason given him was that they could not afford the loss of foreign exchange which they receive in freight charges on Czechoslovak goods sent through Germany.

I asked Bousquet of the Commercial Relations Division of the Quai d'Orsay the other day if to his knowledge there had taken place as yet anything suggestive of an "economic squeeze". He replied, "only in one respect". Coal shipments from Germany (presumably Silesia), which formerly passed through Czechoslovakia to Austria, were now being routed entirely on German railways.

L.H.

W/PM

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUL 19 1938  
MR. WELLES

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUL 20 1938  
MR. MESSERSMITH

CA  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone (D)

PARIS  
Dated July 18, 1938  
Rec'd 7:45 p.m.

MR. MOORE  
JUL 19 1938  
COUNSELLOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State  
Washington

SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUL 19 1938  
NOTED

ADVISED ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. DUNN  
JUL 21 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1125, July 18, 8 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY

I discussed with Bonnet this afternoon the Czecho-  
slovak situation and the exchange of letters between Dal-  
adier and Chamberlain.

Bonnet said that the letters had been relatively un-  
important as they had added nothing new to understandings  
already reached. They had been exchanged merely because of  
the impending visit of the King and Queen.

In his letter Daladier had set forth French policy  
vis a vis the situation in Czechoslovakia and had made it  
clear that if the German army should cross the frontier of  
Czechoslovakia France would march. He had then asked if he  
could count on England maintaining the same position that  
Chamberlain had indicated England would maintain on April  
28 and had maintained in practice on May 20. Chamberlain had  
replied that England would continue to maintain this posit-  
ion "which" said Bonnet "means that England will march with  
us."

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BULLITT

EMB ROW

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

LMS

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

Paris

Dated July 18, 1938

Rec'd 8 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1125, July 18, 8 p. m. (SECTION TWO)

Bonnet added that in spite of the visit of the French Minister in Praha, who was here last week end he had not much new light on the situation. The French Minister believed that Benes would go far in his concessions of local administrative autonomy and expected the Czechoslovak Government to have its proposals in final form on July 22nd.

Bonnet said that he had other information which indicated that the concessions which would be offered by the Czechoslovak Government would be altogether insufficient to appease even temporarily the Sudeten and that their publication might result in serious disturbances among the Sudeten population. He feared that the Czechs would put down such disturbances by force, that many Sudeten would be killed and that Hitler would march across the frontier.

Bonnet added that he had instructed the French

Minister

760 F. 62/482

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FILE

LMS 2-No. 1125, July 18, 8 p. m., Sec. 2, from Paris.

Minister to say to Benes immediately on his return to Praha that he hoped Benes realized fully that the one country which could gain nothing from general European war at the present time was Czechoslovakia since whichever side might win no statesman would ever again be so idiotic as to put together a state even faintly resembling Czechoslovakia in its present form.

BULLITT

EMB:ROW

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

CA

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated FROM to anyone (D)

PARIS

Dated July 18, 1938

Rec'd 8:30 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

1125, July 18, 8 p.m. (SECTION THREE)

Walter Lipman who has just returned from Praha where he had a conversation of two hours with Benes is most pessimistic. He is inclined to believe that the dispute is unsolvable since the Czechs will not offer the Sudeten anything but a permanent status as an inferior minority and the Sudeten will not accept any such status.

Lipman said that Benes seemed fully prepared to face the eventuality of war and had stated he was certain the Soviet Union would enter the war at once, bombard German cities and march an army to Czechoslovakia across Rumania. (Incidentally Bonnet said to me today that he was not at all certain that Russia would march or even send airplanes).

Lipman said that Benes had indicated that if the Sudeten should reject the Czechoslovak proposals and should start physical manifestations they would be put down by force. Lipman also asserted that Benes had said that under these circumstances German troops probably would cross the frontier and occupy the Sudeten portions of Czechoslovakia and then propose peace.

As I indicated to the Department in my 1104 July 13,

760 F. 62/482

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File

CA

--2--1125 from Paris Section 3..

4 p.m., the feverish preparations which the Germans are making to develop a line of fortifications from the North Sea to the Swiss border which includes a development in depth of the present Siegfried line continue to increase apprehension in the French Government and army that Hitler will use any large incident in the Sudeten regions as the signal for crossing the Czechoslovakia border.

(END OF MESSAGE)

BULLITT

EMB ROW

TELEGRAM

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
RECEIVED  
JUL 25 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUL 23 1938  
MR. WELLES

PAYD

FROM

EG  
This message must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (D)

Sulph

Paris

Dated July 22, 1938

Rec'd 2:40 p.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington.

SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUL 23 1938  
NOTED

MR. MOORE  
JUL 25 1938  
CHIEF OF BUREAU OF INFORMATION

1146, July 22, 5 p.m. (SECTION ONE).

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

The visit of the King and Queen and Lord Halifax has left the French public with a feeling of security but with French Government with a feeling of insecurity and great nervousness. The latter phenomenon is due to the line which Halifax took in conversations with Daladier, Bonnet and others.

He was extremely gloomy with regard to the situation in Czechoslovakia and most apprehensive that war might break out. He reiterated the determination of Great Britain to stand by the accords reached in London on April 28th notably the promise that if Germany should attempt to settle the Czechoslovak question by an act of force and if France therefore should declare war on Germany, England would support France. He made clear, however, the extreme reluctance of Great Britain to be obliged to take this position and introduced into the discussions a new element which upset the French Government greatly.

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-2- #1146, July 22, 5 p.m. (SECTION ONE) from Paris

So nearly as I can gather from conversations with nearly all members of the French Government Halifax said that he had no confidence in the genuineness of Benes' assertions that he was attempting to do everything possible to work out a peaceful solution of the problem of the Sudeten. He believed on the contrary that the publication of the Czechoslovak Government's proposals would result in an explosion of disappointment and anger both in the Sudeten regions and in Germany. He feared immediate riots in the Sudeten regions and had reason to believe that the Sudeten would demand that the democracies should accord to them the same right of self determination which have been accorded to the Czechs and other subject peoples of Europe by the Treaty of Versailles.

Halifax then went on to say that if the Sudeten should demand a plebiscite to determine whether or not they should remain a portion of the Czechoslovak state or should be joined to Germany and if the Czechoslovak Government should refuse this demand it would be impossible for the Government of Great Britain to support the position of the Czechoslovak Government. Great Britain certainly would not go to war on behalf of Czechoslovakia if Hitler should act after a refusal of a plebiscite by the Czechoslovak Government. Public opinion in Great Britain would  
not

-3- #1146, July 22, 5 p.m. (SECTION ONE) from Paris

not support a war of the most horrible nature in order to maintain the dominance of 7,000,000 Czech over 3,500,000 Germans.

Halifax asked what would be the position of the French Government in case the Sudeten should demand such a plebiscite. Neither Daladier nor Bonnet was able to give any very definite answer for the good reason that public opinion in France would be divided on this issue and opinion within the government itself would be divided. Needless to say if the French army is to undertake an attack on the heavily fortified position of the Siegfried line all France must be united and enthusiastic in support of war. (END SECTION ONE).

BULLITT

CSB

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

This telegram must be  
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for<sup>ing</sup> being communicated **FROM**  
to anyone. (D)

PARIS

Dated July 22, 1938

Rec'd 3:57 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1146, July 22, 5 p. m. (SECTION TWO)

Halifax reported to the French Government that Wiedemann, Hitler's personal aide de camp and companion at Berchtesgarden, had come to London with a personal message from Hitler. It was believed that this message had been sent over the head of the German Foreign Office and must be regarded as extremely important. Wiedemann had said that Hitler ardently desired peace at the present time. His army was sufficiently ready for him to be able to envisage the possibility of war but he did not desire to plunge Europe into war. He was being pushed hard however to take immediate action to settle the Czechoslovak question and he ardently hoped that the British Government would be able to bring such pressure on the Czechoslovak Government that the question could be settled peacefully.

Member of the French Government with whom Halifax discussed his conversation with Wiedemann derived the impression

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2-#1146, From Paris, July 22, 5 p. m.  
(Sec. Two)

impression that Halifax had been impressed greatly by Wiedemann's description of Hitler's desire for peace.

It was finally decided that both England and France once more should bring pressure on Benes to compel him to increase the concessions which he is contemplating making to the Sudeten. In particular the French Government believes that the British Government will inform Benes that if the Czechoslovak Government should be unable to make sufficient concessions to satisfy the Sudeten and if the Sudeten should demand a plebiscite Great Britain would not oppose such a plebiscite and would certainly not go to war in support of Czechoslovakia if the Czechoslovak Government should refuse to grant such a plebiscite.

I have informed the Department repeatedly with regard to the advice which the French Government has given Benes during the past two months. Benes has not yet communicated to the French Government the text of the proposals he expects to make and the French Government is about to demand the text immediately. Owing to the quasi alliance between France and Czechoslovakia  
it

REB

3-#1146, From Paris, July 22, 5 p.m.  
(Sec. Two)

it is impossible for the French Government to take as strong a position as the British until it has been able to judge from the text that the concessions to be offered to the Sudeten will be inadequate. The Czechoslovak Government will however be informed that if the Sudeten should demand a plebiscite and if Great Britain should make it clear that refusal of such a plebiscite would result in the withdrawal of British support in case of war the position of the French Government would become most doubtful.

In point of fact this diplomatic statement is entirely accurate. Bonnet, Chautemps and others, even responsible permanent officials of the Quai d'Orsay, believe that France should not support Czechoslovakia if the Czechoslovak Government should refuse a plebiscite. On the other hand Mandel, Herriot and Paul Reynaud would advocate support of Benes' refusal to grant a plebiscite. Daladier remains uncertain but at the moment would probably be on the side of those advocating support of Benes' refusal. (END TWO)

BULLITT

CSB

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM

<sup>GPO</sup>  
EG  
This message must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (D)

Paris

Dated July 22, 1938

Rec'd 5:37 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1146, July 22, 5 p.m. (SECTION THREE).

The extreme nervousness among members of the French Government resulting from Halifax's statements with regard to a possible plebiscite in the Sudeten regions was accentuated this morning by the arrival of Francois Poncet in Paris with gloomy predictions as to Hitler's intention to seek an immediate solution of the Czechoslovak question.

The present estimate of the French Government, with regard to possibilities if war should come between Germany on the one hand and France, England and Czechoslovakia on the other hand, is that Poland and Rumania would declare their neutrality; that the Soviet Union would ask the French Government what action the French Government desired it to take; pointing out that if the Soviet armies were to attempt to cross either Poland or Rumania to support Czechoslovakia both Poland and Rumania would declare war against the Soviet Union; and inquiring whether

741.51/297

FP

or

-2- #1146, July 22, 5 p.m. (SECTION THREE) from Paris

or not, under the circumstances, France would not prefer to have the Soviet Union remain neutral. It is believed that if the Soviet Union should remain neutral both Poland and Rumania, in the course of time, would enter the war on the side of France and England. It is believed that Italy would remain neutral for a considerable period waiting to rush to the rescue of the victor.

Halifax said to Daladier and Bonnet that he no longer had any idea what Mussolini was up to. He expressed the opinion that the Spanish war would not come to an early conclusion but would drag on for many months. (This opinion incidentally is confirmed by the reports of two distinguished officers of the French General Staff who have investigated recently the military situation on the Government side in Spain. They returned with the opinion that the Government troops would continue to resist the assaults of Franco's army, retreating step by step, and that the cost in both men and material to Franco would be so great that he could not hope for early victory.

French reports on the latest frontier dispute between the Soviet Union and Japan indicate that the  
incident

-3- #1146, July 22, 5 p.m. (SECTION THREE) from Paris

incident is not expected to result in war but is to be classified with the long series of frontier incidents which have troubled relations between Japan and the Soviet Union for many years.

In all the foregoing you will have observed that there is no mention of the desire of France for reasons of prestige or ultimate national defense to maintain the traditional power of France in central and eastern Europe. This factor is somewhat surprisingly absent from all current discussions and at least for the moment the French seem to have accepted the fact that their traditional policy is no longer in accord with the physical facts of their relative population or their relative military and economic strength. There has been of late a gradual evolution in the French point of view with regard to this matter and the opinion is increasing in strength daily that France should be content to live in security behind her own fortifications and maintain her present colonial empire. Today the controlling factor, if France should go to war on behalf of Czechoslovakia, would be the point of national honor involved by the Franco-Czech treaty.

Bonnet

-4- #1146, July 22, 5 p.m. (SECTION THREE) from Paris

Bonnet, before leaving Paris this morning with the King and Queen, said to me that he would like to see me tomorrow afternoon. I shall report his further comments immediately. (END OF MESSAGE).

BULLITT

RGC:ROW

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DEPT OF STATE  
NOTED  
1938

SECRET  
PAID

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

Paris  
FROM Dated July 25, 1938  
REC'd 2:40 p.m.

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUL 29 1938  
MR. WELLES

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
JUL 26 1938  
MR. MOORE

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. DUNN  
JUL 27 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1156, July 25, 5 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

Bonnet said to me today that the British Government had stated officially to the German and Czechoslovak Governments that the British Government would be glad to tender its good offices for the purpose of finding a settlement by agreement of the dispute between the German and Czechoslovak Governments with regard to the Sudeten regions of Czechoslovakia.

Bonnet added that the German Government had welcomed this proposal but that the Czechoslovak Government was reluctant to accept.

Osusky, the Czechoslovak Minister in Paris, had called on him yesterday afternoon to say that the Czechoslovak Government did not wish to make any decision with regard to this British proposal before consulting the French Government. Bonnet said that he had advised the Czechoslovak Government to accept the proposal and had said that the French Government supported

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Confidential File  
GMB

-2- #1156, July 25, 5 p.m., from Paris.

supported fully this British initiative.

Bonnet said that he had as yet no information as to whether his advice to the Czechoslovak Government would be followed.

In any case he felt that this British proposal would turn out advantageously for France. If the Czechs should refuse British mediation the British then would make it clear that they were not prepared to go to war in order to maintain the dominance of seven million Czechs over three million and a half Germans. It would then be possible for France to take a similar attitude. In case the Czechs should accept there would be a possibility of a settlement of the dispute. At least the British would be fully involved in the question of the Sudeten regions of Czechoslovakia and France would be certain of British support if the worst should come.

In further discussion of the question of European peace Bonnet displayed more optimism than he has evinced for many weeks.

BULLITT

KLP:WVC