



file
Division of
FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
NOV 28 1938
Department of State
m

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM

PARIS

Dated November 25, 1938

Rec'd 4:06 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1938, November 25, 7 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

OF
RECEIVED
W. H. P. H.

I saw Bonnet this afternoon. He said that he was satisfied with the talks with the British yesterday. There had been complete agreement on "most" of the matters discussed.

He said that they had agreed to try to do something helpful for the political refugees from Germany. The idea first is to have a meeting in Holland between Rublee and a representative of the German Government with representatives of the British and French Governments present.

Bonnet said that the French Government would probably have a proposal to make to our Government within a few days on this subject.

Bonnet talked at length regarding the Franco-German declaration. He said that complete agreement had been reached between the German and French Governments concerning the declaration on November 7 and it had then been intended to announce it about November 10. (END SECTION ONE)

*741.51
not*

540, 48 Refugees

751.62

741.51/312

FILED

DEC 1 1938

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Confidential File

CSB

WILSON

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

PARIS

Dated November 25, 1938

Rec'd 4:29 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1994, November 25, 7 p. m. (SECTION TWO)

The shooting of Von Rath and the subsequent persecution of the Jews in Germany had made it necessary to defer the announcement. Bonnet said that he hoped that the true significance of this agreement would be understood in the United States. It, of course, did not mean that France was turning away from the democracies. It simply meant that Hitler liberated from the ~~(~~the~~)~~ ^{dictator} of Versailles was of his own free will pledging himself to renounce any claim to Alsace-Lorraine and to respect the French frontiers. It would be absurd for France to refuse such an offer. Bonnet said that he was now convinced that France had no reason to fear an attack from Germany. Making all allowances for the fact that Hitler had violated undertakings before and might do so again he would certainly not have agreed to this declaration if he had had any intention of attacking France in the near future.

WILSON

NPL

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741.51/312

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated November 25, 1938

AS OF NOV 25 1938
RECORDS

Rec'd 4:38 p. m.
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
NOV 26 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1994, November 25, 7 p. m. (SECTION THREE)

The agreement would, of course, be known to the public in Germany; it stated that there were no questions in dispute between Germany and France; it would therefore be very difficult for Hitler to convince the German people who had shown uneasiness over the imminence of war last September that some new question had arisen which would warrant making war on France.

Bonnet said that in negotiating for the declaration he had persuaded the Germans to drop two important points which they had raised. One was the matter of colonies: France had given no promise or assurance whatsoever on the colonial matter. The second point concerned France's alliances with other countries: this position had been protected by the reservation in the declaration of special relations with third countries.

NPL-EMB

WILSON

741.51/312

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962.014

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~~FE~~

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM PARIS

Dated November 25, 1938

Rec'd 6:44 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
NOV 26 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
W. H. C. [unclear]

1994, November 25, 7 p. m. (SECTION FOUR)

751.65

Bonnet said that there were people in France who urged him to have no relations with Italy because Italy was Fascist; to have no relations with Germany because of Hitler; to have no relations with the Burgos Government because of Franco; and to limit France's friends to Red Spain, Mexico, and Soviet Russia. Bonnet said that it was impossible for the French Government to carry out a foreign policy on such principles; that it was necessary to get rid of ideological prejudices and in the world as it exists today employ the type of diplomacy which seeks to have as useful relations as possible with every country and to derive from those relations the maximum of benefit for one's own country.

Bonnet said that it was absurd to pretend that the Franco-German declaration had irritated the British. He had kept the British fully informed and on November 7, the date

741.51/312

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REB

2-#1994, From Paris, Nov. 25, 7p.m.
(Sec. Four)

date the Germans agreed, he had notified Phipps thereof. He said that Chamberlain had assured him personally that he was greatly pleased over the declaration as an indication that France and Germany were coming to better terms.

I remarked that the impression that the British might have been irritated perhaps arose from the circumstance that the announcement had been made hastily while the British were en route to Paris.

WILSON

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated November 25, 1938

Rec'd 6:52 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1994, November 25, 7 p. m. (SECTION FIVE)

Bonnet's only reply to this was that when Coulondre presented his letters to Hitler on November 22 he inquired when signature of the declaration could take place; Hitler replied that Ribbentrop could go to Paris any time between November 28 and December 5 and expressed the wish that the earlier it was done the better.

Bonnet said that it had been a question in his mind whether Ribbentrop should come to Paris or whether he, Bonnet, should go to Berlin for the signature. Since Hitler, however, desired that Ribbentrop should come to Paris he saw no reason why the French Government should decline to receive the visit of a German foreign minister who wished to sign an agreement in Paris renouncing any claim on Alsace-Lorraine. I remarked that there might be some disagreeable incidents during Ribbentrop's visit. Bonnet said that this was true but he hoped nothing would happen.

happen.

741.51/312

F.P.

REB

2-#1994, From Paris, Nov. 25, 7p.m.
(Sec. Five)

happen.

8607.014
Bonnet said that he had discussed with the British the question of guaranteeing the new Czech frontiers. It had been decided to inquire of the Czechoslovak Government exactly what countries they desired to join in the guarantee. It was for Czechoslovakia to say for instance whether Russia should be included.

(END SECTION FIVE)

WILSON

NPL

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~~EU~~
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REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

PARIS

Dated November 25, 1938

FROM

Rec'd 7:01 p. m.

RECEIVED
NOV 26 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Wm. J. ...

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1938, November 25, 7 p. m. (SECTION SIX)

I inquired regarding discussion of national defense matters with the British. Bonnet replied that cooperation in defense had been agreed upon between Great Britain and France after the occupation of the Rhineland, and particularly in recent months there had been demand for closest contact maintained between the two Governments in this matter. In the discussions yesterday it had been a case of reviewing plans and extending them. I asked if he believes that the British might establish a ministry of supply. He replied that he did not (repeat not) believe so.

I inquired whether the signature of the declaration with Germany might result in slowing up plans for French rearmament. Bonnet said that it would have no effect whatsoever in this field and that the British and French were determined to pursue their effort at rearmament. I asked if there had been any discussion with the Germans

regarding

741.51/312

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REB

2-#1994, From Paris, Nov. 25, 7p.m.
(Sec. Six)

regarding limitation of air armaments. Bonnet replied that there had been nothing on this point since Hitler mentioned it to Francois-Poncet at their last meeting. Bonnet said, however, that he knew the Germans had this in mind and that it might well come up later as a second step after Munich. He believed, however, that there would be no air limitation until France had achieved in large measure her program of rearmament.

951.248
I asked if in fact the French Government was determined to make a great effort for air rearmament despite the financial sacrifices required. Bonnet replied that the French Government was in fact determined to do this.

(END SECTION SIX)

WILSON

NPL

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated November 25, 1938

Rec'd 7:10 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1994, November 25, 7 p. m. (SECTION SEVEN)

Referring to the Far East Bonnet said that the French and British had agreed to take the same position which the United States had adopted in relation to the Japanese declaration that a new situation had arisen in the Far East. I pressed Bonnet to be more explicit on this point but he was vague and gave me the impression of not having gone into it thoroughly. He added that the British and French had agreed to instruct their ambassadors to discuss further with the State Department questions concerning the Far East; he mentioned specifically the Yangtze navigation problem.

Regarding Spain Bonnet said that it had been agreed with the British that there could be no question of granting belligerent rights to Franco at present and that the provisions of the London Committee's plan should be followed in this matter. I referred to his earlier remarks regarding

regarding

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File

REB

2-#1994, From Paris, Nov. 25, 7p.m.
(Sec. Seven)

regarding relations with Burgos and asked if the French
Government was planning to send a representative there.
Bonnet said that he would like to do so and the British
would like to have him do so but no decision in this sense
could be taken for the time being.

(END OF MESSAGE)

WILSON

NPL

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
DEC 16 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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

FROM PARIS

Dated December 15, 1938

Rec'd 4:15 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

2120, December 15, 6 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Reference my 2117, December 15, 2 p. m.

After speaking of the refugee problem Bonnet talked at length of the Italian demands on France and the German attitude thereto. He said that he knew the report had circulated that Ribbentrop's attitude in this matter had caused concern to the French Government. He, Bonnet, did not (repeat not) hold this view. It was true that Ribbentrop had spoken of the solidarity of the Rome-Berlin axis. At the same time Ribbentrop had said to him: "Why should I come to Paris to sign an agreement renouncing any claim to Alsace-Lorraine if I intended tomorrow to go to war with France for the purpose of satisfying Italian claims to Tunis, Corsica and Nice?" Bonnet said that while he was convinced that Germany would not (repeat not) go to war for Italian territorial claims on France he fully expected that Germany

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751.65
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751.65

751.65/448

FILED

Confidential

REB

2-#2120, From Paris, Dec.15,6p.m.

Germany would give diplomatic support to Italy for claims such as Italian participation in the administration of the Suez Canal and a modification of rates on the Djibouti Railway.

(END SECTION ONE)

WILSON

CSB

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

CA

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

PARIS

FROM

Dated December 15, 1938

Rec'd 4:05 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

2120, December 15, 6 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

I remarked that the German press campaign supporting Italian territorial claims while Ribbentrop was in Paris seemed unfortunate. Bonnet said that he believed this was another example of the play of conflicting forces within the German Government. He believed that Ribbentrop was annoyed by this press campaign and that it was undertaken by Goebbels as much for the purpose of annoying Ribbentrop as for any other purpose. Bonnet added that he had said to Ribbentrop just what he stated before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber yesterday that France would go to war with Italy rather than give up an inch of French territory.

Bonnet said that the situation which would be created if Italy in fact should press territorial claims on France would be very different from that created by German claims on Czechoslovakia. In this latter case if he had wished to go to war to preserve Czechoslovakia he would have had half of France against him. If it were a question of going to war to prevent Italy seizing French territory the French people would march to the last man.

WILSON CSB

EU
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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated December 15, 1938

Rec'd 4:52 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

2120, December 15, 6 p. m. (SECTION THREE)

I asked about his discussion with Ribbentrop on the Spanish situation which, as he had mentioned, had occupied a good share of their private conversation the afternoon of December 7. Bonnet started to say something, hesitated and then stated merely that the conversation on this point had been satisfactory and that the German attitude towards Spain constituted no threat to French interests. (In this connection please refer to my 2076, December 8, 3 p. m., reporting what the Counselor of the German Embassy had said to me. It is also of interest that after the discussion of the Spanish question which evidently took place on December 6 in the presence of other members of both delegations Bonnet should have discussed this problem in private and at some length with Ribbentrop the following day). Bonnet added that he believed it would be most important if the Pan American Conference at Lima could be prevailed upon to

address

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REB

2-112120, From Paris, Dec. 15, 6p.m.
(See Three)

address an appeal to both sides in Spain for an armistice. He said that he had instructed Saint Quentin to discuss this with you and he read me a few lines from a telegram received from Saint Quentin to the effect that you had stated that the matter was under consideration at Lima and that you would inform him later.

WILSON

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

This telegram must be _____
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Paris

Dated December 15, 1938

FROM

REC'D

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
DEC 16 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,
Washington.

2120, December 15, 6 p.m. (SECTION FOUR).

I asked Bonnet what developments he expected in the Ukraine question. He believed that there would be no early developments; the Soviet and Polish Ambassadors had told him that they also held this view. He stated that the ultimate solution of the Ukraine question would depend upon the strength and stability of the Soviet and Polish Government. If the Soviets are as strong as they claim to be and as willing to fight as they asserted they were in September to support Czechoslovakia, then there would be no change in the status of the Ukraine.

I enquired regarding Memel. Bonnet said that he did not expect serious difficulties over this question. He understood that the German and Lithuanian Governments were discussing the matter, and while he did not know what they had in mind (Ribbentrop had not mentioned this matter) he believed that whatever solution German desired would be accepted by Lithuania.

(END OF MESSAGE).

RR

WILSON

751.65/448

Confidential File

FILED

DEC 17 1938

*not
9602.01*

960-m. of memel

GE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 14 1939
Paris
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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

Dated January 14, 1939
Rec'd 9:50 a.m.

Secretary of State,
— Washington.

86, January 14, noon. (SECTION ONE)
STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JAN 16 1939
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
ASV

Rochat read to me this morning a telegram received
from Francis Poncet reporting his conversation with
Halifax yesterday. In summary it was as follows:

Nothing positive, nothing definite was accomplished.
As concerns Italian claims against France, Mussolini did
not (repeat not) define these claims nor give any exact
indication of what they might be. He, of course, criti-
cised in bitter terms France and French policy.

As regards Spain, Mussolini said that he was con-
fident that Franco would obtain an early victory. Italy
had no intention of sending additional reinforcements to
Franco except to the extent of replacing casualties
suffered by Italian troops. Mussolini did not (repeat
not) request the recognition of belligerent rights for
Franco and in general took the attitude that he had no
anxiety concerning the Spanish situation which was de-
veloping in a wholly satisfactory manner.

HPD

WILSON

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741.65/690

SEC. 1

FILED

JAN 18 1939

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

GML

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WE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

Paris

FROM

Dated January 14, 1939

Rec'd 11:40 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JAN 15 1939
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 16 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

86, January 14, noon, (SECTION TWO).

*not
440.48/Reg
562.4016*

With reference to the Jewish question Mussolini stated that he would ask Hitler to deal with it in a reasonable manner.

In speaking of Hitler Mussolini said that with the world as troubled as it is today Hitler was of course taking necessary measures to be prepared to deal with whatever situation might arise. Nevertheless, he, Mussolini, was convinced that Hitler did not (repeat not) desire war and that there was no reason to be apprehensive on this score.

762 60

Mussolini proffered the assurance that the obligations incurred by Italy under the Anglo-Italian agreement of last April will be fully respected and he spoke at various times of his desire for peace. He also said that he recognized that the London-Paris axis was as solid as the Rome-Berlin axis.

241.51

Mussolini

741.65/690

SEC. 2

CONFIDENTIAL

GAIL

-2- #86, January 14, noon. (SECTION TWO) from Paris.

Mussolini also made the statement that he believed that nothing could be accomplished regarding relations between Italy and France until an improved atmosphere had been created and that to accomplish this it would be necessary to await the conclusion of the Spanish conflict.

WILSON

WVC:KLP

JR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

Paris

Dated January 14, 1929

FROM

Rec'd 11:50 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.



86, January 14, noon (SECTION THREE)

Poncet reported that he had found Halifax somewhat skeptical regarding the assurances of good intentions expressed from the Italian side.

I asked Rochat what the impression was at the Foreign Office regarding the Rome visit. He said that they "refuse to draw any conclusions". There were elements that might perhaps warrant optimism: For instance Mussolini had not laid down, in a burst of rage, a set of minimum demands on France. Rochat said that it was possible that Mussolini had refrained from doing this because he realized that Franco-British solidarity was such that he would have met with a diplomatic defeat. Rochat said that the British had lived up one hundred per cent to their understanding with the French, that they would refuse to be drawn into the role of mediator between France and Italy. The British had merely indicated to the Italian Government that they hoped the matter of Italian claims might be taken up directly by Italy with France.

WILSON

EDA:WIC

741.65/690

SEC. 3

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

GM L

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EU
NE

JR

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

Paris

FROM

Dated January 14, 1939

Rec'd Noon

Secretary of State,
Washington.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS JAN 18 1939 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

86, January 14, noon. (SECTION FOUR).

In speaking of French satisfaction at the British attitude Rochat added the information that when Chamberlain and Halifax stopped off for a chat with Paladier and Bonnet in Paris on January 10 the communique issued at that time referring to identity of views had been suggested by Chamberlain; the French had not proposed a communique fearing that a Franco-British communique on the eve of the Rome visit might prove embarrassing to the British.

Rochat repeated that he felt it unwise to draw any conclusions as yet from the Rome conversations. No one could tell what might happen within the next few days or at any time thereafter; there might at any moment be some dramatic move by Mussolini or Hitler. (END MESSAGE)

WILSON

WVC:KLP

741.65/690

SEC. 4

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

31

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FD
AC

JR

1-1236

FROM

Paris

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

Dated January 16, 1939

Rec'd 2:55 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JAN 18 1939
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 17 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

94, January 16, 5 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Leger lunched with me today. He said that it was clear that while maintaining the anti-French tone of the Fascist press Mussolini would do nothing to raise the question of Italian claims against France until after the expected victory of Franco. If and when this takes place he will stage the ultimate effort at blackmail. So far as German support is concerned however, Leger is convinced that Hitler earnestly desires that France and Great Britain stand firm against any concessions to Mussolini. So long as Britain and France stand firm, Hitler will give Mussolini press and diplomatic support but nothing more. Hitler knows well that in case of war on account of Italian claims Germany would bear four-fifths of the brunt of the fighting.

WVC:DDM

ILSON

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JAN 20 1939

FILED

CONFIDENTIAL
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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

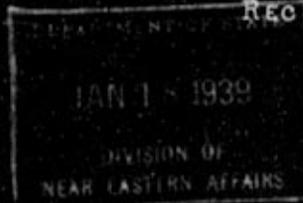
JR
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased
before being communicated FROM
to anyone. (D)

Paris

Dated January 16, 1939

REC'd 2:48 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.



94, January 16, 5 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

If however there should be any appearance of weakness on the part of France or Great Britain, any willingness to consider concessions to Italy, Hitler would at once launch a tremendous effort to intimidate France, similar to the one last summer, with the belief that he could break down French resistance. He would then be able to claim that it was he who had obtained the concessions from France and that he had thus paid his debt to Mussolini.

Leger believes that the end of the Spanish war is not yet in sight. He says that Negrin is an extraordinary leader; the government spirit remains firm and the conflict may continue for months. He spoke at length of the improvement in morale and discipline on the Government side, said that all anarchist and communist influence had been driven out and that the present Government in Spain about corresponds to a Radical Socialist Government in France.

852.00

852.0013

WTC

WILSON

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HRE

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

PARIS

Dated January 16, 1939

Rec'd 5:25 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

94, January 16, 5 p.m. (SECTION THREE)

DIVISION OF
INTELLIGENCE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

I remarked that I had heard that the Executive committee of the Radical Socialist Party at its meeting yesterday had been greatly exercised over the possible consequences of a Franco victory on the security of France and that there had been much sentiment for reconsideration of the non-intervention policy. Leger said that it was impossible now for the French Government to abandon non-intervention. Furthermore, having assumed obligations under that policy, the French Government would have to continue to live up to them. It could not afford to be in the position of permitting open violations of the agreement. In some quarters it was suggested that by providing greater facilities for "normal commerce" over the border, ways could be found to assist the Spanish Government. Leger thought that little if anything would be done in this regard. For one thing the French armament industry is nationalized and the French Government cannot permit arms manufactured in its own factories to cross the frontier in violation of the Government's commitments;

such

95 2.24

HRE

2-#94 From Paris January 16, 5 p.m. (Sec 3)

such other material as might be available in France would
be of little use to the Spanish Government.

(END SECTION THREE)

WILSON

NPL:ROW

EU
NE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HRE

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

PARIS

Dated January 16, 1939

Rec'd 5:30 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington



94, January 16, 5 p.m. (SECTION FOUR)

7600.62

I asked if there was any authoritative information regarding the recent Hitler-Beck interview. Leger replied that there was absolutely none. The French Government had made inquiries of the Polish Government but had received a vague and meaningless reply. Leger said that Beck was playing his usual double game: in order to try to justify his efforts to make a deal with Hitler, Beck had put out stories to the effect that Poland had not been treated with proper regard by France that he, Beck, while on the Riviera, had been ignored by the French Government and that he had not even been invited to come to Paris. Leger said that on the contrary the French Government had proposed sending a representative to talk with Beck at Monte Carlo but Beck had declined. (In this connection see last paragraph my 11, January 4, noon)

751.60c

(END SECTION FOUR)

WILSON

NPL:JRL

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HRE

1-1330

FROM

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

PARIS

Dated January 16, 1939

Rec'd 5:45 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JAN 18 1939
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 17 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

94, January 16, 5 p.m. (SECTION FIVE)

I mentioned the Ukraine. Leger said that reports that Germany was preparing for an early move to set up an independent Ukraine were simply absurd. Hitler manufactured these stories in order to put to sleep British and French apprehensions regarding Germany's activities elsewhere. Leger said that when Hitler speaks of the Ukraine he means Central Europe - Poland, Hungary, Rumania, and Yugoslavia. (END OF MESSAGE)

WILSON

NPL:JRL

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED



PA-D

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

PARIS

Dated January 24, 1939

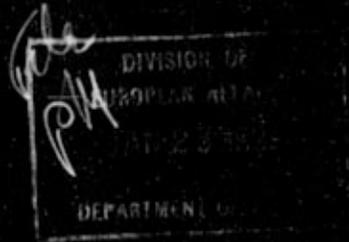
Rec'd 5:55 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

145, January 24, 6 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL



I have had a talk with Ceyruti, Italian Ambassador in Paris until about a year ago, who is here for a few days visit. His attitude and what he said tends to confirm the impression that in Rome it is considered that the French are a decadent and impotent race who will capitulate again as they did last September rather than fight.

Bonnet's Chef de Cabinet, Bressy, expresses to me a very apprehensive view of the situation. He spoke at considerable length of the necessity for France to take "guarantees" in the form of occupation of Spanish Morocco as soon as it becomes unmistakably clear that the Italian Government has no intention of abandoning its strategic position in Spain and Majorca. He also said that it was a great pity that the British despite the seriousness of the situation were unwilling to move rapidly towards the introduction of compulsory service. If Italy and Germany push matters as far as war France with a population of 40,000,000 would be fighting

751.65
852.00

751.65/507

FILED

CONFIDENTIAL

GML

CA

--2--145 from Paris.

fighting on three frontiers against nearly 130,000,000
Germans and Italians. The thought of this he said was
a continual nightmare.

WILSON

EMB NPL

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM PARIS

Dated January 24, 1939

Rec'd 5:45 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

146, January 24, 8 p.m. (SECTION TWO)



I remarked that I had heard that when the German

Ambassador called yesterday on Bonnet he had given assur-
ances regarding Germany's attitude. Charveriat said that
frankly he was not yet informed of what took place at this
conversation
(?) he had not seen Bonnet who had been in the Chamber of
Deputies all day for the debate on foreign affairs. He said,
however, that the German Counselor had called on him yester-
day to inquire the French position regarding the Italian
demands. He had replied that so far the Italian Government
had made no demands on the French Government. If it should
be a question of territorial demands France would resist
them to the limit, by war if necessary. On the other hand,
the French Government had never withdrawn the proposition
embodied in the 1935 agreements and these propositions still
held good today as offers of the French Government for
settlement.

(END SECTION TWO)

WILSON

NPL EMB

751.65/508

SEC. 2

8512.014

JAN 25 1939
RECEIVED

GML

40

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

CA

1-1330

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

FROM

PARIS

Dated January 24, 1939

Rec'd 8:08 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

146, January 24, 8 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

CONFIDENTIAL



Having heard rumors today of measures of a military character in Italy including the calling of about 200,000 recruits and reservists, I went to see Charveriat, Director of Political Affairs at the Foreign Office, to ask what information he had in the matter. He said that he had received similar reports which in many respects seemed circumstantial but that he had no definite confirmation thereof. Furthermore he had reports that recently considerable quantities of German war material had been sent into Italy, that normal German train service to Italy was being curtailed to make way for trains carrying these munitions and that there were troop movements in Lybia for the strengthening of garrisons there.

(END SECTION ONE)

WILSON

EMB NPL

JAN 25 1939
RECEIVED

GML

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
JAN 26 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

PA-D

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

Paris

Dated January 25, 1939

Rec'd 5:25 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

148, January 25, 4 p. m.

CONFIDENTIAL.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
M. Hill
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

In my judgment we are approaching, perhaps rapidly,
a very serious situation between Italy and France.
Mussolini has rejected the 1935 settlement and has
championed demands on France which while so far unde-
fined are undoubtedly far-reaching. He must, for
reasons of prestige if nothing else, obtain a measure
of satisfaction which France will find it difficult to
concede if she is to remain France. If the situation
continues to develop in this sense the French Government
and people are apt to find that they have a choice
only between fighting or capitulating.

(END OF SECTION ONE)

WILSON

EMB:ROW

751.65

JAN 30 1939

FILED

751.65/509 SEC. 1 AND 2 Confidential File GMB

10

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

LMS
1-1939
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (D)

FROM

Paris

Dated January 25, 1939

Rec'd 1:35 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.



148, January 25, 4 p. m. (SECTION TWO)

It is unfortunate that at this particular time there should be such fundamental difference of outlook on the part of the main French political groups as regards certain aspects of foreign relations. The Government's hands are tied thereby and it is rendered incapable of any initiative which might strengthen its position abroad, for example, representation at Burgos, clarification of relations with Russia, et cetera. Nevertheless, I believe that if the French are confronted with the choice mentioned above they will fight.

(END MESSAGE)

WILSON

KLP:CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
PARIS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Dated January 30, 1939

Rec'd 3:20 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

134, January 30, 3 p. m. (SECTION ONE)

The Foreign Office issued a statement this noon that, contrary to a report published in a foreign newspaper this morning the Minister of Foreign Affairs did not make any declaration on the problems of foreign policy to the newspaper correspondents after the meeting of the Chamber on Saturday.

This denial relates to a story in this morning's LONDON TIMES to the effect that following the Cabinet meeting, Bonnet received members of the French press and after declaring that the foreign situation was critical appealed to the journalists not to reply in kind to the Italian press attacks against France and then committed the indiscretion of stating that after all Italy had received little more from the Laval Mussolini agreement "than a few deserts" Before making this latter statement the Minister had recalled Italy's participation in the World

751,65/518
JGG

FILED
FEB 3 1939

REB

2-#164, From Paris, Jan. 20, 30.
(Sec. One)

World War and the promises of colonial aggrandizement
contained in the 1915 agreement.

(END SECTION ONE)

BULLITT

WIC

PEG

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

FROM

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

PARIS

Dated January 30, 1939

Rec'd 3:28 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.



154, January 30, 3 p. m. (SECTION TWO)

Bonnet speaking for confidential background purposes made some statement which gave rise to this report. The Communist newspaper HUMANITE did not respect the confidence and yesterday morning published enough of the story to bring the matter into the light of day although no other French newspaper as yet seen by the Embassy has taken up the matter.

It is understood that as might be expected Daladier is intensely annoyed over the incident. The Prime Minister according to one very well informed American correspondent, who by the way first brought the seriousness of Bonnet's indiscretion to the attention of the press section of the Foreign Office, remains as firmly opposed to concessions to Italy as he revealed himself to be in his speech before the Chamber January 26. It is

also

REB

2-#164, From Paris, Jan. 30, 3p.m.
(Sec. Two)

also understood that the military are strongly opposed to
any concessions.

Copy to Berlin, London, Rome.

(END MESSAGE)

BULLITT

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 9 1939
PARIS DEPARTMENT OF STATE

EDA

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

FROM

Dated February 8, 1939

Received 7:37 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

245, February 8, 8 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Bonnet said to me today that in his opinion the Italian Government was beginning to be somewhat desperate because it could foresee the collapse of its hopes for large annexations in the Mediterranean. It was his impression that the Italian Government would welcome any sort of incident at the present moment which might put the fat in the fire and might make it appear that war was the fault of the French. In this connection he mentioned the fact that he had just received a visit of a General of Military Intelligence who had been inspecting the French line in Tunis along the border of Libya. The General reported that it appeared from Italian actions there that the Minister of Marine was attempting to provoke an incident which could be made to appear an aggression on the part of the French. The French Government was therefore taking every conceivable precaution

751.65

751.65/524

FEB 11 1939

FILED GDC

EDA - 2 - #245, February 8, 8 p.m. from Paris

precaution on all frontiers where its territory was
'contiguous to Italian territory to make certain that
no Frenchman should be provoked to any hostile act
against an Italian.

(END SECTION ONE)

BULLITT

DDM

EU
NE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

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

Paris

FROM

Dated February 8, 1939

Rec'd 7:45 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

245, February 8, 8 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

FEB 9 1939

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Bonnet said that he felt that the French at the moment should treat the Italians with the greatest conceivable politeness and leave criticism of Italian words and acts to the British and Americans who were not at the moment objects of Mussolini's immediate hostility. At the same time the French should refuse flatly and absolutely any concession of any nature to the Italians. If the French should carry out this policy and if Mussolini should be unable to provoke any frontier incidents it seemed certain that Mussolini would have to crawl out of the present situation by disavowing the articles demanding French territory which have been appearing in the Italian press. In this connection Bonnet called attention to the fact that no official of the Italian Government had made any demand for any concessions by the French.

Bonnet was cheerful and said he felt that although there

-2- #245, February 8, 8 p.m. (SECTION TWO) from Paris.

there would be anxious days ahead the revival of economic life and morale in France plus the attitude of the United States plus Chamberlain's latest statement had made it probable that war could be avoided. (END OF MESSAGE)

BULLITT

DDM:KLP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

File

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

FROM Paris

Dated February 13, 1939

Rec'd 12:56 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington,



276, February 13, 10 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

Daladier, Paul Reynaud and Guy La Chambre discussed with me today for several hours the general situation and the problem of providing France with an adequate air force. The conclusion was reached that the French should exercise the options they have obtained for an additional 120 Martin bombers and an additional 100 Douglas bombers and 250 North American training planes. The French Government will pay cash for these planes.

In the course of our conversation Paul Reynaud suggested that it might be possible either for the Export-Import Bank or private bankers in the United States to extend credits to American manufacturers of planes for French account, such credits possibly to run for as long as five years. This suggestion of Reynaud's was not made as a formal proposal but was merely a remark in the course of an exhaustive conversation on the subject of air armament. I replied that I felt absolutely certain that

there

851.248

*777
851.51*

851.248/139 SEC. 1 (3)

Confidential File
GMB

-2- #276, February 13, 10 p.m. (SECTION ONE) from Paris.

there was not the slightest chance that the Export-Import Bank at the present time could finance such exports, and I believed that similar credits by private bankers would be forbidden by the Johnson Act.

Both Daladier and Reynaud then expressed in the strongest possible terms their belief France had acted with extreme stupidity in defaulting on her debt to the United States. Daladier said to Reynaud that if France should continue to acquire gold at the present rate he thought the best use that the gold could be put to would be to pay France's arrears on her debt to the United States.

They then asked me if I believed that the United States would be prepared to make a debt settlement at this time. I said that while we should always be glad to discuss the question, it was my own belief that France did not at this time have a sufficiently stable financial situation to make it possible for the French Government to pay sums to the Government of the United States large enough to be acceptable to the Congress of the United States as a debt settlement.

Reynaud suggested that France might make a "token payment" such as the British had once made. I expressed the opinion that, while the Government of the United States would

700.51 1089 France

-3- #276, February 13, 10 p.m. (SECTION ONE) from Paris.

would be glad to receive any payment on the French debt it could not regard any "token payment" as relieving the French Government from the restrictions imposed by the Johnson Act.

Both Daladier and Reynaud continued to express their interest in settling the French debt to the United States and both pointed out that at the time of the default they had supported Herriot in demanding payment. Reynaud finally said that he would wish to discuss the matter again with me in the near future as he had some ideas.

All the remarks recorded above occurred in the course of an intimate and rapid exchange of views, and I should not be in the least embarrassed if I were obliged tomorrow to express opinions contrary to those I expressed today. I trust therefore that you will inform me immediately if my expressions of opinion were not in accord with your views.

(END SECTION ONE)

BULLITT

KLP

S

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EDA

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

PARIS
FROM

Dated February 13, 1939

Received 10:50 a.m., 14th.

Secretary of State

Washington

276, February 13, 10 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

461-248

We also discussed the situation in the Soviet Union and La Chambre expressed the opinion that the Soviet air force was falling further and further behind in efficiency because of the execution of all the leading Russian designers and constructors. He asserted that the Russians were still making copies of obsolete models obtained from the United States four years ago.

751-61

Daladier said that not only were there no intimate conversations of any kind today between the Russian Soviet and France but also that the French Ambassador in Moscow and the French Military Attache now found it impossible to have any contact with anyone. He had no confidence in any statement or promise which might be made by the Russians. He felt however that if Rumania could be persuaded to accept Russian assistance the Russians might feel inclined to send troops to Rumania in case of a German attack on Rumania. He said that when he had talked with

762.71

EDA - 2 - #276, February 13, From Paris Section two
with the King of Rumania on this subject the King had
said to him that he would under no circumstances permit
any Russian soldier or aviator to set foot on Rumanian
soil. King Carol now appeared to be changing his point
of view. It now seemed that in case of German attack on
Rumania Carol might be willing to accept Russian assis-
tance in case both France and England should promise
to make war on the Soviet Union if Soviet troops should
not evacuate Rumania after such assistance was no longer
necessary.

BULLITT

HPD



V

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM PARIS

Dated February 13, 1939

Received 11 a.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

276, February 13, 10 p.m. (SECTION THREE).

451.2^D
In the course of our conversation there was considerable discussion of the impending reorganization of the French General Staff. Daladier said that he had decided to make General Gamelin Chief of the General Staff of National Defense which would serve as a coordinating General Staff for Army, Navy and Air force. He had told General George that he would appoint him as Chief of the General Staff of the Army on one condition; that General George should agree to have his office in the Ministry of War and not a detached office in the Invalides. Daladier said that the arrangement instituted by Foch who toward the end of the war had transferred the General Staff to the Invalides was much less efficient than the old system of having the Chief of the General Staff in the Ministry of War. Daladier said that it was literally true that he, the Minister for War, had not seen Gamelin for two months for the simple reason that
the

EDA - 2 - #276, February 13, 10 p.m. from Paris Section
three

the Chief of Staff was sitting in the Invalides and not in the Ministry of War. Daladier finally said that if General GEORGE should refuse to accept this condition by the day after tomorrow he would pass over General GEORGE entirely although he thought he was the best soldier in France and appoint in his stead a relatively junior man who was now in command in Bordeaux.

In the course of this general discussion about the General Staff I pointed out that in the month of September last the members of the General Staff of the Army had seemed to be entirely unaware of what they could count on from the air force which was a separate entity and seemed to be making their plans without regard to the air force. Daladier replied "that was because there was no air force. They were quite right".

BULLITT

KLP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

OFFICE OF THE ADVISER ON
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
FEB 15 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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

FROM Paris

Dated February 13, 1939

Rec'd 1:26 p. m., 14th

Secretary of State,
Washington.

276, February 13, 10 p. m. (SECTION FOUR)

Daladier had not yet made up his mind with regard
to the question of immediate de jure recognition of
Franco. He said that he would not recognize Franco
de jure immediately. On the other hand he felt that
continued resistance by the Madrid Government would
produce merely a useless slaughter of brave men. He
felt that while Franco would be delighted to have French
de jure recognition at the moment and while today he
was disposed to work on a friendly basis with France
by the end of another month he would have no further
interest in de jure recognition by France and the
Germans and Italians would have him much more completely
in their hands than today.

He believed therefore that France would have to
move toward full de jure recognition of Franco. He
did not want to rush matters. The question was of
doing

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FILED

FEB 16 1939

Confidential File

851.248/139

SEC. 4

GMB

S

LMS 2-No. 276, February 13, 10 p. m., Sec. 4, from Paris.

doing the thing decently.

852.24
Incidentally, in the course of this conversation Daladier said that he had received a few days ago from Negrin a letter thanking him for permitting munitions to come through as they had to Barcelona during the final month of resistance in Catalonia. Daladier said that 20,000 tons of munitions had crossed the French frontier to Barcelona during that month and most of them had not even been taken out of their cases when Franco captured the city. He added that in view of the loss of the Barcelona munitions factories he did not see how resistance could be prolonged more than three weeks to a month in the Madrid Valencia district however heroic might be the defense.

793.94
We discussed the situation produced by the Japanese seizure of the island of Hainan. Daladier summed up the discussion by saying that France did not have sufficient forces and neither did England to distribute them over the earth. It was necessary for both countries to concentrate their forces in Europe at the present moment. It was therefore necessary to sacrifice whatever it might be necessary to sacrifice in the Far East.

France

LMS 3-No. 276, February 13, 10 p. m., Sec. 4, from Paris.

France therefore could not be expected to do more than to ask the Japanese to promise to get out of Hainan when the war with China should come to an end.

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65.002 2mm
Daladier said that he still believed that Italy would not attack France at the present time but he was not entirely sure. Mussolini had lost one position after another to Hitler and was losing his personal popularity in Italy. Under the circumstances it was difficult to feel certain that he would not take the risk of general war. Once again Daladier expressed the opinion which was endorsed heartily by both Reynaud and La Chambre that war would be imminent if it were not for the hesitation created in Germany and Italy by the evolution of opinion in the United States and the attitude of the President and the American Government.

(END MESSAGE)

BULLITT

HPD

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

CORRECTED COPY

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

Paris
FROM
Dated February 16, 1939

Rec'd 9:30 p.m.



Secretary of State,
Washington.

751.65/301 *Confidential*

301, February 16, 5 p.m.

SECRET FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY.

I lunched today with General Requin of the Superior War Council and General Georges whom Daladier has invited to be Chief of the General Staff of the Army. Georges said that from a number of different secret service sources all of which were regarded as reliable the French General Staff during the past three days had received the following information.

One. After a considerable period of hesitation Mussolini had decided to push his demands against France and to make war if France should refuse to give him what he wants.

Two. Hitler day before yesterday had promised Mussolini that he would have the full backing of Germany against France and that Germany would go to war as Italy's ally in case of necessity.

Three. Mussolini had already begun a quiet mobilization. In addition to the regular classes undergoing training he now had under arms between

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CONFIDENTIAL

GML

-2- #301, February 16, 5 p.m., from Paris.

350,000 and 400,000 reservists. Orders had been issued by Mussolini which would bring the mobilized strength of the Italian army to 1,000,000 men by the first of March.

Four. Further concentrations of Italian troops in Libya had now brought up the number there to 100,000. A considerable portion of the Italian air force was being concentrated in Sicily and Libya. (END SECTION ONE).

BULLITT

NPL

5

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

CA apo

FROM

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

PARIS

Dated February 16, 1939

Rec'd 4:35 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

301, February 16, 5 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

SECRET FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

Five. In addition to Italian troops in Libya there were now not only German officers of the high command, aviators and technicians of all sorts but also a considerable number of German infantrymen who had been sent in small detachments.

It was the view of both General Georges and General Requin that the information which the general staff had received during the past three days was authoritative beyond the shadow of a doubt. They believed that Mussolini would begin a campaign of intimidation about March 1 and that Italy and Germany were likely to strike about the end of March.

My relations with Requin and Georges are of such a nature that I am certain they do not color in any way their statements to me. I believe therefore that this information with regard to Mussolini's intentions must be taken most seriously.

General

761.65/538
SEC. 2
CONFIDENTIAL FILE
GML

CA

--2--Section 2 of 301 from Paris..

8510.20
General Georges stated that the information was taken so seriously by the French General Staff that orders had been given this morning to place Tunisia immediately on a war footing. Troops were already being moved to Tunisia from Algiers. Incidentally Georges adds that ninety excellent Swiss antiaircraft guns which had been brought over the frontier by Negrin's soldiers were already on their way to Tunis.

I venture to suggest that certain measures that might have a cooling effect on Italy which we discussed when I was in Washington should be fully prepared for immediate use during the next month.

(END OF MESSAGE)

BULLITT

NPL

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
FEB 23 1939
Paraphrase to President
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
10-7-39-11-10

S
U

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

Paris
FROM
Dated February 22, 1939
Rec'd 9:28 a.m., 23rd.

PAID

Secretary of State,
Washington.

SECRETARY OF STATE
FEB 23 1939
NOTED

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
FEB 24 1939
MR. WELLES

340, February 23, 1939
STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

I have had conversations during the last past
24 hours with Daladier, Mandel, Reynaud, Gamelin Chief
of the General Staff and Blum. The present situation
in the view of all these men is at least as serious
as last August.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
APR 12 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The following facts constitute the basis of this
judgment:

Italy is reinforcing the Italian army in Libya
daily. In addition to officers and technicians of all
sorts the Germans are sending to Libya not only high
officers, technical experts of all sorts and aviators
but also a certain number of infantrymen.

In addition the Germans are sending daily to
Libya airplanes in crates. It is the belief of all the
men mentioned above that Mussolini will make unacceptable
demands on France between the 10th of March and the 1st
of April. It is also their belief that Mussolini may
make war on France at any time after the 15th of March

and

751.65/553

SEC. 1

CONFIDENTIAL
GML

95165

-2- #340, February 22, midnight, from Paris.

and that Djibouti probably will be the first point to
be attacked.

(END SECTION ONE).

BULLITT

KLP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

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

Paris

FROM Dated February 22, 1939

REC'd 9:18 a.m., 23rd.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

340, February 22, midnight. (SECTION TWO).

Mussolini now has 100,000 troops in Libya and French information indicates that he is about to add an additional 30,000. The French are confident that their forces in Tunis will be able to resist successfully any attack on Tunis. On the other hand they know that the British have in Egypt at the present time only 15,000 British troops, 40 planes and some thousands of Egyptian troops who are regarded as relatively useless. It is the belief of Gamelin and Daladier that in case of war the Italians in Libya may attack Egypt and stand on the defensive against the French troops in Tunis.

Viscount Gort, Chief of the British General Staff passed through Paris yesterday on his way back to England from Egypt. In his conversation with General George in Paris he displayed great apprehension with regard to the situation in apprehending an Italian attack on Egypt. He stated to the French that he had ordered Sikh troops sent from India for the defense of Egypt.

751.65/565
SEC:2
CONFIDENTIAL FILE
FILED
APR 12 1939
GML

5

JR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

Paris

Dated February 22, 1939

FROM Rec'd 9:10 a.m., 23rd.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

340, February 22, midnight (SECTION THREE).

It is the opinion of all the men cited above that Germany does not desire to go to war with France at the present time but will go to war at once in case Italy should make war on France.

This opinion has been reinforced by Herve Alphand, Director of Commercial Accords, with whom I also talked today who returned from Berlin a few days ago. He said to me that he believed that France should make a very far-reaching commercial agreement with Germany at once in order that the Germans might feel that they had more to gain through good relations with France than by supporting Italy. I believe from this and other conversations that the French are willing to make far-reaching economic and commercial concessions to Germany at the present time. Alphand said that the economic situation in Germany was in his opinion most serious and that he believed there was a real possibility of influencing German actions through commercial offers.

BULLITT

KLP

751.65/553

SEC. 3

COMM. APR 12 1939

FILED GML

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5

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM
Paris

Dated February 22, 1939

Rec'd 10:05 a.m., 23rd.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

340, February 22, midnight. (SECTION FOUR).

152 01
Daladier said to me tonight that he personally
considered Berard's negotiations in Spain successful--
provided that Franco should endorse the simple agreement
entered into by Berard and General Jordana. They had
agreed that France would recognize General Franco if
General Franco should promise that Spain would be
completely independent of Germany and Italy and in case
of general European war this year would remain neutral.

JR
Jordana said to Berard that he would urge Franco to
make this promise in return for recognition but he was
not sure whether or not Franco would make any such promise.
Daladier added that if Franco should refuse to promise
neutrality he would immediately order both military and
industrial mobilization in France since Franco's refusal
would mean that France would have to face an attack on
three fronts in the course of the next few weeks.

Daladier

751.65/553

SEC. 4

CONFIDENTIAL

FILED

GWL

-2- #340, February 22, midnight, (SECTION FOUR) from Paris.

Daladier is somewhat inclined to make statements of this sort and not carry them out so that I am not at all certain that such action would ^{follow} ~~(be)~~ a refusal by Franco of the terms agreed upon by Berard and General Jordana.

BULLITT

HPD

~~(*) Apparent omission.~~

S

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM:ris

Dated February 22, 1939

Rec'd 10:40 a.m., 23rd.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

340, February 22, midnight (SECTION FIVE).

124.51
I discussed with Daladier and Gamelin measures to
be taken in Paris in case Germany and Italy should attack
in the next few weeks. Both Daladier and Gamelin
promised me that the stands of the race track at Autueil
would be reserved for the American Embassy in case our
chancery should be blown up--which both regarded as most
likely.

Both Daladier and Gamelin commented on the extreme
gravity of the situation of the British in the Far East,
expressing the opinion that Great Britain could do nothing
at the moment to defend either Hong Kong, Singapore,
New Zealand, Australia or the Dutch East Indies in case
of Japanese attack. They added that it might be possible
for the Italians to seize Egypt and obtain support from
the Mohammedan peoples of Arabia, Palestine, and the
adjacent countries who were hostile to the British on
account of the Jewish immigration into Palestine. If the

SUEZ

751.65/553

SEC. 5

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

FILED

GML

-2- #340, February 22, midnight (Section Five) from Paris.

Suez Canal and Egypt should be in Italian hands instead of the British the entire situation not only in the Eastern Mediterranean but also to the eastward--in the Indian Ocean--would be changed.

BULLITT

HPD

5

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

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

FROM Paris

Dated February 22, 1939

Rec'd 10:59 a.m., 23rd

Secretary of State,

Washington.

340, February 22, midnight (SECTION SIX).

I could continue to report views of representative Frenchmen as to the extreme gravity of the present situation until this telegram would be endless. One example may be worth citing. Last night when I was at Blum's apartment Mandel telephoned to say that he must see Blum at once. He arrived and I offered to go but both men asked me to remain. Mandel said to Blum that he considered it vital that Blum should not leave for America. It was now certain that the Italians would begin an effort at blackmail on a grand scale in the month of March. It was vital for France to refuse to make any concessions. If Blum should go to America it would be entirely possible that the Socialists under the leadership of Paul Faure would begin to scream for peace, asking "Why should French boys die for Djibouti?" He brought forward all the facts to which I have drawn your attention above and added that although

the

751.65/553

SEC. 6

FILED

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

GML

-2- #340, February 22, midnight (SECTION SIX) from Paris.

the the French had only eight antique planes in the Djibouti region there were now sufficient troops there to hold up an Italian attack in force for two weeks. The Italians therefore could not seize Djibouti by a swift attack and then offer to talk peace. He considered Blum's presence essential in order to reinforce the backbone of the Socialist Party. At the close of the conversation Blum decided not to go to America.

END MESSAGE.

BULLITT

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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file

CA

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

FROM

PARIS

Dated March 1, 1939

Rec'd 6:37 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

387, March 1, 7 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

RECEIVED
MAR 2 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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From various remarks made by Quinones de Leon in the course of our conversation today I gathered that he is in intimate contact with King Alphonso in Rome. The opinions which he expressed on Mussolini's present intentions may therefore be of interest.

He said that he had information from Rome which was certainly authoritative and indicated that Mussolini positively was afraid to start war this spring. Mussolini was convinced and with good reason that without fighting he could get a majority of the shares of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railroad, a free port in Djibouti, two shares on the board of the Suez Canal and a statute for the Italians in Tunisia similar to that which Laval had offered to him. Quinones de Leon said that the King of Italy and the entire royal family were absolutely convinced that there would be no war this spring.

BULLITT

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
MAR 7 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Handwritten initials: HJ, EAD, SA

FS
This telegram must be _____ Paris
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fore being communicated
to anyone. (D)

FROM Dated March 3, 1939

Rec'd 1:05 p.m.

SECRETARY OF DIVISION OF
State
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
Washington, 8 1939

SECRETARY OF STATE
MAR - 4 1939
NOTED

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
MAR 6 - 1939
MR. WELLES

401, DEPARTMENT OF STATE
March 3, 3 p.m. (SECTION ONE).

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

I had a long talk with Daladier this morning. In the course of our conversation he permitted me to read a six page note which Sir Eric Phipps, British Ambassador in Paris, had handed to Bonnet yesterday.

The note ran as follows: On the 27th of February Bastianini (replacing Ciano who was absent because of his Polish visit) sent for Lord Perth and made the following remarks:

The Italian Government was much disturbed because the increase of French reinforcements in Tunisia. In addition to soldiers (?) airplanes the French Government was sending heavy artillery. Moreover, the French were taking measures against Italians resident in Tunisia of such a nature that the Italian Government believed that the French Government was contemplating an early attack against Libya.

HPD

BULLITT

Handwritten: 751.65

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated March 3, 1939

Rec'd 2 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

401, March 3, 3 p. m. (SECTION TWO)

Bastianini added that he knew it would be argued in Paris that these French forces were being concentrated in Tunisia so that if Italian troops should attack Djibouti there might be a French counter-attack on Libya.

Bastianini asserted that it was absurd for any one to believe that the Italians were contemplating or could contemplate an attack on Djibouti and that this French argument was therefore valueless. The Italian Government was obliged to believe that the French themselves were preparing for an immediate attack on Libya.

Under the circumstances the Italian Government must reinforce heavily the 62,000 Italian troops now in Libya and must insist that the French should stop sending reinforcements to Tunisia. Bastianini added that if the French should not stop reinforcing the army in Tunisia the Italian Government might have to take immediate and drastic action and that war might result.

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

PARIS

Dated March 3, 1939

FROM Rec'd 1:15 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

401, March 3, 3 p. m. (SECTION THREE)

The note went on to say that Lord Perth had replied that it was inconceivable and absurd to believe that the French were contemplating an attack on Libya and that the French preparations were certainly merely an answer to Italian preparations in Libya.

The British Government, the note stated, had promised the French Government that it would not attempt to mediate or arbitrate the dispute between France and Italy, and Chamberlain had stated flatly that in case of war England would fight on the side of France; but the British Government considered that the situation was already so dangerous and that, in the immediate future, war would become so imminent, unless both the Italians and French should stop this race of reinforcements to Libya and Tunisia, that the British Government ventured to suggest to the French Government that the French Government might now be prepared to accept the good offices of the British Government to work out a settlement of the dispute.

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Paris

Dated March 3, 1939

FROM

Rec'd 3: 01 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

401, March 3, 3 p.m. (SECTION FOUR).

Daladier commented somewhat bitterly that this note was obviously the beginning of that very British mediation which the British had promised not to propose.

We then discussed the underlying realities of the situation. Daladier said that although Bastianini had stated to Perth that there were only 62,000 Italian troops in Libya, the secret service reports of the French general staff indicated that there were approximately 100,000. He was in the habit personally of discounting such reports by about 10%; but he felt absolutely convinced that there were at least 85,000 Italian troops in Libya. At the present time there were 30,000 French troops in Tunisia but he was reenforcing them and he was sending pursuit planes to Tunisia among which were the Curtis P 36-S which recently had been delivered to France.

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Paris

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Dated March 3, 1939

Rec'd 2:25 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

FROM

401, March 3, 3 p.m. (SECTION FIVE).

He added that it was quite true that he had sent heavy
artillery to Tunisia and also that he had sent tanks.
Daladier went on to say that he would continue to send
reinforcements.

Djibouti obviously could not be defended for a long
time against an Italian attack from Ethiopia. He believes,
however, that the present defenses of Djibouti were suffi-
cient to prevent the Italians from taking the town in less
than two weeks. He could not send large forces to Djibouti
because it was a mere cul de sac and all soldiers there
eventually would be sacrificed.

Daladier said that he had given Bonnet orders to pre-
pare a note replying vigorously to the British that France
could not accept British mediation. (Indeed in his hand-
writing on the British note which he showed me was an
annotation to this effect.) Daladier added that Bonnet
was now preparing the note.

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

FROM PARIS

Dated March 3, 1939

Rec'd 2:39 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

401, March 3, 3 p. m. (SECTION SIX)

I asked Daladier what he thought the Italians would demand. He said that he thought they would demand the Adis Ababa Djibouti railroad, a free port in Djibouti, seats on the board of the Suez Canal Company and a new statute for the Italians in Tunisia which would make it certain that they would have a virtually independent status and would eventually be able to dominate Tunisia. By this I gathered that he meant, among other things, that the Italians would demand the right of unrestricted immigration into Tunisia and the right for all children of these Italians to remain for all future generations Italian citizens.

Daladier went on to say that certain of these demands were not unreasonable and would not touch the vital interests of France. However, so long as Italy should continue to make such demands at the point of a pistol it would be impossible to accord them. If I should

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REB

2-#401, From Paris, March 3, 3 p.m.
(SEC. Six)

should walk into his office and ask him casually to give me ten francs he would naturally do it; but if I should walk in and point a pistol at his head and say that he must give me ten francs or I would shoot him he would be obliged to tell me to shoot.

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated March 3, 1939

Rec'd 2:46 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

401, March 3, 3 p. m. (SECTION SEVEN)

So far as he was concerned he believed that now that the Italians controlled Ethiopia it would be reasonable, provided Italy should be ready to behave as a good neighbor to France and to stop insults and threats, to arrange for the sale to the Italian Government of that portion of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa Railroad which lay in Ethiopia, French interests retaining that portion which was in French Somaliland. Furthermore, he had no great objection to giving Italy a free port in Djibouti although there was, of course, the danger that this free port would soon dominate the entire town and make it virtually an Italian possession. He also had no particular objection to giving Italy a few seats on the board of the Suez Canal. The Italian demands with regard to Tunis must, however, be rejected if they should go any further than the proposals which Laval had made to Mussolini in 1935. He could not go one step further than Laval had gone. Indeed he believed that

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REB

2-#401, From Paris, March 3, 3p.m.
(Sec. Seven)

that Laval had gone too far. He again repeated that France could not submit to blackmail and that he would rather have war than surrender any advantage however slight to Italy at the point of a gun.

(END SECTION SEVEN)

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated March 3, 1939

Rec'd 3:50 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

401, March 3, 3 p. m. (SECTION EIGHT)

I have gathered from sources too numerous to mention that Bonnet may have been preparing the ground for the British note which Daladier showed me and that Bonnet may be prepared to accept a very slight change in attitude on the part of Mussolini as sufficient alteration in Italian policy to justify concessions with regard to the Djibouti-Addis Ababa Railroad, the freeport in Djibouti, the seats on the board of the Suez Canal and a new harbor for Tunisia.

The latter point obviously is most serious. As Daladier said to me this morning "If we make concessions with regard to Tunisia of such a nature to cause the Tunisians to believe that we shall some day abandon them to the Italians, we shall not only lose Tunisia but also Algeria and the whole of North Africa. An Italian Tunisia would not only be the beginning of the end of our colonial empire in North Africa but also would mean absolute control

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Confidential File

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REB

2-#401, From Paris, Mar.3,3p.m.
(Sec. Eight)

control by Italy of the whole portion of the Mediterranean
lying to the east of Bizerte, Pantelleria and Sicily."

(END SECTION EIGHT)

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

PARIS
FROM Dated March 3, 1939
Rec'd 2:50 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

401, March 3, 3 p. m. (SECTION NINE)

My own judgment of the British note was that its terms and tone indicated that the British Government is about to bring very serious pressure on the French Government to compel the French Government to make the concessions that Mussolini desires. I do not know to what extent Bonnet will cooperate in this British pressure and it is difficult to predict whether or not Daladier will stand firm in the next crisis.

Daladier comes from the people and is not influenced by the curious wave of upper class emotion which is beginning to make a large number of rich and respectable gentlemen on the Right, both in France and England, feel a sense of solidarity with the dictators rather than the democracies. One of the growing factors in the present situation is this sense of the international solidarity of capitalists which is curiously reminiscent of the Metternich period

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REB

2-#401, From Paris, Mar.3,3p.m.
(Sec. Nine)

in Europe when there was an international solidarity of legitimists. They want to preserve the position of the dictators as a defence against the Left at almost any cost. Flandin heads this group in France and Bonnet is perhaps not remote from it.

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM PARIS

Dated March 3, 1939

Rec'd 3:16 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

401, March 3, 3 p. m. (SECTION TEN)

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At the conclusion of our conversation I took up with Daladier a request which the Polish Ambassador made to me a few days ago. The Polish Ambassador said that his Government was most anxious to improve relations between Poland and France. The chief obstacles to these relations were certain misunderstandings which existed in the mind of Daladier with regard to Polish policy and Polish promises in the past. He had not seen Daladier for a very long time and had no personal contact with him and would be deeply obliged if I would invite him and Daladier to lunch with me alone so that these misunderstandings might be cleared up.

(END SECTION TEN)

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

PARIS

FROM Dated March 3, 1939

Rec'd 3:24 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

401, March 3, 3 p. m. (SECTION ELEVEN)

I repeated the above to Daladier. He said that it was indeed true that he had an exceedingly bad opinion both of the Polish Ambassador in Paris and of his Foreign Minister Beck. He agreed, however, that it would be wise for him to hear any explanations that the Polish Ambassador might have to give him since at the present moment it appeared that Poland was again becoming afraid of Germany and might therefore desire to draw closer to France.

In conclusion Daladier expressed his intense joy at the election of Cardinal Pacelli as Pope. He was also most pleased by the excellent reception in Spain of the nomination of Marechal Petain as Ambassador to Burgos.

(END OF MESSAGE)

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Actual File

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