EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 740

Berlin, April 27, 1939

Subject: Conversation Relating to the Current Political Situation of the Balkan State.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's despatch No. 683 of April 11, 1939, mentioning views of the local Albanian Minister on developments in the European politico-military situation, with especial reference to the Balkan peninsula.

In view of the attention which continues to be focused on that area, it may be of some interest to the Department to have recorded remarks made today by the Albanian Minister, who continues to reside in Berlin and to enjoy extraterritorial status despite the absence of any instructions from Tirana. It is felt that Mr. Raouf Fico's observations may be worthy of attention in view of his experience with both Central European and Balkan problems.

Respectfully yours,

Raymond H. Geist
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

Enclosure:
Memorandum.

800 JP:EM

Enclosure to despatch No. 740
of April 27, 1939, from the
American Embassy, Berlin.

MEMORANDUM

April 27, 1939.

Subject: Current European Situation.

Participants: Mr. Raour Fico, Albanian Minister, and
Mr. Patterson.

The Albanian Minister (who had not removed his country's emblems from before his Legation, the arms and flagstaff being still in place, and the front door reading, in Albanian and German, "Albanian Legation") stated that he had received no instructions from Tirana and but one letter from his wife since the Italian occupation of Albania. He knew merely that an administration had been formed and thought that eventually he would have some word from its members. He evidently hoped that Albania would continue as a separate kingdom under the Italian Crown, so that the union of the two countries would be merely a personal one under a common king. He mentioned the relationships which exist between Great Britain and the Dominions. This was evidently merely wishful thinking, however. Mr. Fico added that he remained in his house most of the time since it was difficult for him to circulate in his present vague status. However, he intended attending the Reichstag meeting on April 28, for which he apparently had received cards along with the other

chiefs

chiefs of diplomatic missions in Berlin. He appeared interested in Hitler's reply to the President and inquired if the American Embassy had made any preparations to leave Germany should eventualities make such a step desirable. He had come to no definite conclusion as to the prospects for war in Europe, but was inclined to be very pessimistic as to the future, saying that it was impossible to plan for the future, or to look ahead with any certainty for more than a fortnight at a time.

He was convinced of the strength of the German forces and intimated that they were in a position to overrun Rumania at any time. They might have to do so in case of hostilities in any quarter in order to obtain the oil required for their motorized forces. (In this connection it may be interesting to report a statement recently made to me by a journalist, to the effect that Ministerialdirektor Wohlthat, who recently concluded a comprehensive German-Rumanian economic agreement, had stated that persons who expected the treaty to be of immediate economic benefit to Germany were deluding themselves. Important economic advantages could hardly be derived under the Rumanian agreement before the lapse of 20 months.) Germany probably did not have very large stores of military supplies so would act quickly in order to seize the resources of neighboring lands. As for Jugoslavia, Mr. Fico stated that that country

was

was in a most difficult situation with enemies on all borders. He had not seen Mr. Cincar-Markovitch, the Jugoslav Foreign Minister, now in Berlin, but felt that he was a person who understood the German mentality thoroughly. However, despite that clairvoyance, there was not much he or his country could do should Germany decide to invade or otherwise to make use of the country. Greece was in even a less satisfactory position, with Italians on one side; the Bulgarians, who openly demanded Thrace, on the other; and the long coastline exposed to the nearest fleet. As for Turkey, the Minister knew (he had himself been a Turkish official at one time) that the Turks' association with the Germans during the World War had left bitter memories in the minds of the former. It was just those Turks, too, who were now in power in Turkey (former army officers). Mr. Fico indicated that Turkey would resist German pressure as much as possible. Bulgaria was inclined to rely on Germany to rectify its frontiers, come what might later on.

JP:MM

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 7. Berlin, May 2, 1939.

Subject: Remarks of Greek Minister on Current European Political Situation with Especial Reference to Poland and the Balkan States.

740.00/1470

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

MAY 26 1939

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's despatch No. 683 of April 11, 1939, in enclosure 2 to which were incorporated observations concerning Poland recently made by the Italian Ambassador in Berlin.

In view of the attention directed toward that country as a result of Chancelor Hitler's speech before the Reichstag on the 28th ultimo, it

1/ seems pertinent to enclose a memorandum of a conversation between a member of the staff of the Embassy and Mr. Alexander Rizo-Rangabé, Minister of Greece at this post, in which references are made both to the situation of Poland, and to that of

the

the Balkan States, in relation to Germany.

It will be noted that the Greek Minister shares the sentiment expressed by his Italian colleague as to the danger to Poland arising from its government's vanity and exaggerated sense of prestige. Poland, in the view of Mr. Rizo-Rangabé, is not able to realize its desire to live as a great power and is at present in a dangerous situation due to its current estrangement from Germany and to its unwillingness to come to terms with the Soviet Union. Poland must elect either to stand by Germany or by Russia.

As for the Balkan States as a whole, Mr. Rizo-Rangabé professed to feel that the danger of their natural economic ties with Germany had been exaggerated by the press of the western powers. Certainly Greece, his own country, was obliged to trade extensively with Germany if its population were not to starve, since other important outlets for Hellenic products had not been realized and were perhaps not capable of development. He advocated a policy of the strictest neutrality for all small States in case of an armed conflict among the major Powers and pointed to the difficulties encountered by Greece during the World War as a result of the tincture of benevolence imparted by Venizelos to the neutrality originally declared by his country at that time.

Respectfully yours,

Raymond H. Geist

Raymond H. Geist
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

Enclosure:
Memorandum, as above.

800
JP:EM

Enclosure to despatch
No. 7 of May 2, 1939,
from American Embassy,
Berlin, Germany.

Memorandum.

Subject: Hitler's April 28 Reichstag Speech and the General European Situation.

Participants: Mr. Rizo-Rangabé, Greek Minister, and Mr. Patterson.

On calling by appointment on the Greek Minister on the morning of April 29th, mention was made of Hitler's speech. Mr. Rizo-Rangabé was inclined to find Hitler's decision to break with his past policy of friendly relationships with Great Britain the most serious, in the long run, item of the Chancelor's address. While he felt that the denunciation of the Anglo-German naval accord of 1935 was not in itself more than a detail (since Germany was not able to build up to 35 per cent of the British navy), it was disquieting to find that Hitler, who had, ever since taking over power, advocated a policy of amity with Great Britain, should have apparently decided that it could be followed no longer.

At the same time, Hitler's declaration of the end of the German-Polish agreement of 1934 boded ill for Poland, and also linked up with Germany's present distrust and sentiment of antagonism toward Great Britain. Mr. Rizo-Rangabé considered that Poland, in rejecting German suggestions regarding cession of Danzig in

return

return for economic facilities at that port, and the construction of an extraterritorial highway and railway across the Corridor, had been shortsighted. Such demands were reasonable on the part of Germany, and Poland by rejecting them had placed herself in a morally weak position. In the Minister's view, Poland simply could not afford to antagonize both Germany and Soviet Russia at the same time. Poland could not play the great power, as it liked to do, and must lean either on Germany or on Russia. However, Poland, now that friendly relations with Germany had ended, was unwilling to come to terms with Russia, with a view to cooperation in case of German aggression. This was an untenable position: Poland must make its election. In the Minister's view, Great Britain and France could do little to help Poland, and this the Poles seemed to realize, for the Polish Ambassador in Berlin, Mr. Lipsky, had said as much and had stated that Poland would rely on its seventy divisions. The Minister remarked parenthetically that the ordinary German and even German officials, although perhaps not those in the Foreign Office, consider Britain on the decline and intimate that such small islands cannot indefinitely continue to rule a large empire. Poland feels in relation to Danzig that if the free city were ceded, German cannon could dominate Gydinia and so practically exclude Poland from the sea. The Poles had, on the other hand, intimated that they might be

disposed

disposed to cede the city if the Germans would demilitarize it. This the Minister felt the Germans, after the example of the Rhineland, would not do. Matters were in an impasse at the present moment.

Turning to Roumania, the Minister said that he had had a brief talk with Mr. Gafencu, Roumanian Foreign Minister, who had recently been in Berlin. He had gained the impression that Mr. Gafencu had been rather content with Hitler's attitude. Hitler had surveyed the general European horizon. In relation to Poland, the Chancelor had said that he was the only man in Germany strong enough to make a reasonable settlement with Poland; that if he disappeared, the Army would quickly march into the Corridor; that he desired a reasonable settlement, but that the Poles were not disposed to discuss matters on a sensible basis. (The Minister himself felt that Poland was too much concerned with prestige for its own good.)

Similarly, he had been the only man to make a reasonable settlement with France for no one else could have renounced Alsace-Lorraine as he had done.

The Minister remarked that Mr. Gafencu was not unduly alarmed over the future of Roumania; and that close economic relations with Germany were necessary for the very livelihood of not only the Roumanian people, but also of those of the other Balkan States, Greece included. Due cognizance was, of course, taken of the possible political risk involved in these relationships.

Gafencu had not felt that the economic agreement necessarily meant the end of his country's political independence and had indeed left with a feeling of reassurance.

Indeed, it was partly because of exaggerated statements in the French and other foreign press regarding German designs on Yugoslavia that the Yugoslavian Foreign Minister Markovitch had within the past week come to Berlin. (On the other hand, it would have been difficult for him and other Balkan statesmen to have refused an invitation to Berlin.) The Minister felt that the western press threw the situation of the southeast European countries into too lurid a light. Germany might need their resources, but they also required the German market.

He was convinced that Hungary, in March 1939, had invaded the Carpatho-Ukraine without the consent of Germany and had in fact stolen a march on Germany in so doing. Germany had opposed a common Hungarian frontier in September 1938, and was not in favor of it even now. However, at the moment of invading Bohemia and Moravia and of establishing control in Slovakia, Germany was in no position to complain of Hungary's action which had ensued with great dispatch. The Hungarian action did not mean that Hungary was completely subject to Germany and was acting as Germany's tool. The Minister supposed that Graf Teleki and Czaky had come to discuss general problems only.

As

As for President Roosevelt's message to Hitler of April 14, he did not feel that it would have any appreciable effect on the policy of this country. He felt that the speech of Hitler before the Reichstag had been only incidentally concerned with Roosevelt. Poland and England had been its principal burden. Hitler had not closed the door to further negotiation with either Britain or Poland and indeed to leave the door of negotiation open was his custom. The Minister did not believe, though, that the Germans were likely to be deterred from their purpose of expansion by anything short of force.

Greece intended to preserve the most absolute degree of neutrality. The Minister remarked that during the last war, Venizelos had declared "benevolent neutrality" toward the Allies and had as a result first seen France and England encroach and demand greater and greater degrees of benevolence with the result that the Central Powers had regarded Greece's attitude as definite "malveillant" and had acted accordingly, thus turning the country into a battleground. Now, Greece would not budge from strict neutrality toward all comers. That was the attitude which all small States should adopt, and which the Balkan Entente desired. Greece could not afford to antagonize any strong power, including of course (and especially) the maritime States.

Bulgaria was not a member of the Balkan Entente, but might eventually enter it. Bulgaria had territorial ambitions in the Dobrudja and also on Dedeagatch on the Aegean Sea. Greece, however, while entirely willing

to

to grant Bulgaria (as it had already granted Yugoslavia) a free port at Salonika, was not willing to cede territory to Bulgaria. Greece had an expanding population, augmented by refugees from Turkey, and could afford, with its sterile soil, to let no land go to others over which it could claim sovereignty. Besides, a cardinal principle of Greek policy was to have a common frontier with Turkey. The time was approaching when, as a result of decidedly improved relations with Turkey, it might be possible for Greeks again to settle in Asia Minor, or at least to work there for long periods. A cession of land on the Aegean would, if granted to Bulgaria, interrupt this process, which was of great importance to his country. Besides, if Bulgaria needed territory on the Aegean, the same argument could be put forward on behalf of Roumania and other countries.

JP:EM

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
Mr. DUNN
MAY 8 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

BERLIN (PART AIR)
FROM
Dated May 3, 1939

Received 6:20 a.m. 4th

Secretary of State

Washington

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAY 4 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

310, May 3, 5 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

I have information from a source found in the past to be reliable that active preparations are now being carried on by the Germans to make a sudden military coup in Poland within the next fourteen days. I am informed that it is planned to make the invasion through Lithuania and Latvia though I am not clear why Latvian territory should be utilized. Certain military leaves have been canceled. My informant further stated that if this is not done within the next fourteen days it would be postponed for at least four months. Furthermore, if the military coup is made the Germans will demand Danzig and the corridor.

In evaluating this information I am sure that the preparations reported are being made; and that the German-Polish deadlock which is the source of greatest anxiety here in diplomatic circles has caused Hitler to consider seriously risking a sudden military movement against Poland still believing (as my informant stated)

that

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CONFIDENTIAL FILE
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that the western powers will not intervene. Whether or not the blow will be struck as my informant indicated depends upon the development of events during the next few weeks, particularly on the attitude of Poland.

GEIST

RR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
MAY 9 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FROM

HM
A portion of this telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone (C)

Berlin

Dated May 8, 1939

Rec'd 12:42 p.m.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAY 9 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

760C.62/572

Secretary of State,

Washington.

329, May 8, 4 p.m.

(GRAY) Following the same general lines described in the Embassy's 325, May 6, 1 p.m. the papers over the week-end continued to inveigh against Polish policy towards Germany as stated in Beck's speech on Friday. The press in Poland and in the western democracies are taken to task for allegedly interpreting the speech as an indication of Poland's readiness to settle outstanding problems through negotiation, it being asserted that in fact Beck adopted a negative stand toward every phase of the German position with respect to Poland. In this connection the German papers indicate that Italian influence will be exerted in Warsaw in support of Germany's standpoint. (END GRAY).

The Polish Ambassador is still absent from Berlin. According to a Polish secretary to whom a member of the staff spoke yesterday Lipski is expected to return to

Berlin

G-J

Berlin in the next few days but will not carry instructions to negotiate a compromise settlement of the Danzig and the Corridor questions. The Secretary characterized as "laughable" the rumor that Beck was making any plans at this time to come to Germany to confer with Hitler and gave the following personal expose of the German-Polish situation which, although believed to be sincere, cannot be regarded as more than a personal and unauthoritative statement of opinion: the Secretary said that at the Polish Embassy it was not believed that Germany would endeavor to occupy Danzig or invade any portion of Poland in the immediate future; that the Embassy was of the opinion that Hitler was now convinced that such action would result in a general war and that not only was he determined to avoid a general war but except as a last resort was still unwilling to start a war with Poland alone. The Embassy, he continued, had been informed by "Germans" -- whom he did not name -- that Beck's speech while extremely irritating had stopped just short of being "provocative enough" to determine the Reich to adopt military action. (END SECTION ONE).

KIRK

PEG

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

BERLIN

Dated May 8, 1939

Rec'd 4:07 p. m.

FROM

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
MAY 9 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAY 9 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,

Washington.

329, May 8, 4 p. m. (SECTION TWO)

The Secretary said that while it was not believed that Germany would occupy Danzig or invade Polish territory at the present time he did not see how a war could ultimately be avoided in view of the firmness of attitude and intensity of feeling on both sides. The Polish Embassy felt, however, that some development as yet unforeseeable would occur which would give Hitler a way out without loss of prestige before his people and the Secretary remarked that if Poland could be assured that such action would end the tension and not be a prelude to further German demands the Polish Government would be willing ultimately to agree to some readjustment in the status of Danzig and a "corridor through the corridor" but only under some Polish control. At the present time, however, given "German psychology and methods" he considered that it would be a mistake to start with an offer of concessions on the part of Poland and furthermore

from

FW 760C.62/572

G-J

REB

2-#329, From Berlin, May 8, 4 p.m.
(Sec. Two)

from his Government's standpoint it was practically impossible even to talk concessions until the present state of Polish public feeling had quieted down as any indication on the part of his Government to "talk concessions" at the present time would probably provoke a revolution in Poland and a successful one.

Referring to Beck's denial that Hitler had proposed a 25-year guarantee of Polish boundaries in return for Danzig and a zone through the "corridor" he remarked that the Beck-Hitler conversations had merely been exploratory and that Beck had clearly indicated that any mention on that occasion of guarantees for Poland had been coupled with "unacceptable propositions". He indicated that these "unacceptable propositions" were "feelers" from Hitler looking toward a joint Polish-German attitude or action against Russia.

He concluded by saying that he understood that the German representative at Moscow had been having talks with the Soviet Government presumably in an endeavor to divert it from any thought of supporting Poland. He remarked that he did not think that Hitler had reached the point of discussing anything in the nature of a "definite

understanding"

REB

3-#329, From Berlin, May 8,4p.m.
(Sec. Two)

understanding" with Soviet Russia but that in Poland it was regarded as highly possible that at some time in the future an attempt to reach such an "understanding" might be made.

(END OF MESSAGE)

KIRK

NPL

ROW

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 360 Berlin, May 8, 1939.

Subject: The Pope's Diplomatic Démarche, with Special Reference to Germany.

Copy in Eu

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
JUN 29 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

O. N. I.
Mil. Int.
in confidence

740.00
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The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Sir:

As more information has gradually become available subsequent to the writing of the Embassy's telegram No. 331, of May 8, 3 p.m., I have the honor to furnish for the Department's records an outline of the background and present status, with special reference to Germany, of the diplomatic démarche made by the Pope at the beginning of last month in the international situation, and with regard particularly to the German-Polish controversy.

Trustworthy accounts of the Pope's démarche

have been

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GMB

have been exceedingly difficult to obtain in Berlin, the more particularly so as in all matters of this kind involving a personal appeal to the Führer, the utmost reserve is maintained in German official quarters. In fact, no mention of the Pope's action, or the Papal Nuncio's call upon the Führer on May 5 was made at all in the German press, although knowledge of the matter has obtained wide currency among the German public by virtue of the infiltration of news from abroad, as well as apparently by its dissemination through the local organs of the Catholic Church.

According to information available here up to the present, it would appear that following Hitler's rejection of President Roosevelt's message, the Pope felt that an appeal upon a wider front might be usefully made to the nations most directly involved in the current European crisis, and particularly in the German-Polish controversy, which since President Roosevelt's message had become one of the most burning issues in European politics. The Pope therefore took steps to communicate to the German, Italian, British, French and Polish Governments his great concern that peace might be kept, suggesting at the same time that some sort of consultation might be appropriately held for the discussion and settlement of the most serious outstanding issues. It does not

appear

appear to have been the Pope's intention, however, that a conference should be held at the Vatican.

In a conversation with the Papal Nuncio he informed me that he was instructed on May 4 to see the Führer personally, the Vatican, he added, being unaware that Hitler was not in Berlin at the time. The Papal Nuncio communicated immediately with the Foreign Office, stating that he was not averse to flying, and on Friday, May 5, he was taken by airplane to Berchtesgaden, where he was received by Hitler in the presence of Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop. With regard to his interview, the Papal Nuncio informed me that the Vatican's proposals were courteously received and were not rejected. Subsequently in my conversation with him I said that I could not believe that a gesture such as the Pope had made would be allowed to lapse, to which the Papal Nuncio replied that of course the matter was still to the fore, but that everything depended upon the determination of Hitler's policy.

The concensus of diplomatic opinion in Berlin at the moment is that the Pope's action is unlikely to lead to concrete results in view of the very great difficulties involved. Among these are mentioned Germany's and Italy's aversion to conferences generally and to one in particular in which they would find themselves in a minority against Great

Britain,

Britain, France and Poland. According to a local diplomatic source the Pope himself realized that there was but little chance that Germany and Poland would sit at a table together to confer and that Italy was not inclined to put itself in a position where it might have to discuss with France, in conference, its alleged grievances against that country. The question is asked finally as to whether the division of Europe into two opposing blocks has not gone too far to permit a general conference of such a nature taking place today. A diplomat identified with one of the "Axis Powers" has indeed characterised the Pope's démarche as unfortunate in that it was made at the wrong time when there was too much tension to enable it to have the proper effect. He continued that as of the present date there had been no further developments in connection with the Pope's initiative and that the Pope had not made any other gesture along the same lines of his previous démarche.

It is believed in certain circles in Berlin that Germany, in whatever subsequent reply it may later make to the Pope's representations, would not risk a brusque refusal but would probably express in general terms its appreciation for the Pope's high motives and his concern in maintaining peace. The guess is indeed hazarded that Herr Hitler's friendly reception

of the

of the Papal Nuncio may have encouraged the Pope to make his optimistic statement of June 2 to the College of Cardinals in Rome.

As mentioned in the Embassy's telegram No. 337 of May 9, 9 p.m., it appears that following the presentation of the Vatican's proposals, the Nuncio and Herr Hitler had a long and friendly talk concerning the situation of the Catholic Church in Germany, and indeed, signs have not been lacking that the Pope's diplomatic initiative, as well as the Papal Nuncio's conversation, may have had a certain bearing upon relations between the German Catholic Church and the State. It has for instance been noticeable this summer that the Government has abated what might be called its frontal attacks upon the Church, such as those undertaken on a nation-wide scale by uniform press propoganda and anti-Catholic speeches, although it is not clear on the one hand, as to whether this abatement may not have been decreed in order to prevent Catholic discontent from disrupting popular unity at the present international juncture, or, on the other hand, may have been the direct result of the Pope's démarche. It would seem to be in any case true that the Pope's initiative and the Papal Nuncio's interview with Hitler certainly cannot have aggravated relations

between

between the Church and State and may even have improved them. On the other hand, as one local diplomat has put it, any lessening of tension due to the Pope's initiative has been purely diplomatic, inasmuch as fundamental relations between the Church and the Government remain practically the same. In any event, the pattern of the picture is not entirely clear, for while according to information received from Munich and Cologne and reported in the Embassy's telegram No. 410 of May 24, 10 a.m., there has been a general improvement in relations, new reports have been received from sources in Berlin that the Government is proceeding at an accelerated rate with the confiscation of Church property in Austria.

Respectfully yours,

A. Kirk

Alexander Kirk,
Charge d'Affaires ad interim.

700
JDB:PF

Copy to American Embassy, Rome.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
MAY 15 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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

FROM BERLIN

Dated May 12, 1939

Received 10:05 a.m.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAY 12 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,

Washington.

350, May 12, noon. STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

No. 310, May 3, 4 p.m.

Information from the same source is to the effect that although every allowance must be made for a possible sudden decision by Hitler to liquidate his claims on Poland, no drastic step in that direction need be expected immediately and that action may be postponed until September.

KIRK

DDM:HTM

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CONFIDENTIAL FILE
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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

AC ——————— GRAY

1—1336

FROM Berlin

Dated May 12, 1939

Rec'd 1:30 p.m.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAY 13 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State

Washington

354, May 12, 5 p.m.

Yesterday evening's issue of the DDRK, the semi official Foreign Office organ, after asserting that Germany is aware of the inducements being offered to Turkey by certain great powers to join the so-called peace alliance and of their endeavor to convince Turkey that it is menaced by the Axis powers directs a warning to Turkey in the following terms.

"Germany and Italy have only the one aim; namely, to work together in harmony with the other peoples in the geographical and economic sphere where they have been placed and to do so in a way that will safeguard the interests and the independence of all. But on the other hand it (*) without saying that they will necessarily interpret as a sign of a hostile attitude towards them any attempt to use any portion of this area as a point of departure for an attack on their interests and will draw their conclusions accordingly."

KIRK

WWC:DDM

740.00/1446

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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

FROM BERLIN

Dated May 13, 1939

Received 9:25 a.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAY 15 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

355, May 13, 11 a.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Within the last few days I have held brief conversations with the representatives here of Argentina, France, Great Britain, Japan, Poland, Russia, Turkey, as well as of certain smaller countries. They all emphasize the critical state of affairs in Europe and manifest pessimism as to the possibility of avoiding a conflict but although they point to the element of surprise which is always present in the tactics of Germany they all appear to agree in professing a belief that immediate action on the part of Germany against Poland need not be expected.

In view of this state of uncertainty indications of possible manifestations of German policy in immediate prospect are sought in those concrete factors within the country which would be involved in any such manifestations and in this regard the present status of war preparations in Germany are considered of special importance. I therefore submit the following brief resume of

740.00/1457

of those preparations as of today which has been prepared from information available to the Military and Naval and Air Attaches to this Embassy:

The present status of the German army gives no positive indication of a contemplated use of military force for the next few days. Under the system of training, however, which is now in progress in Germany, there are a minimum of 1,500,000 men under arms and in organized units. Both the size of this force and the location of the troops is such that a swift move to seize and hold Danzig and the Corridor could be made with no previous warning and could be followed by a general mobilization within a period of four days to a week. There have been within the last two days evidences of slightly more than usual military activity but these cannot be attributed directly to any concentration of troops. Furthermore there have been no indications to date of the assembling of civilian transportation in the quantities essential for active armed operations as was the case in September 1938 although this may be partially attributed to the large amount of military transport made available through the seizure of Czech equipment. The most significant feature of

the

the present military situation is the fact that the S S Leibstandarten Adolf Hitler which normally does not form a part of the peace time army is now in the field in the vicinity of Neu Stettin in the German defensive line. There is no indication, however, of any troop concentration within 30 kilometers of the Polish border. (END OF SECTION ONE.)

KIRK

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MAY 15 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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

FROM

Berlin

Dated May 13, 1939

Received 9:15 a.m.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAY 15 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,

Washington.

356, May 13, noon.

Continuing my 355, May 13, 11 a.m. (SECTION TWO).

As regards aviation more air activity has been apparent since the beginning of May than at any previous time since the German air force was restored and this activity apparently may be attributed in part at least to the intensive training with the latest types of combat air craft of reserve and commercial pilots as well as to military pilots of the regular air force.

As regards naval preparations there is no present indication of any special activities which may not (repeat not) be attributed to the maneuvers which usually take place at this time of year.

In conclusion it may be stated that insofar as may be ascertained the war preparations as of today have not (repeat not) in every respect reached the stage marked during the crisis of September last. The impression prevails, however, in foreign military circles here that a move by Germany against Poland could be

740.00/1457 SEC 2 GMB

be undertaken at any moment and that any development which might be regarded by the German Government as indicating a weakening of the position of the non-aggression powers and especially of England would constitute an important factor in precipitating such a move. (END OF MESSAGE)

KIRK

CSB