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119

741.00

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 851.00 P.P./481 FOR #2930

FROM Great Britain (Atherton) DATED Mar. 8, 1937

TO NAME 1-1137 670

REGARDING: British foreign policy. Summary of statements made regarding -, during debates on foreign affairs taking place in both the House of Commons and House of Lords on March 2.

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741.00 / 119

GMB

### Debates on Foreign Affairs.

Debates on foreign affairs took place in both the House of Lords and the House of Commons on March 2. The debate was continued in the House of Lords on March 3.

In the House of Lords the Marquis of Lothian resumed the debate on Lord Arnold's motion calling for a change in British foreign policy "which will bring it more into accord with the realities of the existing situation" and stated that the greatest cause of international disunity was the extravagances of economic nationalism. Other statements that he made may be summarized as follows: The real problem confronting statesmanship is not so much the prevention of all war as the means whereby if war broke out its spreading into a world war could be prevented. The form of collective security now advocated is that of an armed alliance. There is no such thing as collective security in a world of sovereign states and the fear of Germany is to a large extent a bogey and a policy of restricted commitments is infinitely wiser and safer than one of universal commitments. Attention ought to be paid to the policy now being pursued by the United States. Great Britain would be unable to buy arms or to raise loans in the United States and might not be able to receive raw materials and foodstuffs from the United States. If Great Britain could get the co-operation of the United States, a center of stability and peace in the world would be created

which/

which might exercise for ever the spectre of another world war. Fundamentally the attitude of the United States is that the real trouble in Europe is anarchy, because an area no larger than the United States is trying still to live as 26 states. Great Britain's withdrawing from Europe would be the best contribution the country could make to the peace of Europe, and more attention should be given to the possibility of more intimate association with the United States. It is hoped that more active co-operation with the United States would result from Mr. Runciman's recent visit there. Because Great Britain had shunned alliance systems and had a paramount navy there was no world war between 1815 and 1914.

One of the other speakers in the House of Lords was Viscount Cecil, who said that any system based on Anglo-American co-operation in any practical sense was really out of the question, as feeling in America against such a proposal would be overwhelming, particularly if Great Britain proposed to maintain one of its European obligations, the defence of France and Belgium.

In the House of Commons Mr. J. H. Greenwood was the principal speaker for the Opposition. He found the spectacle of Europe ravaged by propaganda and crippled with disarmaments to be disgusting, and stated that if all countries had joined in the arms race, Germany and Russia were the hardest runners, having spent between them two-thirds of Europe's bill for arms. No country, according to him, feared any country except Germany and all feared it. He suggested that the British Government had

clear its position with respect to all the danger points in Europe, and that it call a world peace convention and propose a general economic settlement.

The principal statements made by Mr. Eden, Foreign Secretary, may be summarized as follows:

The policy of non-intervention has proved right, having averted a grave international danger of war, despite the policy's checkered career. The next non-intervention step is to evacuate the foreign soldiers already in Spain. The League of Nations, while damaged, is not entombed. Since 1931 the League has engineered ten diplomatic successes, the latest having been the settlement of the Franco-Turkish dispute over Alexandretta. It is unfair to remember only the failures in Manchuria and Abyssinia. There is no good news to give about the proposed Western Pact, though it is perhaps time for a new effort. In regard to German colonial propaganda, the only answer is that the British Government has not considered and is not considering any transfer of territories. In my Leamington speech, it was made clear that Great Britain would defend France and Belgium against unprovoked aggression. If a new Locarno were made, Great Britain would fight if Germany were similarly attacked. Great Britain's policy has been almost universally welcomed on the ground that the stronger Great Britain is, the more likely is the continuance of peace, as Great Britain would never break the Covenant of the League.

Sir Austen Chamberlain stated that there had been quite enough big conferences for the time being and that

there were quite enough agreements if they were kept. Sir Archibald Sinclair stated that public support would be given to anything in the name of collective security and that the Opposition clamour for wider commitments was justifiable.

Lord Cranborne, speaking for the Government, stated that the Government considered the world's armaments to be monstrous and would lose no opportunity of trying to get an agreement to reduce them.

At the conclusion of the debate on March 2 the Government received 243 votes against 134 for the Opposition in the House of Commons.

In resuming the foreign affairs debate in the House of Lords on March 3, Lord Allen approved the British rearmament as leading to the pacification of Europe. He urged reconstruction of the League of Nations as an instrument of justice and not of force. He urged getting Germany to submit her grievances at a conference on a basis of absolute equality. Lord Rankeillour, while favoring friendship with France, argued that overtures should be made to Germany. The Socialist leader, Lord Snell, stated that the Socialist Party supported the armaments program to the extent that it would enable Great Britain to fulfil its obligations provided that the program be accompanied by a clear-sighted policy of appeasement. He also suggested reaching an understanding with Germany. Lord Halifax, speaking for the Government, stated that a great commonwealth could not be isolated, and that British influence and authority reinforced by rearmament would be used to prevent conflict from arising, that the gloomy

expectancy of war was not shared by the Government and that it was hoped that the time would come when a reasonable equilibrium of armaments on a lower scale than at present could be negotiated with more success than in the past. He maintained that British foreign policy had been more clearly defined by Mr. Eden in recent months than ever before, and that Britain's inability to state its attitude in hypothetical cases in Eastern Europe did not mean disinterest in that region. He reminded Lord Allen that efforts had been made for months by the British Government to get Germany to a conference table, and that any proposals for promotion of peace that could be deemed effective, would be sympathetically received by the British Government.

Reference is made to the Embassy's despatches No. 2907 of March 4, and No. 2918 of March 10, 1937.

Copy sent to White House

Sub

WE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RB

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

RECEIVED  
1 1937  
NOTED  
LONDON

Dated March 31, 1937

Rec'd 4:40

WESTERN AFFAIRS

File  
APR 2 1937  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State  
Washington.

180, March 31, 5 p. m.

CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

The following telegram is based on recent conversations and should be read with my 133, March 11, 9 p. m. and 173, March 25, 10 p. m. and memorandum of conversation due by pouch arriving in Washington tomorrow as back round.

In view of your 110, March 27, 5 p. m., I venture to outline my personal views at some length.

Germany in official eyes remains the greatest threat to European peace. The British Government's attitude towards the Spanish situation has been from the beginning that a decisive victory by either of the contending sides would endanger European equilibrium -- rather peace without victory was preferable with the situation ending in stalemate after withdrawal of foreign volunteers, leaving a settlement to be negotiated

740.00/134

APR 5 - 1937

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APR 5 - 1937

GMB

RB

-2-180, March 31, 5 p. m. from  
London

be negotiated between the contending elements in Spain on a basis of provincial autonomy. It was with this in mind that English diplomacy has been concentrated on the maintenance of the work of the Nonintervention Committee and this will continue to be the ultimate objective of British policy even under the most extreme circumstances.

Mussolini's position at the present moment is difficult. Rising commodity costs embarrass him; also the continuing expenses of the Abyssinian adventure together with the costs of his rearmament program and the undercurrent of unpopularity of the Fascist adventure in Spain. He had "roared magnificently in response to recent pin pricks of various sorts from this country" but it is not believed here that he wishes on top of his other difficulties to debar by his actions the possibility of improvement in Anglo-Italian relations. <sup>(British?)</sup> The Brazilian Government on its part does not wish to alienate Mussolini and I foresee further moves from London intended to appease him such as recognition of the Italian empire. In this connection it is suggestive of the British Government's current policy of handling the Italian

RB

-3-#180, March 31, 5 p. m. from  
London

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the Italian problem that encouragement was given Regent Paul of Yugoslavia by the British Foreign Office for the recent negotiations with Ciano. However, in the recent attempts at a rapprochement between England and Italy some incident has always arisen to keep open the wound; for the most recent instance, that of the meeting of the Nonintervention Committee of March 23, the Soviets are blamed. These meetings are by agreement secret and the only public reports are the official communiques given out at the end of each session by the chairman with the concurrence of the delegates. Nevertheless, when after the recent defeat of Italian troops outside Madrid, the Italian Ambassador pressed by Soviet Ambassador Maisky refused at that particular juncture to discuss the withdrawal (\*) volunteers, an explanation of a statement in the Committee appeared in the local press even before the official communique of the Committee meeting had been drawn up. This leakage which served to arouse fresh popular indignation against Mussolini is attributed to the Soviets. The Nonintervention Committee is on holiday until next week but the Board of Control meets again today to determine further

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-4-#180, March 31, 5 p. m. from  
London

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further the setting up of observation points and observers on the Spanish land frontiers and the international naval controls in Spanish waters. It is doubtful whether these controls at the very earliest can be established before two weeks.

Three courses are open to Mussolini in view of the recent defeat of Italian troops with insurgent forces: (One) He may regard them as volunteers infected by foreign propaganda and leave them to their fate. (Two) Mussolini can undoubtedly find examples today of material and men now reaching the Madrid Government from Soviet sources and also from France, and with some pretense of regularity in this critical period until the effective controls of the International Board of Control are established, support Italian volunteers in Spain temporarily with materials and men. Neither of these two courses would present difficulties that could not predicably be handled by the Nonintervention Committee. (Three) Mussolini might decide to support his volunteers in Spain openly in violation of the nonintervention agreement. This would undoubtedly create a crisis in which the reaction in France would be immediate and violent.

RB

-5-#180, March 31, 5 p. m. from  
London

and violent and would likewise encourage that numerous body of opinion in this country which had favored the imposition of sanctions against Italy in the Abyssinian crisis to believe a second chance had been given this Government to call "the dictator's bluff".

I venture to point out, however, that the English entente is with France and not with the Front Populaire. Thus if, as might be expected, the extreme French Left should react violently against Italy in such a crisis, it is undoubtedly true that such a reaction would cause all public opinion in this country to take a second thought before joining with French communistic elements in any venture outside the confines of the Nonintervention Committee.

So it is conceivable that the reaction to any Italian official military venture in Spain would be to create a tension between the British and French Governments augmented by the fact that Soviet influences would encourage an aggressiveness on the part of France. In such a situation between France and England Hitler, who has been liquidating his commitments in the Spanish situation, would be given his opening to make every advance to England. These considerations would doubtless give a

RB

-6-180, March 31, 5 p. m. from  
London

give a breathing space which would permit the British Government to reaffirm before public opinion in this country its policy against using force or even putting the British fleet between Italy and the shores of Spain. Thus, it is my opinion that in the hypothetical situation suggested in the Department's 110, March 27, 5 p. m. should Italy make an official armed move in Spain, the (British?) Brazilian Government, of course, influenced at that time by imponderables in the situation would nevertheless endeavor to work with and on the French, both inside and outside the Nonintervention Committee to maintain their original policy of stalemate or peace without victory in the Spanish situation but certainly without resort to armed intervention.

BINGHAM

(\*) Apparent omission

SMS

EMB

OFFICE OF EDITORIAL ADVISERS  
MAY 18 1937  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RECEIVED  
MAY 18 1937  
NOTED

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

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

London

Dated April 29, 1937

FROM  
Assistant Secretary  
of State  
APR 30 1937  
MR. SAYRE

Secretary of State,  
Washington.  
Department of State

April 29, 11 p.m. (SECTION ONE).

CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY.

Chamberlain asked Mrs. Davis and me to lunch quietly with him and Mrs. Chamberlain at Downing Street on Monday in order that he and I might thus have an uninterrupted confidential talk.

He was highly pleased at the President's recent letter to the CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR and said he strongly favored an Anglo-American trade agreement and the closest possible cooperation between our two <sup>countries</sup> upon which world economic stability and peace largely depend. He found, however, that a trade agreement of much substance required a modification of the Ottawa agreements which he hoped could be brought about but which necessitated negotiation and some delay. The Dominions were reluctant to make concessions without some compensation and Canada which had benefitted most was offering difficulties. He asked if I had spoken to Laith Ross about this and suggested that I do so.

With regard to the European situation Chamberlain thought it impracticable to undertake simultaneously a comprehensive

Handwritten initials and marks: JA, FE, EA, and a large checkmark.

740.00/154 SEC. 1 AND 2

CONFIDENTIAL  
GWB  
MAY 19 1937  
FILED

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JR April 29, 11 p.m. (SECTION ONE) from London.

comprehensive settlement of political, economic, and disarmament questions. It was necessary to proceed by stages. There were recent indications of a favorable change in the attitude of Germany. Semi-official exploratory talks with Schacht had been encouraging but before proceeding further with him it is necessary to be certain that he represents the views of Hitler. The new British Ambassador to Berlin has been instructed to get acquainted with Hitler and find out to what extent Schacht has authority to speak for him and what Hitler is prepared to do.

Chamberlain indicated his belief that while political inquiries and economic collaboration go hand in hand political discussions and tentative agreements must precede any substantial steps towards economic rehabilitation, including the extension of stabilization agreements, removal of exchange controls and reduction in trade restrictions. I asked what he thought about disarmament and if it might not be necessary or advisable in view of the problems created by armaments and the strong sentiment in favor of disarmament to approach a solution from that angle. (END SECTION ONE).

DAVIS

KLP

(\*) apparent omission.

## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM

London

Dated April 29, 1937.

Rec'd 9:45 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

April 29, 11 p.m. (SPECIFIC TWO)

541  
I thought disarmament must come last and implied that British rearmament must proceed to a more advanced stage before it would be practicable to call a halt.

I told him my impression was that the economic and financial situation of Germany and Italy and social conditions in France were becoming precarious and inquired whether there were not a danger that events would not wait for the British time schedule. He admitted concern about this and was therefore eager to find out as soon as possible how much reliance could be placed upon Schacht and the sincerity of the Germans. Dealings with Germany had been complicated because the former British Ambassador to Berlin was not the right man for the post and the same could be said of the German representative here.

701-4162  
701-6241  
751-62  
751-611  
I asked if something might be done through direct negotiation between Germany and France. He <sup>thought</sup> ~~(S)~~ this would be thoroughly impracticable since aside from the obstacle of the

MG

Page 2,  
Section two Area London  
April 29, 11 a.m.

of the Franco-Soviet Pact there was virtually nothing of substance they could settle in direct negotiation without the participation of other countries.

Chamberlain then said he would like to discuss confidentially the Far East which gives them considerable concern. In substance he said Japan had recently shown a more reasonable attitude but it was not possible to deal satisfactorily with her as long as the militarists were in control. He was fearful that if Great Britain got into trouble with Germany, Italy would side with the latter and Japan would too in the Far East. As favorable factors the German-Japanese anti-Communist agreement had been unpopular in Japan and British rearmament would probably deter Germany and Italy from hostile action. He insisted, however, that Japan would cause no trouble if she believed that the United States and Great Britain were standing together. The more Japan could see that our two countries were collaborating the more she would wish to cooperate in promoting economic recovery and peace in China and the Pacific. I replied that it was our desire to cooperate in every practicable way but it would be difficult to define the character and extent of such cooperation. (TID

SECTION TWO).

KLP  
(/ ) Apparent omission

DAVIS

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# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

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

London

FROM

Dated April 29, 1937

Rec'd 7:35 a.m., 30th.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

April 29, 11 p.m. (SECTION THREE).

My personal view was that the most practical and effective means of cooperation would be to exchange views frankly and frequently and endeavor to pursue common policies. I suggested that our cooperation in naval matters had been satisfactory and beneficial. He agreed but thought there should be other ways in which we might most usefully cooperate. For instance, he thought cooperation in the economic development of China had great possibilities for good.

I raised the question of a possible neutralization in the Pacific. His first reaction was doubt as to the practicability of undertaking anything of such importance until the Japanese political situation improves.

The net impression from my talk with Chamberlain and from other contacts is that the British who have felt humiliated by recent diplomatic defeats and whose interests have been jeopardized in Italy and Japan are beginning to feel a sense of satisfaction, security and confidence as a consequence of their renewed authority and prestige

resulting

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JR April 29, 11 p.m. (SECTION THREE) from London.

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resulting from their rearmament program. They realize that the rearmament cannot continue indefinitely without bringing on economic disaster but they believe they can keep their economic and financial situation in <sup>land</sup> (\*) for another two or three years and that if they do not show any signs of weakening Germany, Italy and Japan will soon realize the futility and failure of their militaristic policies. Meanwhile the British do not wish to take any initiative to halt rearmament or to have anyone else take an initiative unless or until they are convinced it will succeed in establishing real peace.

DAVIS

KLP

(\*) apparent omission.

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
NOV 10 1937  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JS

A portion of this telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone <sup>(B)</sup>  
FROM

LONDON

Dated November 9 1937

Rec'd 7:45 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington, D.C.

704, November 9, 6 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

My 680, October 30, 3 p.m.

In a conversation yesterday at the Foreign Office some further indication was given of British views regarding Italian adherence to the German Japanese anti-Communist pact. While there was no attempt to make an authoritative assessment of the implications of the enlarged pact, it was apparent that the general trend of Foreign Office opinion is along these lines set forth in my 680, October 30, 3 p.m. That Germany's long term objective is directed towards using the pact as the springboard of a European policy rather than as a specifically anti-Russian instrument (and pro-Japanese as far as Far Eastern policy is concerned), would seem to be borne out by information bearing on the difficulties of the German position in the Far East.

According to my informant there is a sharp cleavage of opinion in German official circles at present as to

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FILED

-2- #704, November 9, 6 p.m., from London.

the proper objective for German policy in the Far East. German banking and business leaders and the command and staff of the army, including Blomberg, are said to be frankly in sympathy with Chinese aims as they consider that China under a more or less "open door" policy, offers a more fruitful field for expansion of German commercial enterprise than the Japanese Empire or a China under the heel of Japan. The Nazi party leaders on the other hand, who at the moment have a preponderating influence in German foreign policy, are quite prepared to throw German commercial interests in China overboard in order to establish political solidarity with Japan. Which of these two views will finally prevail may still be in doubt. Some indication as to their relative strength may shortly be shown by the result of the present conflict of opinion in Berlin on the withdrawal of German military advisers from China. According to my informant, there are with the Chinese military forces fifty-eight German officers of the highest professional reputation and great experience, some eight or ten of them being general officers. They have done what is said to be a very effective job with the Chinese Army and some have even passed beyond the status of advisers and have been commanding military operations. The Nazi influence in Germany desires the  
immediate

-3- #704, November 9, 6 p.m., from London.

immediate withdrawal of these officers as a pleasing gesture towards Japan. To this the German Army and the conservative industrial and business leaders are opposed. Even if the official Nazi views prevail and the officers are ordered back, there is, of course, no assurance how many if any of them would be prepared to obey the order and return to Germany where no future awaits them. The Foreign Office considers the presence of these highly trained and experienced German officers in China as a factor of considerable importance in the Sino-Japanese conflict. As of interest in this connection, it may be mentioned that, according to Foreign Office information, there were secret military clauses to the German-Japanese pact of a year ago and the existence and purport of these clauses were withheld by the Germans and the Japanese from the Italians in the negotiation of the Italian adherence. Further, according to the Foreign Office, the Germans carefully safeguarded themselves by those secret clauses against being attached to any Japanese kite in the Far East. Such safeguarding provisions in the secret clauses if they exist would indicate that the Nazi political leaders did not have an entirely free hand in negotiating the original pact with Japan.

Concurrently

-4- #704, NOVEMBER 9, 6 p.m., from London.

Concurrently with announcement of the Italian adherence to the anti-Communist pact have come rumors that Hitler might be asked by Japan to mediate in the present Chinese conflict. The Foreign Office professes to have no authoritative information regarding this rumor. The presence, however, of the German military advisers in China and the uncertain result of the conflict of opinion in Germany as to their withdrawal would seem in themselves sufficient reasons to exclude Germany as a mediator.

If it be true that far-seeing elements in Germany are reluctant to jeopardize the existence of important commercial interests in China and the prospect of their expansion in the future by supporting the Japanese program and if there is a chance that this view will prevail, there would be further reasons to look for a European focus for the Nazi-made anti-Communist pact. It would moreover be difficult to escape the conclusion that it is really directed against Great Britain, not perhaps in any immediate sense but as an instrument of long term policy. If Germany is able to build up a bloc of states subservient to her leadership and whose larger interests she can make appear in some degree identical with her own and opposed to those of the far-flung British Empire, so much greater will be her strategical position in exacting from Great Britain, and secondarily

-5- #704, November 9, 6 p.m., from London.

secondarily France, concessions along all the lines of her ambition. Commentators have not failed to see the implications of this pact with respect to German claims for colonial expansion which are gathering increased momentum. That the British are aware of these trends may be taken for granted and there is some indication that the Foreign Office is moving to the view that the now strengthened Berlin-Rome axis must be attacked at Berlin as well as at Rome if an effective result is to be achieved. What is causing the anxiety now is how this attack at Berlin may be made.

(GRAY) Press comment on the anti-Communist pact will be speculative in character and somewhat consciously playing down its immediate importance, nevertheless carries an undertone of anxiety and doubt as to the real aims of the three signatories. On the surface Italy's adherence might seem to be an innocuous endorsement of the policy expressed in the German-Japanese anti-Communist pact, but informed commentators are nevertheless aware that other factors have come into play within the last year which justify more serious significance being attached to Italy's adherence. The published terms of the document signed in Rome are substantially the same as those conditions of the German-Japanese agreement but the circumstances in which it

-6- #704, November 9, 6 p.m., from London.

was signed have changed in at least two important respects as pointed out in the following brief excerpts from the leading editorial in the TIMES today which express with substantial accuracy the reaction of all sections of the press: "A year ago the Rome-Berlin axis wore an aspect less imposing outwardly than it wears today; and a year ago Japan was not strenuously engaged in a large scale invasion of China. There has accordingly been no little speculation whether the new pact has a more effective scope and more portentous implications than its predecessor \*\*\* The difficulties of interpretation which have been apparent in newspaper comment not only in countries outside the pact but also in the three capitals principally concerned are evident. Whether the pact will mean much or little depends on what force and value the signatories may feel from time to time impelled to give it \*\*\* The truth perhaps is that the pact coming at this moment is a diplomatic demonstration which may be presumed to have an immediate value as a reassurance for Japan and for Italy, in particular, for their commitments in China and Spain respectively. Its future will be what events make it, that is to say the sympathies it implies did not in existing circumstances require a pact to create them".

Repeated to American Delegation, Brussels.

BINGHAM

SMS:EMB

J

GRAY

London

Dated December 16, 1937

Rec'd 1:35 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington:

780, December 16, 1 p.m.

All of the principal newspapers carried editorials approving the tone of the British note to Japan which was published this morning.

THE TIMES is particularly sharp in its criticism of the Japanese conduct and says that the note with studied moderation sets forth the circumstances in which the attacks were made, the mere recital of which is "a damning indictment of Japanese irresponsibility". The editorial continues "Tokyo will not be far wrong if it detects seathing implications in this document, nor misled if it attaches importance to the close Anglo-American cooperation surrounding the despatch of both the British and American protests. The Japanese official explanation of the sinking of the PANAY and of the other incidents of last Sunday gives an unconvincing and discreditable account of the activities of the air men concerned (\*\*\*)". There are only two possible deductions

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-2- #780, December 16, 1 p.m., from London.

to be drawn from all this hooliganism. It may have been the result of a deliberate attempt by responsible military and naval officers to destroy neutral shipping on the Yangtze -- possibly by way of testing the reactions of the powers concerned, as they tested Russia's on the Amur before launching the North China campaign. If, on the other hand the incidents were not deliberate, then it must be concluded that save for a small civilized upper class no Japanese can be trusted to carry firearms even in the Emperor's service because he is too ignorant and too irresponsible not to run amok without provocation (\*\*\*). Some doubt about the existence of responsible statesmanship even in Tokyo was perhaps in Mr. Roosevelt's mind when he addressed himself to the Emperor, presumably in an endeavor to establish contact with some source of authority which could not be ignored, disowned, or flouted with impunity (\*\*\*). The prospects of peace dimly discernible a short time ago are today more remote than at any previous stage of the war. (\*\*\*). The exponents of relentless in Tokyo were reinforced by appointment to the Home Ministry of Admiral Saito an extreme Nationalist of the new crusading

-3- 780, December 16, 1 p.m., from London.

epusading type. There have been other indications that the fighting services with their policy 'war at any price' have lately gained a supremacy even more effective than hitherto in the councils of the nations. (\*\*\*) about a fortnight ago Japan intimated that she no longer welcomed attempts at mediation. There is no reason to suppose that the fire-acting in Tokyo is bluff. The army has the bit between its teeth. Japan aims at the rate not of a mere five provinces in the north but of the whole of China. It is likely that the next step towards this objective will be an invasion of South China and an attack on Canton".

The editorial entitled "Concerted Action" appearing in the Yorkshire POST is also worthy of note since this important provincial journal is owned by Mrs. Eden's family, circulates in his constituency and is used by him on occasion as a personal organ. It points out that "the immediate efficacy of the Nyon agreement suggests that a similar agreement of all powers affected by the real or alleged uncontrollability of Japanese units in China would have an equally desirable effect. There are two common suggestions as to the reasons why Japan has hitherto displayed so contemptuous an indifference to the

protests

-4- WBO, December 16, 1 p.m., from London.

protests of the foreign governments. The first is that she has or believes herself to have something like a blank check for China from her partners in the anti-Comintern agreement (\*\*). The other reason given for Japan's indifference to foreign protests is a presumed inability even of the three naval democracies, -- France, Britain, and the United States -- to act together. The comparative difficulty of ensuring an overwhelming support of American public opinion for action at a great distance is well understood here. It is intelligible also that in view of the extreme gravity of the actual attack on American ships, President Roosevelt should have considered it necessary to act with the minimum of delay. But if it is common ground that there is lacking in Tokyo not the will but the present ability to put a brake on the activities of politically irresponsible militarists, a concerted protest by all powers with interests in China may be the very step necessary to restore to saner Japanese opinion the control which it has lost. Such action could hardly be misrepresented as advantaging any one power interested over the others." The TELEGRAPH editorial concludes "the British Government has been very patient. No one can pretend

-5- 4780, December 16, 1 p.m., from London.

It is pointed out that the requisitions which it has now made are excessive. Indeed, they are more moderate than the circumstances would well justify.

Excerpts from the editorial in the usually pro-Japanese DAILY MAIL follow: "The note sent by the British Government to Japan yesterday speaks wholly in the name of the British people. Happily, in carrying out this policy close co-operation is being maintained with the United States" (para). "Prompt reparation and careful avoidance of any further episodes are Japan's obvious ways to preserve good mutual relations".

The Liberal MANCHESTER GUARDIAN thinks that the British Government's note though almost identical in matter is milder in tone than the American note. It says "one may regret that Mr. Eden did not borrow a little of the American bluntness of language, but it is difficult to see what more could have been said after the receipt of the Japanese note. There is however good reason to believe that the Japanese Government is at last genuinely perturbed over the situation though only time can show whether its perturbation is shared by the army and navy in China".

The Socialist DAILY HERALD states "the plain truth is that ever since the Government rejected the League policy in the Far East in 1931 British efforts to stem

the

-6- #780, DECEMBER 16, 1 p.m., from London.

the tide of lawlessness have been unreal and ineffective.  
(\*\*\*\*) It is late to start now. But it had better be  
faced that the situation in the Far East is going to  
grow worse, not better, unless Britain and France, the  
United States and the Soviet Union and such powers as  
will join them are prepared to stand side by side".

JOHNSON

CSB

LONDON, January 25, 1938.

No. 3627

SUBJECT: British Consular office in Moscow closed

CONFIDENTIAL

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

Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department that the Foreign Office announced yesterday that in compliance with the request for parity in consular representation made by the Soviet Government two weeks ago, reported in the Embassy's despatch No. 3789 of January 17, 1938, the Consular Office attached to the British Embassy in Moscow has been closed. The announcement points out that the office in Moscow was open for the convenience of the Soviet authorities and travelers, and that applications for consular facilities will now have to be made at the Consulate General at Leningrad, four hundred miles away. It is also mentioned in this connection that the arrangement does not close the discussion of the question of parity raised by the Soviet Government.

A press report from Moscow indicates that Stalin himself issued the general order to close every possible foreign consulate and that it is unlikely that the Soviet Government will hesitate to use all legal means to close the British Consulate General in Leningrad. According to this report, so anxious are the Soviet authorities to get rid of foreign officials that they have agreed to close ten of the eleven of their consulates and consular agencies in Iran.

The matter was discussed with Mr. Collier, the Chief of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, who gave the Embassy the following information:

He said that two weeks ago an official of the Russian Foreign Office informed the British Ambassador of the Soviet Government's plan to introduce the principle of "parity" in consular representation and gave Great Britain two months in which to carry this out. On receiving the Ambassador's report, the Foreign Office in London instructed him to inform M. Litvinoff that Great Britain as a great trading nation could not accept the principle of parity; consuls were stationed in places where British commercial interests required them; and if the Soviet Government wished to open another consulate in Great Britain there was no objection whatsoever. In any event, since the member of the British Embassy in Moscow who carried out certain consular functions had ceased to do so, parity did in fact now exist in that the British have a Consulate General in Leningrad and the Russians one in London. (In this connection, the Foreign Office official told the Embassy that since the Soviet Consul General holds a commission signed by M. Litvinoff and not by the Chief of State, he has not,

in accordance with British practice, been given an exequatur but was, nevertheless, fully recognized as Consul General). On being informed of the foregoing, by the British Ambassador, Litvinoff admitted that the real reason for the representations was that he had been instructed to get all foreign consular officers out of Leningrad. He endeavored, without success, to persuade the Ambassador to consider the office which was then handling consular matters in Moscow as the equivalent of the Soviet Consulate General in London.

Mr. Collier said that if the Soviet Government insists, the British will have to close their Consulate General in Leningrad, but they are determined to make it as difficult as possible for the Russians and in any event to make them admit openly that it is not really parity they are after. He added that should the Russians persist, Great Britain would demand a prolongation of the two months' period allowed for carrying out this change, which was wholly inadequate.

Asked what he thought was the real reason for this move, Mr. Collier said that curiously enough the Russians seemed to be of the opinion that Germany might attack them through the Leningrad district and there was considerable military activity there. Steps were being taken to make a strong naval base there with considerable fortifications. The plan to close foreign consulates there was doubtless linked with the military preparations. However, since Leningrad is the principal port, the British Consulate General was needed for looking after ships' papers, protection of seamen and the interests of British tourists, many of whom enter Russia that way. In addition, there were still several

hundred British subjects with pre-Revolution Russian affiliations in that district, many of whom are in straitened circumstances. The Foreign Office official feared that if the Consulate General were closed they would be subjected to police persecution since apparently it is the Soviet Government's hope to drive all foreigners out of the Leningrad district and that the closing of consulates was the first step. Already five of what he described as distressed British subjects had been compelled to leave Russia and although they would probably have to live on charity in England he thought, on the whole, it was a good thing to get as many British subjects as possible out of Russia.

Mr. Collier mentioned in this general relation that the Soviet Government had been unusually annoying lately and that a short time ago two Russian employees in the Embassy in Moscow, a woman translator and a German-Russian porter, had failed to turn up at the Chancery. When the British Ambassador made inquiries, M. Litvinoff admitted that they had been arrested as "Trotskyists" but said that he had no influence whatever with the police. The British Ambassador pointed out that with such intimidation it would be practically impossible to employ Russian labor.

Asked whether he thought the purge was diminishing in violence, Mr. Collier said that his department prepares a weekly list of the reported executions, which they call their "necrology", and that as far as he could see the list was as long as ever. With regard to the cause of the purge, Mr. Collier said that having no information of the existence of wide-spread opposition in Russia, as might be supposed from these executions,

tions, he could only assume that Stalin was suffering from "an extraordinary case of nerves."

Respectfully yours,

HM/HEJ

Herschel V. Johnson  
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

Copy to American Embassy, Moscow.



~~FE~~  
~~E4~~

NOTE  
741.94

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

London

Dated February 4, 1938

Rec'd 6:47 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

99, February 4, 11 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Mr. Hugh Wilson informs me that, when talking  
privately with Mr. Eden for a moment this afternoon,  
Mr. Eden told him that if the Japanese attacked Hong  
Kong they would act at once in its defense; that this  
might mean the withdrawal of substantial forces from  
the Mediterranean but that the British could not do  
otherwise. He further said that the British would  
act to defend Hong Kong if attacked regardless of what  
American action might be.

JOHNSON

SMS:FPL

793.74 / 12313

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

MBo

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

FROM London

Dated February 4, 1938

Rec'd 6:10 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

98, February 4, 8 p.m.



Mr. Hugh Wilson and I met with Mr. Eden and Sir Alexander Cadogan at lunch today. The conversation naturally turned upon matters with which the Secretary of State is preoccupied. He said that he has no doubt of the genuineness of the Italian desire to effect a rapprochement with this country. He frankly admitted the difficulty in the way of an approach which is offered by the question of de jure recognition of the Italian empire in Abyssinia. The British, however, although recognizing this reality, are not prepared, aside from legal difficulties attending the recognition of Abyssinia, to take such a step without a substantial and real contribution from Mussolini himself. There are from the British point of view also certain preliminary necessities which must be met; they must have from Italy a definite understanding regarding the peace and security of the Mediterranean in connection with which Mr. Eden mentioned the Italian garrisons in Libya and the security of Egypt. The Italians must

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2- No. 98, February 4, from London.

8530

must cease their anti-British propaganda in the Moslem world. Mr. Eden said that he felt also that from the viewpoint of general European settlement it is essential to secure from Mussolini a satisfactory understanding with regard to Spain. The problem of a practical approach to this question is now causing him great concern. The impression he gave was that in the British view there can be no general solution of Mediterranean problems which would exclude Spain from its scope and that therefore a definite understanding with regard to Italy's intentions (should be a?) in that country should a necessary preliminary to an Anglo-Italian rapprochement.

762-65  
740-19

Respecting the Rome-Berlin axis, the Foreign Secretary remarked that although Mussolini was by far a greater immediate difficulty than Hitler there was no question that, as far as a general European settlement was concerned, Germany presented the real problem. There is no intention on the part of the British not to give reasonable consideration to German demands but again he is not disposed to take the promises of dictators at their face value and feels that Germany must herself make positive contributions accompanied by guarantees. What this contribution should be, he sees as including an agreement for reduction

of

3- No. 93, February 4, from London.

760  
862

of armaments, in which of course all would participate, and effective guarantees from Hitler that the peace of Central Europe would not be disturbed. Mr. Eden feels there is good ground for belief in the practical possibility of peaceful settlement of German-Czechoslovak difficulties and that Dr. Benes will contribute his part. The colonial demands of Germany are receiving serious study in the Foreign Office (see my No. 59 of January 25, 6 p.m.) and in this connection Mr. Eden said to Mr. Hugh Wilson that he believed it would be helpful if he, when he got to Berlin, could convey as his own opinion that the British were sincere in their approach to this problem and were not "stalling" which Mr. Eden said they were in fact not doing. Mr. Eden gave the impression throughout his conversation that he regarded the immediate problem of the betterment of Anglo-Italian and Anglo-German relations as but the initial step in the larger issue of European appeasement and settlement and further that in his view, in securing <sup>a</sup> general settlement, it was essential that the authoritarian governments must make their contribution, and that he regards the promises of those governments without effective guarantees as of little value.

He mentioned the trade agreement negotiations between

the

4- No. 9C, February 4, from London.

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the United States and Great Britain and said that he re-  
garded them as of vital importance; that this evidence of  
American interest in the problems of Europe and of the  
American desire to ameliorate world conditions and to bring  
about a general appeasement was having a favorable effect  
throughout Europe; and further that the mere fact that the  
United States was manifesting an energetic interest in  
world problems was having a visible and salutary effect.

JOHNSON

NPL:SEE



RECEIVED  
EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ADVISORIAL RELATIONS  
MAR 2 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FEB 23 PM 1 43

No. 3923

LONDON, February 16, 1938.

SUBJECT: Press Comment on the Hitler-Schuschnigg  
Conversations.

PP  
Feb 28



762.63

762.63/473

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
F.M.C.  
THE SECRETARY  
OF STATE

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

Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department that the reports reaching the London press over the weekend regarding the conversations at Berchtesgaden between Herr Hitler and Dr. Schuschnigg here, on the whole, optimistic in tone and on the Austrian side the step was regarded as a guarantee of the success of talks towards a new Austro-German understanding. Early this week, however, more ominous news began to appear in the

LONDON

MAR 2 1938

FILED

MAIL

London newspapers and, as indicated in the Embassy's telegram No. 124 of February 18, 6 p. m., today's editorials have been gloomy in the extreme. As shown by the digest given below, they describe Herr Hitler's proposal as an ultimatum and think Dr. Schuschnigg had no choice but to accept. No help was to be expected from Italy and the alternative was war.

What is not mentioned in these editorials is perhaps more interesting than what is mentioned. It will be noted, for example, that there is no suggestion, even in the Socialist Daily Herald with all its hatred for the Nazis, that Great Britain should intervene. Likewise it is not suggested that this new step of Hitler's may make Mussolini more amenable to a settlement with Great Britain, though it is difficult to believe that this thought has not occurred to the editors of these papers.

The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post begins its editorial by expressing sympathy with Dr. Schuschnigg in the extremely difficult position in which he finds himself. Herr Hitler demanded, as the price of confirming Germany's formal recognition of Austria's independence, the appointment of a man of strong Nazi sympathies as Minister of the Interior with the control of the police and a Foreign Minister free from the Chancellor's control.

The alternative was a recrudescence of Nazi agitation and violence which convulsed Austria prior to 1936 and "it is even not incredible that more than a hint was dropped about the possibility of Germany's having in that event to step in to restore order". This paper thinks that the independence of Austria, however newly proclaimed, would obviously be substantially modified by the above mentioned changes, and Dr. Schuschnigg's position must be greatly weakened by his submission "to so peremptory and arrogant a demand from Nazi Germany". After pointing out that he was hardly in a position to resist with the knowledge that he could no longer count upon the backing of Italy and referring to the intolerable strain of a renewed Nazi agitation, the Daily Telegraph and Morning Post says that there was little doubt that his supporters must acquiesce in his decision "for the immediate peace of Austria there is nothing else to be done". This paper continues:

"In this country, more easily than in others, it is possible to regard objectively the new situation created for Austria; but it is impossible to mistake the meaning of the ultimatum so bluntly and menacingly presented to her. Although the foundations of her independence are not yet destroyed, they are very evidently undermined - a fact which should give hardly less occasion for uneasiness to Italy than to Austria."

The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post then refers to Herr

Hitler's

Hitler's forthcoming speech and concludes:

"He has tied a knot with his teeth that he cannot untie with his tongue."

The Opposition Liberal Manchester Guardian in a similar tone says that Herr Hitler's invitation to Dr. Schuschnigg is now seen to have been a summons and his proposals to have been an ultimatum and that the demands made by Herr Hitler amount to a more considerable, and probably more effective, interference with the affairs of a sovereign State than that which England and Mussolini have countenanced in Spain. After referring to the negotiations leading up to the Austro-German Agreement of July, 1936, and the demands made of Austria on this occasion, the Manchester Guardian says there is little point in assessing the value of the concessions offered by Herr Hitler. In any case, as Dr. Schuschnigg would be compelled to take action against the Nazis through a Nazi Minister, it would matter very little what help Nazi law breakers received beyond the frontier. Assurances concerning the "independence" of Austria would have the same negative value. The editorial concludes as follows:

"But there is a surely enough spirit of independence in Austria for resistance to be offered to Nazi pressure, though some ill-omened tragedy be that their success."

The Socialist Daily Herald thinks Austria's predicament is one more proof that might is right, and that Dr. Schuschnigg had small choice for there is no appeal. Italy, which four years ago was almost arrogantly prepared to fight for Austria, "is to-day hand-in-glove with Nazi Germany and dares not oppose her ally". France and Britain can do nothing except at risk of unleashing a European war; the League is described as "hamstrung and powerless". If Austria yields, from now on it is clear that whenever Berchtesgaden commands, Vienna must obey and "Austria becomes in fact, if not in name, a German dependency". This paper then asks if there is still time to revise the Versailles settlement, and concludes:

"There have been times in the past when revision by agreement seemed possible.

"Is there still such a possibility? Can an agreed European - and Colonial - basis be discovered which is so generally acceptable that on it a real collectivity can be built?

"The alternative is either to watch passively while Germany pursues the path of revision by act or threat; or to face a new European war of which the purpose would be to stop her, but of which the end would be - what?"

Respectfully yours,

*Herschel V. Johnson*  
Herschel V. Johnson  
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

EU

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

1-1336

FROM

GRAY

London

Dated February 16, 1938

Rec'd 4:10 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

134, February 16, 6 p. m.

In commenting on developments in Austria, the British press as a whole take it as a foregone conclusion that Austria will fall under the Nazi yoke. The DAILY TELEGRAPH says editorially "It is impossible to mistake the meaning of the ultimatum so bluntly and menacingly presented to Austria" and pointedly discusses the implications as far as Italy and Czechoslovakia are concerned. In a slightly less gloomy vein the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN'S editorial ends "There is a strong enough spirit of independence in Austria for resistance to be offered to Nazi pressure, though it is likely to mean tragedy rather than success". The DAILY HERALD feels that "Austria becomes in fact if not in name a German dependency", and feels that the only way to stop Germany from achieving her revisionist ends would be to go to war.

It

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FEB 17 1938

REB

2-#134, From London, Feb. 16, 6p.m.

It is learned from press sources that Hitler proposes to make a conciliatory speech on Sunday, reviving the four power pact idea. This is intended to be a sop to the European powers, a kind of quid pro quo for his Austrian policy. Today's British press certainly does not prepare public opinion for a favorable reception of such a gesture.

JOHNSON

CSB

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

This telegram <sup>1-1236</sup> must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (3)

FROM  
LONDON

Dated February 17, 1938

Rec'd 5:05 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

140, February 17, 7 p. m.

I gather from a conversation with an official of the Foreign Office directly concerned with Central Europe that the Foreign Office has not yet received sufficiently full or accurate information from either Berlin or Vienna to form a clear judgment regarding recent events in Austria. The British Minister at Vienna was informed on February 11, at the same time <sup>as</sup> the French and Italian Ministers, that Schuschnigg would meet Hitler. The Foreign Office it was stated has no information to indicate whether Mussolini did or did not have prior knowledge of Hitler's intentions. The official frankly admitted that if Hitler had deceived Mussolini serious obstacles would have been removed to an Anglo-Italian rapprochement. If, however, Mussolini was privy to the action, he said that in the present views of the Foreign Office it was difficult to see what quid pro quo Hitler might have given him of sufficient

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FEB 19 1938

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REB

2-#140, From London, Feb.17,7p.m.

sufficient importance to offset the appalling danger from Italy's point of view of having Germany for an immediate neighbor. He suggested that Hitler's surprise action may have been taken to offset diminished prestige as a result of the recent German army purge. This loss of prestige he believed to be real.

I also gathered that the Foreign Office profoundly distrusts Schmidt whom they believe to be playing a double game and reporting everything to Hitler and the German Nazis. The situation is regarded here as most serious of course but no indication was given that the British are contemplating any form of intervention. My informant expressed as his personal opinion that this coup of Hitler's was preliminary to some spectacular action in Central Europe in the economic sphere.

JOHNSON

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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REB

GRAY

FROM London

Dated March 9, 1938

Rec'd 3:05 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
MAR 10 1938  
DIVISION OF  
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RE  
DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAR 9 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

195, March 9, 6 p. m.

CONFIDENTIAL. I had lunch with Winston Churchill and his son. The interesting points are as follows:

He feels that the Conservative Party, having been elected on a League of Nations program and not having convinced the electorate yet that the Chamberlain policy is right, are viewing with apprehension the by-election in Fulham. Churchill's opinion is that Eden will be asked for some statement because the campaign will be fought on the Eden or Chamberlain policies. Churchill's personal impression is that Eden will stand with the Government. He feels that within a very few months, if nothing happens of very great import in the meantime, nothing will have been lost. He says that the powers that be do not anticipate being able to make very satisfactory arrangements with either Italy or Germany. The discussions between Italy and England are on these approximate

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MAR 11 1938

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REB

2-#195, Mar. 9, 6p.m. From London

approximate terms.

One. That Italy withdraw troops from Libya and England withdraw battleships from the Mediterranean.

Two. Italy cease sending radio propaganda anti-England.

Three. The recognition by England of the King of Italy as Emperor of Abyssinia.

Four. The ordinary arrangements for financing the movement of trade but not straight loans.

Churchill says that the withdrawal of Italian troops from Spain has become an insignificant matter, because he is informed here by the powers that be that the Germans have a report from the high official command holding the Italian troops in the field very lightly and the general impression is nobody cares whether they are withdrawn or not. The English feel that as far as these various points are concerned if any kind of trouble got started again the Italians would have troops back in Libya in four days and England would have its battleships back in the Mediterranean in five, so that it does not amount to anything. As far as broadcasting is concerned of course they would stop it but they could start it again. As regards  
three

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3-#195, From London, Mar. 9, 6p.m.

2635  
three, there is no desire either on the part of the City or the Government to loan them any money, the adherents of Eden are strongly of the belief that Mussolini was headed for a fall and that Chamberlain's policy has rescued him. In fact they regard this as the real loss in the whole Eden-Chamberlain fracas. The smaller countries by this action have been led to believe that the distatorships are getting somewhere and are more inclined to want to play with them than they were heretofore and the fact that the lion has had his tail wrung has lost them prestige.

262 614  
As to the German demands Ribbentrop in a discussion has suggested: first, that Germany will grant any kind of guarantee that they will not proceed into France or into any of the western countries; Belgium and Holland will be granted complete protection. The colonies must be returned to Germany and England must close its eyes to the procedure in the East. The impression is that nothing will be accomplished in Germany and that delays will take place without any constructive results.

He also made clear to me that England's idea of delaying all action until they get stronger is a fallacy

REB

4-#196, From London, Mar. 9, 6p.m.

fallacy because the war strength of German army by units is growing faster than France's, whereas now it is considerably behind France, and, as far as the air is concerned, their secret information is that Germany is gaining on Britain every month.

The Cabinet see no signs of war. They feel Czechoslovakia is a tough bird and while England probably would not take any direct steps at Germany's progress in the East, provided it were done by propaganda and trade and the so-called gentlemanly methods are against shooting off a gun, France, they feel definitely, will go to Czechoslovakia's assistance and that might put the fat in the fire. Their own impression is, however, that they doubt very much that Germany would take any steps that would cause this to come about.

KENNEDY

HPD



EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*EU*  
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*ATE*  
*AC*

No. 69

London, March 22, 1938.

SUBJECT: The German Foreign Minister in London

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAR 31 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. QUINN  
APR 2 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

<p><i>74162</i> <i>me</i></p> <p>RECEIVED DEPARTMENT OF STATE MAR 23 1938</p>	<p>Distribution Instructions</p>
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741.62/258

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

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
APR 5 1938  
DIVISION OF  
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to despatch No. 3879  
of February 8, 1938, regarding the effect on Herr von  
Ribbentrop of his tour of duty in London, and to re-  
port certain confidential information obtained from  
the same source respecting Herr von Ribbentrop's  
attitude of mind during his recent stay on the  
occasion of his presenting his letters of recall.

The German Foreign Secretary, before departing  
from London on Sunday, March 13, made a speech to  
the

APR 7 1938

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F.P.

the assembled staff of the German Embassy, in which he stated that in his dealings with the British he had, prior to and during his ambassadorship here, been motivated by "the way of the heart" in an attempt to reach an Anglo-German understanding. This method, he admitted, had proved unsuccessful, and he now advocated "the way of strength", that is, for Germany to pursue its destiny and to become equally strong with Great Britain. The Englishman, "whose bark is worse than his bite", would, when that point of equality was reached, be willing to enter into an Anglo-German arrangement.--

Herr von Bibbentrop also stated that it was necessary for Germany to detach Russia from the Western Powers, and he said that his discussions with Lord Halifax led him to believe that there might be some hope of a Four-Power Pact at a later date. Herr von Bibbentrop also referred to an inquiry which Lord Halifax had made of him, whether in the event that colonial territory in Africa could be made available to Germany the German Government would be willing to be bound by the Congo Basin engagements, and he reiterated the German attitude as to its unfettered right to the return of its former colonial possessions or their equivalent.

My informant stated that the German Foreign Secretary was not impressed with either Lord Halifax or the Prime Minister and that, in fact, the only member of the Cabinet whom he found forceful was Sir Thomas Dingley,

Minister for Co-ordination of Defence.

760/62  
Incidentally, in my informant's opinion Germany will inevitably "settle" the Czechoslovakian problem. He regards Russia as hamstrung by internal events, and France immobilized by reason of Russia's weakness and England's unwillingness to commit itself in advance to take specific action. In these circumstances, Germany could await the psychological moment, as it had done in the case of Austria, to impose its will.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

*Herschel V. Johnson*  
Herschel V. Johnson  
Counselor of Embassy

WNB/LW



EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*Handwritten initials and scribbles*

No. 71

LONDON, March 22, 1938.

SUBJECT: Anglo-German Conversations.

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAR 31 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ADVISED ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. DURN  
APR 2 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1938 MAR 30 PM 2 14

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Distribution Instructions

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report two statements from an official British source, which are interesting in the present circumstances:

1. Some time ago, in an after-dinner conversation, Field Marshal Goering outlined to Sir Neville Henderson, British Ambassador in Berlin, the German aims and listed them in the following order:
  - (a) Austria;
  - (b) Memel;
  - (c) Czechoslovakia;
  - (d) Recovery of German colonial possessions or their equivalent.

*Handwritten initials:* rlg

741.62/257

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APR 30 1938

FILED

This

This produced further plain speaking on the part of the British Ambassador as well as of Field Marshal Goering in the course of which Sir Neville Henderson referred to the World War and "the licking we gave you then" and he predicted that if Germany precipitated another war the "next licking would be worse".

2. During the somewhat stormy interview which took place when the British Ambassador in Berlin protested against Germany's seizure of Austria, Herr Hitler referred to his conversations with Lord Halifax and stated that he had gathered from the latter's remarks that Great Britain understood and sympathized with Germany's aspirations as regards Austria and Czechoslovakia.

My informant did not question the sincerity of Herr Hitler's belief, although he, of course, denied that Lord Halifax had intended to convey any such impression. He went on to say that tolerance and civility were inevitably mistaken for indecision and weakness in Nazi Germany and, consequently, that Ambassador Henderson, as a considered policy, employed brutally frank language.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

*Herschell Johnson*  
Herschell V. Johnson  
Counselor of Embassy

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Gray

LONDON

FROM Dated April 6, 1938

Recd 7:15 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

287, April 6, 9 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY AND THE  
UNDERSECRETARY.

One. During my conversation with Halifax this afternoon he discussed the Italian situation. You have probably received from Rome what is an approximate outline of the agreement. I asked him whether Mussolini seemed anxious to do it, having in mind that it would weaken the Rome-Berlin axis. He said Grandi and Ciano and, he understood, Mussolini had all said they wanted to hurry this agreement through before Hitler arrived in Rome, so that they "would not have to back in his shadow."

There is no doubt in my mind, from my conversation with Halifax, that he feels that this agreement will definitely weaken the Hitler-Mussolini alliance. He feels that the agreement will be quite satisfactory, except possibly on two points of which they expect to be criticized here in England by the opposition; one is on Spain, which they think they can handle very easily and very satisfactorily, and, second, on the ~~recognition of Italian~~

Abyssinia.

741.65/527

APR 20 1938

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CONFIDENTIAL FILE

GML

Abyssinia. He said that the Emperor of Abyssinia was in to see him three weeks ago and urged him not to recognize the conquest of Abyssinia. He told him that he quite understood his feeling about it, but that it would require a war to restore the Emperor to his throne and, as every step was now being taken by Chamberlain and himself to get away from the possibility of war, it was quite unlikely that anything practical could be done on that score.

He did have one suggestion to make and I said I would forward it directly to you and the President. He said that regardless of what they would like to think, the United States is definitely regarded as a country with much higher moral standards than theirs, and that if the President thought that this agreement with Italy was a step in the right direction towards the final breaking up of the forces anxious to fight and would say some friendly word, it would be of enormous help throughout the world.

There is no question that Chamberlain and Halifax and the present British Government highly regard the influence of the President and yourself throughout the world.

Will you advise me confidentially how you and the President feel about this? My own opinion is that 90% of the people of Great Britain will hail it with great acclaim and there is no question about its being the beginning of a step in the right direction.

KENNEDY

RGC EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR SPD

FROM GRAY

London

Dated April 11, 1938

Rec'd 1:12 p.m.

SECRETARY OF STATE  
APR 11 1938  
NOTED

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
APR 12 1938  
MR. WELLES

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

296, April 11, 5 p.m.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY AND  
UNDER SECRETARY.

Spent last weekend with the King and Queen.

Neville Chamberlain was there with his wife. He told me that the Italian agreement was in fine shape; that the German agreement was not doing so well; he found it impossible to come to grips with them and have them state what they want. For instance, he said he had asked them what they wanted with regard to colonies and they tossed the question off by saying that was something that could be settled in the next six or ten years.

I asked him if the failure of the agreement meant to him war or like difficulty. He said "no"; that they were thoroughly convinced that Germany was in no position as regards resources or reserves to go to war and they so knew. He likened Germany to a boa constrictor that had eaten a good deal and was trying

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-2- #296, April 11, 5 p.m., from London.

to digest the meal before taking on anything else.  
Therefore he saw no difficulties for the time being.

KENNEDY

HPD

HRE

GRAY

LONDON

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Dated May 16, 1938

Rec'd 6:40 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

FROM

411, May 16, 9 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY AND UNDERSECRETARY.

My 407, May 14, 6 p.m.

Saw Lord Halifax this afternoon. With regard to the Czechoslovak situation he told me that Henderson, the Ambassador in Berlin, had seen German officials on Friday or Saturday and much to their surprise the Germans instead of telling them to mind their own business had said they hoped the British would continue to exert their influence on the Czechs to make a workable arrangement for the Germans. They asked whether the French were part and parcel of the plan to urge Benes to be reasonable in his treatment of the Germans and Henderson assured them that they were. Again Hitler expressed his supreme contempt for the French, Halifax said that on his way back from Geneva he stopped off and saw Bonnet who urged him to work as hard as he could for a settlement in Czechoslovakia so that the French would not be faced with a crisis which they definitely do not want to face.

Halifax believes that Henlein did not come here without Hitler's assent and that his main purpose was

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MAY 23 1938

Confidential File

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to

to get a reaction and see what he could do with first hand talks to convince some of the people in England that his Carlsbad speech was not so far off the ~~line~~ of possibility. Incidentally Ribbentrop told Henderson that the Carlsbad speech was a good starting point for the negotiations.

Halifax said that he had asked the Rumanian Minister, a great friend of Benes, whether his impression that Benes was a great promiser but not a great deliverer was still correct. The answer was that Benes hated the Germans and that is why he got himself up to his eyes in the League of Nations. When that started to weaken he turned to Russia and France and with the situations in those countries looking a little shaky he is very likely to be reasonable in his dealings with Henlein. I asked Halifax whether he thought Henlein could hold his followers in line and he said he thought that very likely Henlein could, especially if he talked with assurances from Berlin. On the whole Halifax said he felt fairly optimistic about the situation. He says he still remembers that in his personal conversation Hitler reserved to himself the right to expand in Eastern and Central Europe among his own people but that he does not want to go to war. So Halifax says that the British are trying to keep to the attitude of saying to Germany, "Now we are urging Benes to make a reasonable and sensible deal" but at the same time saying, "Be as reasonable as you should because if you touch

touch the spring it may go off and then you may not do as well as you think"-a sort of veiled threat.

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I asked him what he thought of Mussolini's speech. He said he was disgusted with it and had sent for Grandi to ask him to wire to Mussolini that he had not only made things more difficult for the French but more difficult for the British. I then inquired what he thought the chances are of France making a deal with Italy and he said he is now a little more doubtful. He is pointing out to Mussolini, however, that Bonnet stood very well at the League of Nations meeting on the Abyssinian and Spanish nonintervention questions. The general impression here Halifax said, is that Mussolini's pro-Hitler speech was made because of his displeasure with what he understood Bonnet's attitude was on the nonintervention question in the Franco-Italian talks now under way at Rome. It is Halifax's belief that Mussolini being in northern Italy wanted to make the Italians in that part of the country believe that having the Germans at the Brenner Pass was not a great hardship for people who are great friends. But Halifax assured me that the Rome-Berlin axis was much weaker and Mussolini definitely no longer pro-Hitler. Halifax advised Bonnet that since the Spanish question was the real reason for the lack of success in the Franco-Italian negotiations, to accept the same assurances that England took of the same question. Bonnet replied that the Italians were not even willing to

HRE

4-#411 From London May 16, 9 p.m.

to give the French, out of sheer spite, the same assurances they gave the British. The British, however, are trying to persuade both to go through with the negotiations.

Halifax is planning a speech on Wednesday in which he will try to make a friendly gesture to Hitler.

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I asked him if there was any possibility of the rumor being true that he is going to resign and he told me definitely not; that he would like to get out but he is going to stay for some time.

Copies to Paris, Berlin, Rome, Praha.

KENNEDY

EMB:RGC

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

GRAY

London

FROM

Dated May 16, 1938

Rec'd 4:35 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

412, May 16, 11 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY AND  
UNDERSECRETARY.

I had lunch today with Sir Warren Fisher. He told me that the British Secret Service had unquestionable evidence that Germany is definitely getting a great advantage out of the war scare episodes in that they are all arming themselves as fast as they can with Germany selling them the arms, the profits and exchange for these transactions being so great as to make the burden of German rearmament very small. He also said that German war ~~are~~ <sup>plans</sup> are on the supposition that if war were declared on Great Britain the issue would be decided within 30 days and that Germany is building an air force designed to demolish London completely in one fell swoop. Fisher said further that all departments of the British Government have been advised

that



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MAY 23 1938

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Confidential File

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2-#412, From London, May 16, 11p.m.

that they must go ahead independently on their war plans without looking for any support or help from America; if such support should come for any reason at all it must be considered as a windfall and nothing else.

KENNEDY

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# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF  
 EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
 MAY 23 1938  
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ML

GRAY

FROM London

Dated May 22, 1938

Rec'd 4:20 p.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington

RUSH

436, May 227 p. m.

My 411, May 16, 9 p. m.

One. Following a meeting of the Cabinet this afternoon Cadogan has given me orally the following resume of developments in Berlin and Praha during the past few days according to Foreign Office information:

On May 19 the first reports of German troop movements that appeared menacing, were received. On May 20 British Minister at Praha reported that the Czechs had similar reports. The same day British Ambassador at Berlin drew attention of German Foreign Office to the reports and was assured that they were unfounded. Similar assurances were given at the same time by the Germans to the Czech Minister at Berlin. On May 21 the Czech general staff reached conclusion that the rumors of German troop movements toward the Czech frontier were well founded and called up one class to the colors. This elicited a protest from the

German

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MAY 24 1938

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ML -2- London May 22, 1938 #436

German Military Attache. Czech Government explained to British Minister they had called up one class to reassure public opinion and to assure the authority of the state in the frontier region. Cadogan says they have no proof that the concentration of German troops is of a menacing character but there is evidence that the movement and concentration is taking place on a considerable scale. On May 20 a number of provocative incidents occurred along the frontier in Czechoslovakia including the killing by Czech sentry of two Sudeten Germans. (END SECTION ONE)

KENNEDY

CSB

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

PL

PLAIN

FROM

London

Dated May 22, 1938

Rec'd 3:50 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

RUSH

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

On the evening of that day Ribbentrop made a threatening communication to the Czech Minister for Foreign Affairs. The latter told the German Minister at Praha that his Government admitted the killing of the two men and would take suitable action, that Czechoslovakia was not so foolish as to threaten Germany. On May 21 the British Ambassador again expressed his concern at the reports of German troop movements and was told by Ribbentrop that they were unfounded. On May 21 the Sudeten German press published a communique of the Political Committee of the Sudeten Party stating that the party was not in a position to discuss the minority statute to which they had been invited by the Czech Government on May 19 on the ground of persecution to which it was alleged they were being subjected and failure of the Government to afford them constitutional guarantees. When Ambassador

Henderson

ML -2- London May 22, 1938 #436 Sec.2 3:50 p.m.

Henderson saw Ribbentrop on the morning of May 21 the latter was in an ugly and truculent mood and greatly excited. He told Henderson German patience was almost at an end and that he had no confidence in the intentions of the Czech Government. That same afternoon Henderson told Ribbentrop that the British Government regretted the decision of the Sudeten Party not to meet with the Czech Government and urged that the German Government use its influence to make Henlein negotiate. Henderson again mentioned to Ribbentrop the persistent reports of German troop movements and told him of the British efforts at Praha to bring the Czech Government to find a solution. He urged Ribbentrop to exercise patience and added, on instructions from London, a warning along the lines of the Prime Minister's statement in the House of Commons on March 24. Ribbentrop retorted that the provocation came entirely from the Czechs and declined to advise Henlein. Ribbentrop is reported to have been perturbed by the British warning but told Henderson that if the worst came to the worst Germany would fight just as she did in 1914. At midnight last night British Minister at Praha was instructed to urge on Benes the necessity for his Government avoiding provocative incidents at all costs. Henderson

was

was instructed to inform Ribbentrop of this further move at Praha. Last evening French Foreign Minister Bonnet told Sir Eric Phipps that he was warning the Czechs about possible consequences of mobilization and that they must not resort to further measures of that kind without consulting France and Great Britain. He also advised the Czechs in case of any serious incident to remind the Germans of their treaty of conciliation signed at the same time as the Locarno Pact and still in force.

Two. Cadogan said that the foregoing really represented the sum of their present information. Anybody's guess is as good as theirs as to how far the Germans are lying and as to what their intentions really are. The British, he said, have gone as far as possible at both Berlin and Praha in warning of the consequences of lack of moderation and endeavoring to establish a base for peaceful negotiation of the issues. The meeting of the cabinet this afternoon was for the purpose of reviewing the situation and considering Halifax's draft of a Government statement to be made in Parliament tomorrow. It is quite obvious that the British have no confidence in any German statement or promise. Their information leads them to believe the German Army is not ready for a first class war and that the German command and staff fully

realize

ML -2- London May 22, 1938 #436 Sec.2 3:50 p.m.

realize this. However, with the type of men in political power in Germany this realistic consideration would have no weight necessarily in determining events and the British feel that peace is more than ever at the hazard of an accident which would give the ultra-nationalistic politicians around Hitler their opportunity.

741.62  
If Germany should actually invade Czechoslovakia and France in consequence launch an attack on Germany it is the current opinion here that Great Britain would be inevitably drawn in. The real community of British and French defence against Germany is too obvious to encourage any belief that Great Britain can afford to stand by in such a conflict.

(END MESSAGE).

KENNEDY

EIB:CSB