



CONTENTS

Communications from Italy

- Telegram No. 20, January 20, 1939, (852.00/8828)
Despatch No. 1259, January 20, 1939, (741.65/703)
Telegram No. 21, January 24, 1939, (751.65/506)
Telegram No. 59, February 21, 1939, (751.65/549)
Telegram No. 62, February 22, 1939, (751.65/550)
Telegram No. 63, February 24, 1939, (751.65/559)
Telegram No. 74, March 6, 1939, (751.65/573)
Telegram No. 94, March 17, 1939, (751.65/594)
Telegram No. 97, March 22, 1939, (765.00/125)
Telegram No. 102, March 26, 1939, (765.00/130)
Telegram No. 109, March 30, 1939, (751.65/622)
Telegram No. 157, April 27, 1939, (751.65/668)
Telegram No. 166, May 2, 1939, (740.00/1277)
Telegram No. 178, May 6, 1939, (740.00/1354)
Telegram No. 183, May 9, 1939, (740.00/1406)
Despatch No. 1419, May 11, 1939, (740.00/1578)
Telegram No. 187, May 11, 1939, (740.00/1424)
Despatch No. 1429, May 16, 1939, (740.00/1620)
Telegram No. 202, May 22, 1939, (762.65/605)
Telegram No. 212, June 1, 1939, (762.65/620)
Telegram No. 213, June 2, 1939, (740.00/1646)
Despatch No. 1455, June 2, 1939, (740.00/1717)
Telegram No. 316, August 17, 1939, (7600.62/858)

Communications from Italy

Telegram No. 321, August 22, 1939, (761.6211/68)
Telegram No. 326, August 24, 1939, (7600.62/953)
Telegram No. 329, August 24, 1939, (7600.62/963)
Telegram No. 350, August 31, 1939, (7600.62/1220)
Telegram No. 355, September 1, 1939, (7600.62/1260)
Telegram No. 362, September 2, 1939, (740.0011 E.W.1939/53)
Telegram No. 366, September 3, 1939, ("/91)
Despatch No. 1575, October 5, 1939, (762.65/758)
Telegram No. 562, December 18, 1939, (765.00/165)
Telegram No. 177, March 13, 1940, (762.65/817)
Telegram No. 245, April 9, 1940, (762.65/858)
Telegram No. 285, April 23, 1940, (740.0011 E. W.1939/2433)
Telegram No. 328, May 10, 1940, ("/2823)
Telegram No. 341, May 14, 1940, paraphrase, ("/2920)
Telegram No. 392, May 21, 1940, ("/2855 2/28)
Telegram No. 402, May 23, 1940, ("/2855 4/28)
Telegram No. 426, May 28, 1940, ("/2855 7/28)
Telegram No. 429, May 29, 1940, ("/2855 10/28)
Telegram No. 437, May 31, 1940, ("/2855 12/28)
Telegram No. 480, June 7, 1940, ("/2855 20/28)
Telegram No. 618, June 24, 1940, ("/2855 25/28)
Telegram No. 630, June 25, 1940, ("/2855 26/28)
Telegram No. 777, August 1, 1940, ("/2855 27/28)
Telegram No. 897, September 20, 1940, (762.65/936)
Letter of April 28, 1941, (711.65/148)
Telegram No. 691, May 13, 1941, (740.0011 E.W.1939/10887)
Telegram No. 796, June 7, 1941, ("/11771)
Telegram No. 1941, December 11, 1941, ("/17390)

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
10/25/39
REPARTMENT OF STATE

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
JAN 24 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

Rome
Dated January 20, 1939
REC'd 9:14 a.m.

AM

DAD

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Secretary of State
Washington

20, January 20, 11 a.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY

SECRETARY OF STATE
WIL. M. SHERBURN

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
MR. WATKINS

I am informed by the British Ambassador in strictest confidence that he was summoned on Saturday by Ciano and informed that the Italian Government was holding 60 battalions of troops in readiness to send to Spain if France should take any steps to intervene on behalf of Negrin Government. The Ambassador immediately communicated this information to his Government which forwarded it without comment to Paris before the recent meeting of the Council of Ministers. In addition to the anti-French press campaign reported in my 19, January 17, 1939, this was obviously intended by the Italians to bring further pressure on the French.

According to the best information available in Rome the decision of the French Council not to intervene has apparently eliminated any immediate danger since it does not appear that the Italians will take action to support Franco unless other powers intervene on the other side.

350.00/3828

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THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Handwritten notes:
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S.A.
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H.C.

1939 FEB 3 PM 2 36 AMERICAN EMBASSY

ROME, January 20, 1939.

No. 1250

NO RECORDS

Subject: Chamberlain's Visit.

Handwritten notes:
File met.
Copy in En-gard.

741.65/703

Confidential

ADVISE ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
FEB 13 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

Handwritten: 741.65/687

With reference to the Embassy's telegrams No. 14,
January 13, 2 p.m., and No. 19, ¹⁶⁹⁷ January 17, 7 p.m.,
and despatch No. 1251 of January 13, 1939 concerning
the visit to Rome of the British Prime Minister and
Foreign Secretary, I have the honor to enclose a trans-
lation of the official communiqué issued upon the
termination of the conversations between the British
statesmen and Signor Mussolini, as well as a transla-
tion of the Informazione Diplomatica Communiqué made
public

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE
FEB 17 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

GML

public on January 15, which was summarized in the Embassy's telegram No. 17, January 16, 1 p.m.

In addition to the ceremonies described in the Embassy's despatch under reference, the British visitors were entertained at a gala opera performance on the evening of January 12, after which Count Ciano gave a large supper party in their honor at the Hotel Excelsior. The following day Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax were received by the Pope and by Cardinal Pacelli. The latter returned their visit afterward at the British Legation to the Holy See and remained for luncheon. In the evening a reception was given at the British Embassy which was attended by the Duce, the Diplomatic Corps and Italian officials.

Early the next morning Lord Halifax left for Geneva and Mr. Chamberlain departed at noon. He was seen off at the station by Signor Mussolini, Count Ciano and other ranking members of the government.

Although the visit was marked by an informality, which afforded a strong contrast to the reception accorded Herr Hitler last year, there was nevertheless manifest a spirit of cordiality, which increased throughout the visit and showed itself in popular demonstrations of friendly interest in the activities of the British Premier. Although no announcements were made in the press as to the routes he would follow in proceeding from one ceremony to another, the streets along which he drove were customarily filled with people, all apparently desirous of seeing the British statesmen whose visit represented in the popular mind the final act of ratification of the Anglo-Italian

Accords of April 1938 and a renaissance of Anglo-Italian friendship. Considerable satisfaction was also manifest over Mr. Chamberlain's reference to the Italian Empire in his toast at the Palazzo Venezia banquet, which it was alleged marked the reestablishment of Anglo-Italian friendship upon the basis of equality between two empires.

Throughout the visit the Italian press laid emphasis upon the Duce's desire for peace founded upon justice--a phrase which was repeated not only by the editorials but by Mussolini in his only public pronouncement during the visit and in his telegram acknowledging Chamberlain's message of thanks upon crossing the Italian frontier. It would appear that it had been deliberately chosen to underline Italy's pacific intentions, but at the same time to indicate that Italy had not abandoned its Mediterranean claims and would demand satisfaction in this respect as soon as the situation in Spain would permit. Although Chamberlain expressed the hope that something might be done to lessen Italo-French tension, it was explained that he had made it clear at the outset of the discussions that Great Britain could not undertake to act as mediator in any way between France and Italy, and no further information regarding the extent of these claims was apparently vouchsafed during the conversations.

In spite of Italian denials, it would seem that the Italian Government had hoped that the British would assume such a role and might be willing to urge France to give some satisfaction to Italy in return for a possible arrangement in Spain and an agreement to withdraw all

Italian

Italian troops. When it was realized that such would not be the case, and in the light of reports from Spain regarding the progress of Franco's offensive in Catalonia, it was announced that the Italian Government would insist upon a satisfactory conclusion of the Spanish war as a condition precedent to any settlement with France.

With the apparent object of bringing pressure upon France to prevent its sending troops to "save Barcelona" and using the excuse that French newspapers have criticized the fighting ability of Italian troops and were casting aspersions on their valor, the press has launched on another violent attack on France, which reached a high point of abusive language in two editorials in the *TEVERE* on January 13 and 17. Although this newspaper normally has very little standing and does not as a rule merit serious consideration, the first article entitled "Francia da Spiti" (Spit-worthy France) which concluded that "even Italian spit is worth more than the Frenchman against whom it is directed, and the Third Republic does not deserve much spittle" was followed by another several days later couched in similar terms. These editorials would scarcely seem worthy of mention save that the repetition indicates that official sanction must have been given to the use of such terms, and the publication of the second was heralded in the streets of Rome by placards advising the public to read the *TEVERE* and stating that "Italian sailors could spit in the face of France". The more responsible newspapers repeated the warning contained in the *INFORMAZIONE DIPLOMATICA* communiqué to the effect that if France intervened on behalf of the Negrin Government, Italy would reserve its freedom of action and spoke of definite possibilities

bilities that France would come to the rescue of Barcelona. Whether these represented a genuine fear that France would follow this course is difficult to determine. The French Ambassador has pointed out that if France had intended to intervene it would hardly have waited all these months. It would seem more likely that the main grievance against France is caused by the latter's failure to make an offer in settlement of Italy's claims arising out of the 1915 Agreement, which the latter maintains have never received adequate compensation.

It has also been made clear in the form of news despatches from Germany that the Italian Government is confident of German support with regard to its attitude concerning intervention in Spain and its decision regarding the postponement of negotiations with France. It has also been indicated that Italy counts on German backing with respect to whatever claims it may subsequently put forward in respect to the Mediterranean. While the extent of such support can only be a matter of speculation, it seems apparent that Italy will expect the same degree of assistance in this regard as it afforded Germany during the Czecho-slovak crisis. Whether or not this would take the form of military aid, should such be required, is open to some doubt, particularly in view of German preoccupations in other areas of Europe.

As explained to me, however, by Lord Halifax, both he and Chamberlain were impressed by the assurances given regarding Italy's pacific intentions and by the definite statement that Spain alone represented the stumbling block to a peaceful settlement in the Mediterranean. While these assurances harmonize with the cordial tone
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of the reception afforded them and the manifest desire on the part of the Italian people for friendly relations with Great Britain, I find on the part of some of my colleagues, notably the French Ambassador, a measure of uncertainty regarding the real aims of Mussolini's program which François Poncet feels is inspired by the determination to "get something" for Italy, by peaceful means if possible, but with the danger that if such means fail he might have recourse to others. Even though there would appear to have been an improvement in the position owing to the French decision not to support the Negrin Government and to the possibility of an early victory for Franco, the French Ambassador feels that the situation is nevertheless fraught with possibilities of danger. Certainly if the threats against France continue, it is difficult to envisage the possibilities of successful negotiations between the two countries.

In the last analysis, however, the state of Italy's dependence upon Germany for support in any possible conflict leaves the ultimate decision for peace with Germany rather than with Italy. In this connection it may be noted that in his conversations with Chamberlain, this part of which was not repeated to the French Ambassador, Mussolini made a distinction between Hitler's relations with the Western Powers and his plans in Eastern Europe. Although Mussolini insisted that in both instances Germany was motivated by peaceful intentions, the distinction nevertheless seems worthy of note as is his statement that the conditions in the Ukraine were so pitiful that German help would be of benefit to them.

That aspect of the Mussolini-Chamberlain conversations which dealt with the subject of Jewish refugees

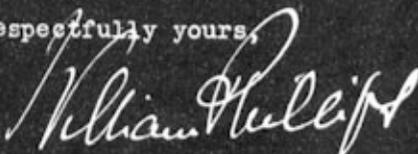
was reported in my telegram No. 14, January 13, 2 p.m. While it was currently rumored that during Chamberlain's call upon the Pope this subject would be discussed, I am informed by a most reliable Vatican source that it would have been considered out of place in a courtesy call of this nature for the Pope to have entered into discussions which might have a political significance. It would subsequently appear therefore that no discussions of importance connected with the refugee problem took place on this occasion. According to the OSSERVATORE ROMANO various points were brought out regarding relations between the Holy See and England, and the results were noted with gratification.

In summarizing the results of the Chamberlain visit, it would seem therefore that while no new commitments were made, no new demands were formulated by Italy, which refrained from pressing claims against France, that the position of both countries was made clear and that there is a possibility of better understanding between the two powers, the concrete results of which can only be reckoned at a time when the Spanish situation will permit further discussions or negotiations. It was made clear on one side that the Rome-Berlin axis and "peace with justice" were the basis of Italy's foreign policy, while on the other side it appears that it was also made clear that the London-Paris association was equally strong

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and that it was a factor to be reckoned with in any future development of Italian policy.

Respectfully yours,



William Phillips

✓ Enclosures:

1. Translation of Stefani Communiqué of January 14, 1939
2. Translation of Informazione Diplomatica Communiqué of January 15, 1939.

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Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 1259 of January 20, 1939
from the Embassy in Rome.

Translation

Stefani Communiqué,
January 14, 1939.

Chamberlain's Visit

"In the conversations that have been held these past few days between the Duce and the British Prime Minister, with the participation of the Foreign Ministers of the two countries, Count Ciano and Lord Halifax, the major questions of the moment and the relations between the two Empires have been examined. These conversations have been marked by the utmost cordiality and have led to a frank and comprehensive exchange of ideas. The intention of developing the existing relations between the two countries in the spirit of friendship of the April 16 Pact has been concordantly reaffirmed. It has also been agreed to conclude at the earliest possible date the special agreements contemplated by that Pact.

"During the conversations there has once more emerged the determination of Italy and Great Britain to pursue a policy which will efficaciously work for the maintenance of peace and toward which the efforts of the two Governments have been and continue to be directed."

Enclosure No. 2 to despatch No. 1250 of January 20, 1939
from the Embassy in Rome.

Translation

Informazione Diplomatica No. 26,
January 15, 1939.

Responsible Roman circles attach importance to the following reports concerning the progress of and conclusions to be drawn from the conversations which took place at the Palazzo Venezia between Chamberlain and the Duce, Lord Halifax and Count Ciano.

After underlining the genuine cordiality of the conversations, it may be noted that in so far as Italo-British relations are concerned there was nothing sensational to be discussed inasmuch as their relations are defined in their entirety and in particular by the Agreements of April 16, 1938 which entered into force on November 16. Both on the Italian side as well as on the British side these Agreements have been loyally observed. In the necessary general review, other questions of a general character were naturally touched upon and at the same time that the British Prime Minister emphasized the close relations existing between London and Paris, on the Italian side it was declared in the most formal fashion possible that the basis of Italian policy is and remains the Rome-Berlin axis. With regard to Spain, the Duce repeated that all Italian legionaries would be repatriated as soon as the "reds" have done the same and when those belligerent rights, which it is now absurd to deny, were accorded to General Franco. The Duce, however,

added

added that if in the near future any large scale intervention on the part of governments friendly to Negrin occurred, Italy would resume its liberty of action and consider that the policy of non-intervention had been brought to an end and had failed.

With regard to Franco-Italian relations, the Duce declared that the Spanish question has created and creates a profound cleavage between the two countries and that it would be possible to review the situation only when the Spanish war was ended. Meanwhile it would be absolutely out of the question to speak of arbitration, mediation, three or four power conferences.

It is further observed in Roman circles that this belies all the unintelligent fantastic stories diffused by the customary press organs to the effect that Italy had desired or even implored British mediation.

Other questions, which were examined but not at length, related to an arrangement in behalf of the so-called Jewish "refugees" and to the possibility - in any case remote - of a limitation of armaments. With regard to the proposal of maintaining the peace of Europe, this was expressed with firm conviction both on the part of Italy as well as on the part of England.

In responsible Roman circles, it is observed that after the Chamberlain-Mussolini meeting all pessimism, as well as all excessive optimism, is premature. It should be left to the men of good will to assure the future of Europe according to the vital, legitimate necessities of the peoples.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM ROME

Dated January 24, 1939

Rec'd 4:10 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

Handwritten: 10
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Stamp: DIVISION OF
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Gmt
Handwritten: W

21, January 24, 7 p. m.

CONFIDENTIAL.

With the anticipated fall of Barcelona there is an increasing uneasiness apparent in unofficial and diplomatic circles in Rome concerning future developments in the Mediterranean. This feeling of uneasiness has been increased not only by Mussolini's speech of January 22 in which he warned France that no matter how firm it might be Italy would be firmer, but also by reports which appear to be deliberately circulated concerning troop activities particularly in the north of Italy and that certain officers and specialists have been unexpectedly summoned for duty. The press is likewise keeping up its anti-French polemics.

The German Ambassador has expressed the opinion to two of his colleagues that after the fall of Barcelona the Italian Government will press for territorial advantages in Tunisia. When I sought to obtain from Mackenson confirmation

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2-#21, From Rome, Jan. 24, 7 p.m.

confirmation of his statement he merely repeated what Ciano had already informed me, see my telegram No. 19, January 17, 7 p. m., to the effect that conversations with the French would begin as soon as the atmosphere had been clarified by the settlement of the Spanish situation.

It is difficult to see how any territorial claims with regard to Tunisia can accord with the renewed assurances given to Chamberlain regarding the loyal maintenance of the Anglo-^{Italian} ~~Italian~~ ^{Agreement}. It may therefore be that this form of pressure is being exercised for the purpose of inducing France and England to agree to a four power conference to discuss the Mediterranean situation as soon as the Spanish situation has become sufficiently clarified.

It also seems probable that the Italian Government, will continue its menacing attitude against France and may make peremptory demands accompanied by threatening gestures in order to give the impression that Italy is prepared for war in the event that it does not receive satisfaction. In my view, which I find is shared by many

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3-#21, From Rome, Jan. 24, 7p.m.

of my colleagues here, it does not, however, seem likely that Italy will in the last analysis embark upon a war for this purpose in view of its unpreparedness for a long struggle.

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM Dated February 21, 1939

Rec'd 3:55 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

59, February 21, 6 p. m.

In spite of the recent press polemics against France and to a lesser extent Great Britain on account of their alleged efforts to drive a wedge between Franco and the Rome-Berlin association I find in general among my colleagues and in Italian circles a belief that the situation is somewhat easier although it is admitted that further tension may arise at the time of presentation of the Italian claims against France. This may conceivably take place before the withdrawal of Italian volunteers. There is, however, no one in Italy in a position to give accurate information concerning future developments. The proof of this is that Mussolini has not yet formulated his claims waiting presumably not only for further clarification of the Spanish situation but also for a fuller knowledge of the extent of German support.

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FEB 23 1939
ROME DEPARTMENT

Lyons

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2-#59, From Rome, Feb. 21, 6p.m.

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The Department is aware that his demands will probably center about Tunis, the Suez, and Jibuti, and that of these Tunisia will present the greatest difficulties. While he may ask for some slight territorial adjustment in Tunisia it is thought that the principal demand will involve such autonomy for Italian residents as may constitute the existence of a state within a state, a condition which will be extremely difficult for the French to accept. Whether in an effort towards appeasement the French will give Jibuti to the Italians is conjecture.

45320
Rome is alive with rumors and conjectures most of which, however, cannot be authenticated. In addition to the partial mobilization, see Embassy's telegram 24, January 26, noon, of the class of 1901, it appears to be a fact that the usual training period for the first contingent of the class of 1918 has been advanced by two months and specialists from the classes of 1902 to 1906 have been called. There was a rumor that a naval concentration was set for March 2 but this has been categorically denied by the Ministry of Marine. Judging also

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3-#59, From Rome, Feb. 21, 6p.m.

also from the ages and types of men called these measures of mobilization seem more in the nature of precautions than actual preparation for war and are considered by military observers here as not excessive in the light of possible tension at the time Italian claims are formulated. It would rather appear that the mobilization machinery is being made ready in order that any possible crisis may not find Italy as unprepared for general mobilization as it was in September.

Italians generally are so hostile to participation in another war and the lack of war materials is so well known that it is hard to believe that Italy is preparing to embark upon war. Furthermore, the airplane industry has received no orders for expansion and their industrial plants are not running under unusually heavy schedules. See Embassy's 38, February 4, noon. Certainly we shall have a period of greater tension in Italo-French relations and many alarms. Were it not for the possibility that in his demands on France Mussolini might go so far as to make retreat impossible without loss of prestige there would seem to me no immediate grounds for alarm in the absence

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4-#59, From Rome, Feb.21,6p.m.

absence of any untoward incidents. As evidenced by the attitude of many Italians the President's defense program and our general attitude toward Great Britain and France have had and will continue to have a steadying influence.

PHILLIPS

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Next

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RFP

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

Rome

FROM

REC'D 10:54 a.m.

URGENT
Feb 23 1939
DEPARTMENT
February 22, 1939

Secretary of State

Washington

62, February 22, 10 a.m.

*Seen by Col. Finley
M.I.D. and Com. Rogers, 291
2-23-39, gmt*

*Rome requested
to repeat to Paris
2-23-39
gmt*

During a conversation with Ciano yesterday I referred to the anxiety in the United States with regard to the general European situation and more particularly with regard to Libya and Tunisia. I mentioned current reports concerning the numbers of Italian troops in Libya of which you informed me in your 16, February 20, 6 p.m. Ciano repeated emphatically what he had already told Perth as reported in my 41, February 8, noon, that following the signature of the British and Italian agreements in April last more than one half of the existing garrison had been withdrawn bringing the total number of troops down to 30,000. Recently a decision had been reached to restore the number to about 60,000 or 65,000 in view of the heavy French reinforcements. According to his statement there are now 240,000 French troops in Tunisia. In reply to my inquiry about the presence in Libya of German technicians, Ciano informed me that there were eight German police officers who for training purposes were attached to the Italian police organization and no others.

751.65/550

RFP -2- #62, February 22, 10 a.m. from Rome

I asked him for information regarding the arrest of Italians in Tunisia accused of espionage, a brief reference to which had occurred in the afternoon papers. SEE my 60, February 21, 7 p.m. . . . Ciano evidenced no especial concern and said he had not received any official report as yet. There has been no further publicity on the subject in today's Rome papers.

With reference to Italo-French relations in general Ciano assured me that he was "optimistic" and he referred to his note of December 17 to the French Government as indicating his desire to reach a settlement by negotiation. (The text of this note has never been published.)

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

ROME

FROM Dated February 24, 1939

Rec'd 3:20 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

63, February 24, 5 p. m.



I am informed that the Belgian Ambassador during a recent call at the Foreign Office learned that the substance of the Italian claims would involve representation on the Governing Board of the Suez Canal, a reduction of canal tolls, a free port and other concessions at Djibouti, "full Italian status" for Italian residents of Tunis and unlimited Italian immigration into the colony. The Ambassador was given to understand that while it was recognized that the objectives regarding Tunis would be the most difficult of achievement Mussolini in his present state of extreme irritation against the French was determined to win these two points even at the cost of war if necessary.

It is worthy of note that this information coming from an entirely different source is almost identical with that contained in the enclosure to despatch No. 3792 of February 8, 1939, from the Embassy in Paris.

While no confirmation is obtainable it is also

reported

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2-#63, From Rome, Feb.24,5p.m.

reported that the Governor of the French Bank of Indo-China, Monsieur Baudoin who is said to have been in Rome was in close contact with Italian officials here and may have been able to take back to Paris some indication of Italian aims. The French Embassy is, however, without information regarding their extent and it may be that the indication given to the Belgian Ambassador was for the purpose of bringing indirect pressure on Paris by way of Brussels.

In general the anti-French campaign in the Italian newspapers has been abated in recent days at least in so far as editorial comment is concerned. On the other hand with respect to a press report that France intends to occupy Shaik Said the Italian press acknowledges no French right to any point on the Yemen coast and states that Italy would oppose any such undertaking by force if necessary. One or two newspapers have also indicated that events in Palestine and Syria are moving in such a way as to force a revision of the Mediterranean status quo.

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM

ROME

Dated March 6, 1939

Rec'd 5 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

74, March 6, 6 p.m.



CONFIDENTIAL

Recently there has been some abatement of tension in well-informed circles and the general impression seems to be growing that there is no external conflict in sight although renewed tension in Italo-French relations is anticipated when the Italian claims are formulated--probably this month. The Italian press also warns against excessive optimism.

By information continues to be that the military activities in Italy are not of a kind to cause alarm. The remainder of the class of 1918 and the first three months of the class of 1919 have been called for training together with members of the 1915, 1916 and 1917 classes who have not received military training on account of physical disability. This procedure is considered normal. These classes should bring the army establishment to a maximum summer training

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training strength of about 550,000 to 600,000 men, one half, however, consisting of untrained or partially trained recruits not ready for combat. If then Italy had any intention of general mobilization or military action in the immediate future the recruits of this latter group presumably would not have been called at the present time.

Reports from all parts of Italy indicate that there is no stepping up of industry. Hours of labor continue to be 40 a week and all heavy industry is suffering from lack of raw materials notably oil, iron and steel. If the gas masks mentioned in Consul General Sholes' cabled report of February 25, noon, have been ordered the Embassy considers it normal and merely a part of the general plan for detailed civilian personnel over a ten year period which was reported by the Military Attaché to the War Department on September 22, 1938. Milan also reports the placing of new contracts for bombing planes which, however, do not call for completion before 1940 or 41.

It is not without interest that at a moment when Italian demands upon France are anxiously awaited General Goerring is known to have left Germany on vacation for a rest of several weeks and is now in northern Italy, with plans for visits to Capri and possibly Libya. While later he may visit

CA

--3--74 from Rome..

Rome and confer with officials here his somewhat lengthy absence from Germany would indicate that Germany is not anticipating preparations of military support for Italy at this time.

I do not think that the military situation in Libya and Tunisia should be taken too seriously, for the French fortifications on the Tunisia eastern frontier are powerful and the French armed forces certainly adequate to prevent any sudden move on the part of the Italians.

There is an abhorrence of war among Italians of all classes and although the people would probably follow Mussolini in any venture upon which he might embark, Italy could not in its present condition support a long war. Moreover, the rearmament programs of Great Britain and the United States and the sale of American planes to both England and France undoubtedly are having a steadying effect. And furthermore, the powerful position of the new Pope and his declared attitude toward world peace must be reckoned with.

On the other hand, it is well known that Mussolini is embittered by the unfavorable trends in his foreign policies and the possibility that he may not receive any substantial benefits from his efforts in the Spanish civil war. In my opinion the only danger of a conflict lies in his disappointment and what might come to be his belief that something

dramatic

CA

--4--74 from Rome..

dramatic is needed to strengthen his government; and there is always the possibility of an unforeseen major incident which in the present tension might lead to military reprisals. There is less confidence than formerly in his judgment because of the fact that he is surrounded by a small clique of radicals and "yes men", sees few of his more conservative advisers and except for visiting Germans no foreigners who are in a position to give him outside impressions.

PHILLIPS

NPL ROW

ABS

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM

ROME

Dated March 17, 1939

Rec'd 4 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington, DC

ju

File, ju

94, March 17, 7 p. m.

By telegram No. 85, March 11, noon.

CONFIDENTIAL. The Counsellor of the British Embassy read to Count Ciano yesterday a statement prepared by Bonnet and handed by him to the British Ambassador in Paris stating that the French Government had no bellicose intentions regarding Libya. This statement was formulated as Bonnet's reply to the British Ambassador's communication to him to the effect that Ciano had informed Perth that Italy harbored no hostile designs regarding Tunis and was so described when read to Ciano by the British Counsellor as the French Government was apparently unwilling to have the impression given Ciano that the statement was intended for transmittal to him. After listening to the statement Ciano told Sir Noel Charles that as Italy's strength in Libya was still greatly inferior to actual and potential French forces in Tunis, Italy would continue to augment

its

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REB

2-#94, From Rome, Mar. 17, 7p.m.

its armed forces in Libya until this disparity had been reduced. He repeated, however, that the Italian Government had no intention of initiating any hostilities in that region.

PHILLIPS

CSB

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR 6P3

FROM

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

Rome

Dated March 22, 1939

Rec'd 7:34 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

97, March 22, 10 a.m.

File 7041000
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mm

The Fascist Grand Council at first session of its regular March meeting last night adopted the following resolution. (GRAY)

"The Grand Council of Fascism in view of the threatened constitution of a 'United front of the same order associated with Bolshevism' against the authoritarian states-- united front which promises not peace but war--declares that what has happened in Central Europe originated in the first place with the Treaty of Versailles and reaffirms, especially at the moment, its full adherence to the policy of the Rome-Berlin axis".
(END GRAY)

Appropriate opportunities to explain just what the Italian Government conceives the policy of the Rome-Berlin axis to be in the light of recent developments will be afforded at the inauguration of the new Fascist Chamber tomorrow when there will be a speech from the throne and on Sunday morning when the king is scheduled to broadcast

765.00/125

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broadcast

-2- #97, March 22, 10 p.m., from Rome.

broadcast of the celebration of the 20th anniversary
celebration of the foundation of the Fasci.

PHILLIPS

BR:TC

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Handwritten scribbles

FROM GRAY

ROME

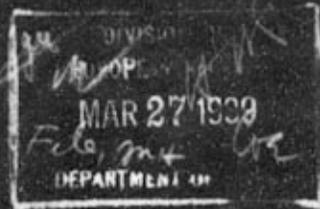
Dated March 26, 1939

Rec'd 10:31 p.m.

File
File

Secretary of State,
Washington.

102, March 26, 6 p.m.



In tone, but not entirely in substance, Mussolini's declarations this morning were in contrast to the King's speech last Thursday and possibly because of the nature of the gathering gave a belligerent and uncompromising impression. After extolling the progress of Fascism, denouncing its critics and promising greater accomplishments for the future he set forth five principles to govern its attitude at present. The salient features of these were as follows:

One. He declared that although Italy should consider perpetual peace a catastrophe for human civilization it nevertheless regarded a long period of peace as necessary for the development of European civilization. But although it had recently been solicited, Italy would take no initiative before its sacred rights have been recognized.

Two.

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Handwritten notes
MAY 29 1939
RECEIVED

-2- #102, March 26, 6 p.m., from Rome.

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Two. He characterized any attempt to weaken the Rome-Berlin axis, founded on an assumption of the two revolutions, as puerile and stated that Italy would not associate itself with these powers which lamented the fate of Czechoslovakia which had failed even to make a gesture of self-defense. He then warned that "in the event of the longed for constitution of a coalition against the authoritarian regimes the latter would accept the challenge and pass to defense and counter attack in all parts of the world".

31.65
Three. With respect to France, now that the Spanish question was about to be liquidated, he reiterated that the note of December 17 had clearly set forth Italian problems with regard to France, that these problems were colonial and that they had a name "Tunisia, Djibouti and the Suez Canal". Although France had a right to refuse to discuss these problems as it had already done through the use of a too often repeated and too categorical "never", Italy could then not be blamed if the breach between the two became too deep and too wide to be bridged.

Four. He proclaimed that the Mediterranean geographically, politically, historically and militarily was a vital space for Italy and included in it the Adriatic

where

-3- #102, March 26, 6 p.m., from Rome.

where Italy's interests, although predominant did not exclude the "Slavs" as shown by two years of peace there.

Five. The final point referred to the necessity for rearmament--more guns, more ships, more aeroplanes--at whatever cost and by whatever means even at the expense of all that is known as civil life since weakness in a state is fatal.

Further comment will be telegraphed later.

PHILLIPS

WVC:PEG

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAR 31 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REB

FROM

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

ROME

Dated March 30, 1939

Rec'd 3:34 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

109, March 30, 6 p. m.

Editorials in the Rome press today interpret Daladier's
speech as confirming the uncompromising attitude of the
French Government. Comment generally is calm and dis-
passionate in tone. Gayda in this evening's GIORNALE
D'ITALIA states that while Daladier's remarks indicate
that the French intend to close the door left open by
Mussolini's speech last Sunday, Italy is not impatient.
Italy, he says, can wait but meanwhile the gap between
the two countries remains unbridged. According to the
TRIBUNA "there remains for us only to take note once
more that France is determined to cling to her positions
and refuses to talk".

It is

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REC'D
MAR 31 1939

REB

2-#109, From Rome, Mar. 30, 6p.m.

It is of interest to note, however, that the Paris correspondent of the *GIORNALE D'ITALIA* in reporting the French reaction to the speech goes to considerable pains to emphasize that all those who are really representative of French public opinion construe Daladier's remarks as demonstrating his desire to leave the door open for seeking and reaching an equitable solution by diplomatic means.

Speaking at Cosenza this morning the Duce after eulogizing Franco's victory said that "by no means does Italy intend to remain a prisoner in the Mediterranean."

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

Rome

FROM Dated April 27, 1939

Rec'd 8:50 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

157, April 27, noon.



The Belgian Ambassador said last night that he had had a "very satisfactory conversation" with Ciano yesterday during the course of which the latter assured him that there was nothing in the field of Franco-Italian relations which would now give rise to a "conflict". While admitting that France would probably not be in a position to take the initiative for any discussions for some time Kerchovc nevertheless gained the impression that Italy was not intending to press its claims. The Ambassador also said that Ciano was so optimistic regarding the general European situation that he had reported this to his Government as evidence that Italy did not want war.

A general abatement of the tension which was so strongly felt in Italy during March and April is now markedly noticeable not only among my colleagues but also in nearly all Italian circles. It would be premature to consider that this implies any real improve-

ment

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PS 2-No. 157, April 27, noon from Rome

ment as it may in part be based upon wishful thinking on the part of the majority of Italians who are more and more opposed to the idea of war. However the general impression seems to be that although Hitler in his speech tomorrow will undoubtedly attempt to ridicule the President's message he nevertheless does not intend to close the door to further negotiations among the European powers.

HFD

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM ROME

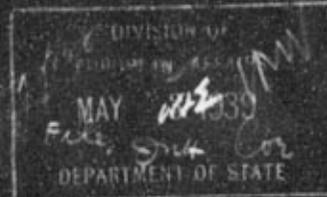
Dated May 2, 1939

Rec'd 1:30 P.M.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

1cc, May 2, 2 P.M.



STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

I had a few minutes conversation last night with the Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs who is at present in Rome. Gafencu told me that Rumania had made offer on a settlement of its war debt to the United States which was now on the way to Washington.

He referred to the conversation which he had had that morning with Mussolini and said that he thought there was a "way out" of the present European difficulty. I had no opportunity to question him regarding the possible solution but from information received from some of my colleagues I have the impression that he may have been thinking of the possibilities of an Italo-French settlement. He appears to have been impressed by the apparent Italian eagerness to begin discussions with Paris and said that Mussolini had explained that Franco-Italian relations were serious but not critical and that Italy's demands were colonial in character and not territorial. According to this account
Mussolini

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-2- #166, May 2, 2 p.m., from Rome.

Mussolini had told Gafencu that the other serious European problem of the moment was that of German-Polish relations and had attached importance to Hitler's offer of a twenty-five year guarantee of Poland's frontier. Gafencu told the British Charge d'Affaires that he found the Duce pessimistic with respect to the British policy of "encirclement" which in the latter's opinion might involve Europe in war. Mussolini had also asked the Minister why Rumania had accepted a guarantee from Great Britain rather than Germany and the latter replied that the British offer had been an "excellent" one and reminded Mussolini that Rumania had just entered into an economic agreement with Germany.

Gafencu's visit to Italy seems to be primarily for information purposes and he has said that the Italians have laid great emphasis upon the solidarity of the Axis in all matters referring to their joint Balkan policy. The Rumanian Minister is returning to Bucharest by way of Belgrade where he hopes to obtain further enlightenment regarding Yugoslavia's relations with the Axis powers.

PHILLIPS

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAY 8 1939
File 1934
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CA

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

FROM

ROME

Dated May 6, 1939

Rec'd 2:55 p.m.

Instructions to Emb. Rio
5/10/39 RA:RFW

MAY 18 1939

Secretary of State

Washington

178, May 6, 6 p.m.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
4
THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
440

It has recently come to my attention that Countess
Ciano is planning to leave shortly on a trip to Brazil.
Yesterday I asked Ciano whether she contemplated visiting
any other countries to which he replied in the negative.
He added that her departure was certainly an indication
of his own certainty that there was no danger of any
European conflict in the near future.

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

ROME

FROM Dated May 9, 1939

Rec'd 4 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAY 10 1939
File, Jmt
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

183, May 9, 7 p. m.

I understand the international press is carrying a story to the effect that the Vatican is about to call a conference between the five powers interested in order to seek a solution of the present German Polish impasse and the general international situation.

CONFIDENTIAL. From information available here I believe that the Vatican is now taking soundings preparatory to such action. A Vatican official has informed me in this connection that no definite step, i.e. an invitation, has been taken but that the Vatican is doing everything possible to "oil the wheels" of the general situation particularly in Berlin and Paris. He admitted that indirect approaches had already been made to the Italian Government concerning a possible conference and that he had reason to believe it was not unfavorable to the proposition.

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GMB



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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AMERICAN EMBASSY

No. 1419

ROME, May 11, 1939.

Subject: Conversation with the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires concerning the present European situation.

(CONFIDENTIAL)

RECEIVED

30

COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS



The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that on the evening of May 5th a member of the Embassy's staff had a conversation with the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Italy, during the course of which the latter expressed the following views concerning the general European situation with particular reference to the recent visit to Rome of the Rumanian Foreign Minister, M. Gafencu. The Chargé stated that his views were the result of conversations which he had had with the British Chargé d'Affaires, the Greek Minister, and the Turkish and French Ambassadors.

Then M. Gafencu called upon Signor Mussolini on May 1st the Duce, after the usual amenities, somewhat abruptly

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
MAY 11 1939

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abruptly asked him why a "great country" like his had accepted a guarantee of independence from Great Britain. M. Gafencu replied that his country had no desire to be drawn into the quarrels of the Great Powers, wished to remain neutral and, therefore, if gratuitously offered protection against aggression by a Great Power, considered that it would be folly to refuse such an offer. Nothing had been discussed, added M. Gafencu, during the conversations that he had recently had in London that could be considered offensive to other powers. The Duce then said somewhat vehemently "You should conclude a political agreement with Germany." To this M. Gafencu replied that Rumania had already concluded a commercial agreement with Germany, which to him appeared to be sufficient at the moment. Here it may be stated parenthetically that M. Gafencu, according to the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, told the Turkish Ambassador before he left that he had gained the impression that Signor Mussolini had suggested this political agreement as a concession to German pressure. The reason that M. Gafencu held this opinion was that Marshal Goering had spoken to him in practically the same phrases during his visit to Berlin previous to proceeding to London and Rome. Marshal Goering, it will be recalled, had just returned from Rome when M. Gafencu saw him in Berlin.

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Signor Mussolini did not press the subject of a political agreement with Berlin, but reviewed the general situation in Europe as he saw it, pointing out that the Polish-German dispute constituted the principal danger spot at the moment, with Franco-Italian relations in

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second place. The latter, however, said the Duce, was not an occasion for war. Italy's demands against France were purely colonial in nature and did not envisage territorial claims. Signor Mussolini hoped that France would prove to be reasonable in the face of "just" Italian claims and emphasized that so far he had not concluded a military alliance with Germany. Later, M. Gafencu, in conversation with the Greek Minister, gave it as his impression that he was expected to pass the foregoing information on to the French Government.

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The Duce then stated that Italian efforts to bring about a rapprochement between Hungary and Yugoslavia were progressing and that he hoped Rumania might see its way clear to aid along those lines. While he, Mussolini, had supported Hungarian irredentist claims in other directions, he would never support them as far as Transylvania was concerned. Italo-Yugoslav relations, added the Duce, were of the best, despite the Albanian episode, as M. Gafencu would see for himself when he visited Belgrade. Signor Mussolini then emphasized that the Rome-Berlin Axis was in complete accord with regard to its policy in the Balkans, and from then on the conversation took a more or less conventional turn.

Before leaving Rome, M. Gafencu, according to the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, let it be known to several confidants that the rumored Italian effort to create a Hungarian-Yugoslav-Rumanian-Italian economic block as a buffer against Germany had no foundation in fact, and also that Count Ciano had told him that Italy was attempting to play the part of "honest broker" between Poland and Germany.

In connection with the foregoing, it should be reported that the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires' information coincided in many points with that previously obtained by the Embassy from other sources.

The Soviet Chargé d'Affaires also stated that he had learned from M. Ragip, the Turkish Ambassador to Italy, that on the evening of May 3rd Count Ciano had sent for M. Ragip and stated that the Italian Foreign Office had received alarming news from the Italian Embassy at Ankara to the effect that public and official opinion was deeply stirred in Turkey as the result of rumors concerning Italian designs in the Mediterranean. For that reason, said Count Ciano, he had sent for M. Ragip to assure him that Italy envisaged no plans in the Mediterranean that could possibly affect Italo-Turkish relations. The Turkish Ambassador replied that, while he had been sure of the above, it was pleasant to hear it confirmed. Count Ciano then gratuitously volunteered the information that he intended to call Herr von Ribbentrop's attention, when he saw the latter in Milan on May 6th, to the dangerous situation now existing for Europe as a result of Polish-German differences and added that he hoped to influence Herr von Ribbentrop along the lines of moderation.

The Soviet Chargé d'Affaires remarked further that on May 4th he had had luncheon with a member of the Fascist Grand Council, whose name he did not feel free to reveal. That official had told him that Signor Mussolini was somewhat irritated by Herr Hitler's speech
before

before the Reichstag on April 28th, when the latter denounced the Polish Non-Aggression Pact, since Marshal Goering had promised him before leaving Rome on his last visit that he would exert what influence he could to restrain Herr Hitler from making a violent move. According to the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires' informant, the Duce felt that either Marshal Goering was unreliable or that Herr Hitler could no longer be restrained by even his most intimate advisors.

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The Soviet Chargé d'Affaires then went on to discuss the resignation of M. Litvinov from the post of Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, his impressions on that subject having been reported to the Department in the Embassy's telegram No. 176 of May 6, 2 p.m. It may be of interest, however, to add that the Chargé d'Affaires was quite definite in his opinion that M. Litvinov's resignation would have little or no effect on future Russian foreign policy, stressing the fact that M. Potemkin, who largely agreed with M. Litvinov's ideas on international affairs, would continue in his present post as chief advisor to M. Molotov. The Chargé d'Affaires in fact, gave it as his personal opinion that M. Litvinov's resignation was largely the outcome of personal differences between him and M. Stalin.

Respectfully yours,

William Phillips
William Phillips

ASR-wrm
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~~SECRET~~

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

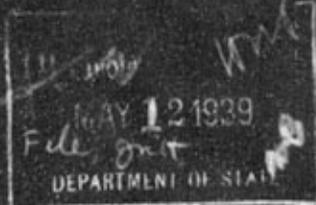
FROM Dated May 11, 1939
Received 12:30 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

157, May 11, 4 p.m.

My 103, May 3, 7 p.m.



I have received from the French Ambassador to the Vatican the following confidential account of the Vatican's recent efforts with regard to a so-called five power peace conference.

The Ambassador said that the Pope's initiative was the result of the President's message to Hitler and Mussolini the Vatican having realized that while the message had a profound importance the fact that it had been addressed to the two dictators destroyed its value as a means of bringing about a meeting of the minds of the European countries. The Pope therefore decided to approach the Governments of Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Poland to point out his concern and to ask whether the time was not opportune for the representatives of the Five powers to meet together in an effort to find a solution of the Danzig problem and other European problems.

The Papal representative in Berlin had a two hour call

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GMB

EDA - 2 - #187, May 11, 4 p.m. from Rome

call upon Hitler. Hitler replied that with regard to Danzig "I can wait". With regard to the Italo-French problems Hitler said that they were easy of adjustment through direct negotiations between the two countries and that therefore in the circumstances a five power meeting did not appear to him necessary. The Duce replied to the Papal representative in much the same terms as Hitler. Both dictators had appeared very calm and said that there was no immediate crisis involved which would require a meeting of the five powers.

The French Government had apparently accepted the Pope's suggestion and the British Government in its reply had asked for more precise information but at no time had the Pope thought of holding the conference at the Vatican. The Polish Government had made no reply.

PHILLIPS

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THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Ass. LC
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Boyle
A/E

AMERICAN EMBASSY
ROME, May 16, 1939.

No. 1429

Subject: Mussolini's Speech at Turin.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 28 1939
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
1939 MAY 21 AM 4 19

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

1477

With reference to the Embassy's telegram No. 193 of May 15, 3 p.m., concerning the speech by the Chief of the Italian Government at Turin on May 15th, 1939, I have the honor to enclose copies in translation of the speech as published in the Rome press.

In commenting upon Mussolini's remarks, the Italian press reiterated that the "encirclement" policy would be even more disastrous a blunder than was the Versailles system and that "encirclement" was obviously intended to provoke war by an effort to isolate and blockade the totalitarian States. It was also alleged that the choice now lay with the great democracies; that Italy and Germany wanted peace and that, therefore, there could be peace if the

740.00/1620

GMB

the democracies wanted it and were willing to admit that the Europe of Versailles was "dead and buried." Mussolini's warning that time should not be lost in settling present problems was also echoed in editorial comment and it was emphasized that any effort on the part of Italy's enemies to starve her out was bound to fail. In spite of the Duce's assurances that there were at present no questions in Europe so far-reaching or acute as to justify war, Virginio Gayda was, nevertheless, deeply pessimistic concerning the possibility that the problem would ever be understood, much less that there would appear any voluntary spirit of sacrifice on the part of the Imperial nations. According to Gayda, the latest speeches of Chamberlain and Daladier left no doubt on the matter, nor did comment published by the French and British newspapers on Mussolini's speech, since there was no talk of revision, but only of forceful means of resisting the demands of the nations accused of aggressiveness. Other writers complained that the democratic press considered only that part of Mussolini's speech which suited its own purpose and ignored the fundamental question of the solution of European problems, which, although they did not want to contemplate it, must, nevertheless, be solved. It was further said that the democracies which had hitherto opposed every revision in the European system continued in exactly the same mentality and, therefore, were a menace to peace.

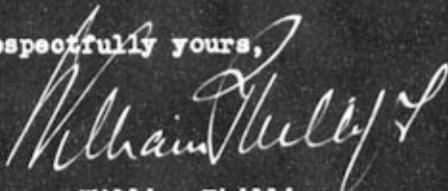
In accordance with its usual custom of giving the utmost publicity to Mussolini's visits in different parts of Italy, the press has devoted most of its space within the past few days to accounts of the Duce's trip to the

North, where he spent several days in Turin and other towns of the Piedmont, particularly on the French frontier. In a few remarks which he addressed to the workers of the Fiat factory at Turin, on May 15th, Signor Mussolini said that the "motor policy", with the abolishment of the automobile circulation tax, would have been continued had the international situation permitted and added that on the previous day he had spoken with extreme frankness, affirming Italy's desire for peace but giving warning that certain problems must be solved before they become chronic. On May 16th the MESSAGGERO wrote that this reference to the motorization program revealed the "measures of vigilant prudence imposed by the present obscure international situation." The MESSAGGERO stated that the situation must clear up very soon and that "the states of the Axis are determined to arrive at a clear-cut situation, of effective peace or of waged war. There is a barrier of suspicion, of preoccupations of an internal rather than external character, and of prejudices and fictions which the great democracies have built up around themselves and which prevents them from getting to the heart of matters and acting realistically. If that barrier does not fall, there can be no happy ending."

AS stated in the Embassy's telegram under reference, the speech and attendant press comment seemed intended to expose before the eyes of the Italian public a democratic threat to the peace and development of the Fascist régime and thus justify possible further sacrifices in pursuance of the present economic program.

In general, among foreign observers in Rome the Duce's speech is considered to have been mild in character and primarily intended for internal consumption, in line with his desire to do everything possible to avoid a general war in view of the difficulty of stirring up any enthusiasm among Italian people for a prolonged conflict.

Respectfully yours,



William Phillips

Hand.

Enclosure to despatch No. 1429 of May 16, 1939, from the Embassy in Rome.

MUSSOLINI'S SPEECH AT TURIN ON MAY 14, 1939.

People of Savoyan and Fascist, industrious and loyal Turin,
Comrades:

Do you recall the last words of the speech I had the honor to make before you seven years ago? To go forward and construct and, if necessary, to fight and win. Looking back on these past seven years, now that it is again my good fortune and joy to return among you, I ask: has the Italian people been loyal to that command? Is the Italian people ready to remain loyal to it?

The Italian people, in fact, has gone forward and has constructed, has fought and has won. Fought and won in Africa against an enemy whom European military experts had guaranteed absolutely unconquerable. Understand? Guaranteed it! The eternal success of certain guarantees! Fought and won against the sanctionist coalition staged by that League of Nations which now lies, unwept, in the great marble mausoleum built for it on the shores of Lake Geneva. Fought and won in Spain side by side with Franco's heroic infantry, against a democratic-bolshevik coalition which issued forth from the struggle literally crushed.

The synthesis of these past seven years: the conquest of the Empire, the union of the Kingdom of Albania with the Kingdom of Italy, the increase of our power in all fields.

As I speak to you, millions, perhaps hundreds of millions, of people in every part of the world, amidst the ups and downs of optimism and pessimism, are asking: are we heading toward peace or toward war?

This is a grave question for everybody, but in particular for those who at a given moment must take the responsibility for

the

the decision.

I reply to this question by declaring that after an objective, cool examination of the situation, there are not in Europe at present questions so far-reaching and acute as to justify a war, which, through the logical development of events, would spread from a European to a universal conflict. There are knots in European politics, but it is not perhaps necessary to resort to the sword to undo them. Nevertheless, those knots must finally be untied, since sometimes harsh reality is preferable to prolonged uncertainty. This is not only the opinion of Italy, but also the opinion of Germany and therefore the opinion of the Axis which, after having been for many years a parallel action of two regimes and two revolutions, will, by the Milan Pact and the military alliance to be signed this month in Berlin, become an indivisible union of two States and two peoples.

Those who every morning, perhaps with their telescopes reversed, have peered out to see whether there was a crack or fracture will now be confused and humiliated. Let no one harbor ridiculous, futile illusions or indulge in superficial casuistry, for the doctrine of Fascism is clear and my will unyielding. As before and better than before.

We shall walk side by side with Germany to give Europe that peace with justice which is the profound desire of all the peoples.

The polemicists of the great democracies are invited to judge our point of view with fairness if possible. We do not want peace simply because our internal situation is notoriously catastrophic!

For seventeen years now our opponents have in vain been waiting for the famous catastrophe and they will wait in vain for a long time to come. Nor is it through physical fear of war, a feeling unknown to us. That is why the theses developed by certain

armchair strategists across the neighboring frontier, in which they speak of easy military excursions in the Po Valley make us smile. The days of Francis I and Charles VIII are over. A "chalk" (+) war is no longer conceivable. Even when there was not, as today, a formidably united people of 45 million souls behind the Alps, the foreign invaders from Talamone to Fornovo never were successful in Italy for very long. In your glorious military history, people of Piedmont, there are many memorable episodes which prove that it is not healthy to contemplate arrogant excursions through the country of Italy.

But it may be appropriately asked: is the sincere desire for peace of the totalitarian states matched by a similarly sincere desire for peace on the part of the great democracies? You have already answered the question; I shall merely say that the actual facts warrant doubt. During recent times the geographic map of three continents has been modified; but it should be pointed out that neither Japan, Germany, nor Italy have taken one square meter of territory or one single inhabitant from the sovereignty of the great democracies. Then how does one explain their fury?

Do they really wish us to believe that it is a question of moral scruples? Do we not perhaps know backwards and forwards and upside down the methods by which their empires had been built and by which they are still maintained? It is, therefore, not a question of territories. It is something else.

At Versailles a system was created, a system of pistols pointed at Germany and Italy. Now that system has irreparably collapsed. Therefore there is an effort to replace it by more or less sought and more or less unilateral guarantees.

That

(+) Machiavelli wrote, in connection with the French invasions and the practice of marking with chalk the doors of houses where troops were to be quartered, that "it was thus permitted to Charles, King of France, to take Italy by chalk."

That the democracies are not sincerely devoted to the cause of peace is demonstrated by an incontestable fact: namely, they have already begun what might be called a white war: that is, war on the terrain of economics. They think to weaken us. They are mistaken! Wars are not won by gold alone. Will-power is more important than gold and, more important still, courage.

A formidable, swiftly multiplying block of 150 million men extending from the Baltic to the Indian Ocean does not allow itself to be crushed. Any attack will be futile; any attack will be repulsed with the utmost decision. Following upon the system of pistols, the system of guarantees will also crumble.

This I have perforce told you, comrades, since it is not the habit of Fascism to deal out exaggerated hopes or fallacious illusions. A strong people like the Italian loves truth and facts. And the reason for which we are arming more and more strongly, so as to be in a position to safeguard our peace and at any moment to repulse any aggression that might be threatened, will be clear to you.

Comrades! I might dispense with a discussion of internal questions. Those questions may be boiled down into just one sentence: People and Regime in Italy form one absolutely indivisible unit.

From the social point of view we shall keep strict faith with the postulate of our original program. Through the education of the new generations we shall create the physical and moral contemporary type of Italian. Through the development of our overseas territory we intend to improve the living conditions of the working people. All this demands severe discipline, coordination of efforts, and an unprecedented tension of will. But

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this cannot frighten the Italians of fascist times; you much less than the others.

Ninety years ago little Piedmont dared to defy an ancient empire. It seemed an act of rash folly: it was, instead, a great act of faith, and that act of faith lay in the furrow of history. Since then all peoples who become the initiators of a movement toward unity have been called Piedmont. It must be for you, People of Turin, a source of intimate, deep, legitimate pride to recall those days and to compare the Italy of 1848 with the Italy of the Year XVII of the Fascist Era. What an arch of power has been built during those ninety years! And who could doubt our future?

Comrades!

Whatever may happen I assure you that all our goals will be reached.

27 *50*
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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HRE

GRAY

ROME

FROM Dated May 22, 1939 *W* *file*

Rec'd 5:15 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

202, May 22, 7 p.m.



782.69/600

The text of the Italo-German treaty of friendship and alliance signed today in Berlin is published in full in the Italian papers this afternoon and given great prominence. Press comment calls attention to the complete and unequivocal character of the agreement. Gayda writing from Berlin admitted that there were other supplementary secret agreements to be elaborated by committees specially formed for the purpose and hinted of the establishment of a unified command. He affirmed that the military forces of the two would be employed under a "single direction" but refused to say more on the subject of the specific military plans than that the various units of the two countries "would not be dispersed in independent and broken up objectives but would move according to an organized plan."

In discussing the treaty's reference to "vital spaces" he said that Germany had agreed to respect Italian interests in southeastern Europe, in the Mediterranean and in Africa and not to interfere with the

the

HRE

2-#202 From Rome May 22, 7 p.m.

the free development thereof, and that full reciprocity was guaranteed by Italy as regards Germany's interests. Declaring that this clearly denied the contention of the democracies that Italy had become a vassal of Germany Gayda then affirmed that there was a "harmonious division of interests and spheres." This definition of vital spaces he added, however, did not involve any plans of hegemony or of political and economic domination of other nations.

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

GRAY

Rome

To On.I
M.I.D
Camerica

FROM

Dated June 1, 1939

Rec'd 4:05 p. m.

Secretary of State, JUN 2 1939

Washington

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JUN 2 1939
File, gnt
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

212, June 1, 7 p. m.

Gayda this evening says that within a few weeks the "vast and ~~en~~ ^{permanent} organization for peace and war" of the "iron alliance" will have been perfected. The mixed Italo-German commissions which are to handle the various questions under the direction of the two foreign ministers are now being appointed and will "quickly and silently" perform their duties. Meanwhile important agreements have been reached between the two air forces in regard to "their productive systems and their European and extra-European duties" while far reaching agreements will shortly be concluded between the respective armies and navies. Definitive agreements have also been concluded or are about to be concluded in the fields of labor, raw materials, foodstuffs, and various branches of production. Simultaneously progress is being made in determining a united political front and joint action in connection with the vital interests of the two Governments in all sectors.

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752.65/620

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

GRAY

Rome

FROM

Dated June 2, 1939

Rec'd 3:45 p. m.

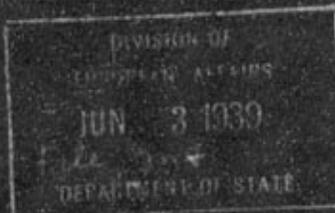
Secretary of State,
Washington.

213, June 2, 7 p. m.

My telegram No. 185, May 10, 7 p. m.

According to summaries published in this afternoon's newspapers the Pope in addressing the College of Cardinals this morning said that his demarche early in May was in general sympathetically received by the Governments concerned. His Holiness has received assurances of good-will and of an intention to maintain the peace which the peoples so greatly desired. No one could be happier than His Holiness to learn of this beginning of a detente or more ardently desirous that it should grow increasingly strong. "Nor will we conceal the fact that other information which we were able to obtain during this demarche regarding the feelings and intentions of influential statesmen gave us greater hope that considerations of noble humanity, consciousness of the inevitable responsibility before God and before history, and upright judgment

of



REB

2-#213, From Rome, June 2, 7p.m.

of the real interests of their peoples would have sufficient vigor and weight to induce the Governments to turn, during their efforts to bring about a stable peace safeguarding the liberty and the honor of the ^{nations} ~~masses~~, to thoughts and action which will serve to attenuate, diminish or overcome the real and psychological obstacles which stand in the way of a sincere and sure agreement. This circumstance has left the way open to us for further solicitations and recommendations."

PHILLIPS

CSB



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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No. 1455

Rome, June 2, 1939.

Subject: Transmitting copy of Interview given by
Virginio Gayda.

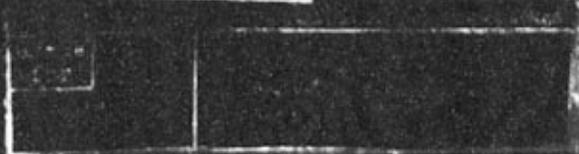
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Handwritten: file
JUN 28 1939
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Handwritten: HWA file

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AT THE
STATE DEPARTMENT

1939 JUN 13 PM 2 54

COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS



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

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
DIVISION
JUN 20 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Handwritten: file
M

Sir:

I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of an interview regarding the international situation with particular reference to Italy's position, which was obtained by the Associated Press from Dr. Virginio Gayda, director and manager of the GIORNALE D'ITALIA, on May 28, 1939.

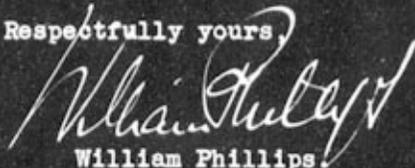
While I realize that the text of this interview has doubtless already been widely published in the newspapers of the United States, I desire especially to bring it to the Department's attention, because I am convinced that the statements made therein by Dr. Gayda very closely reflect

740.00/1717

GMB

flect the views and opinions of the extreme element in the Party, which at present has considerable influence, both with Mussolini and in shaping the policies of the Regime.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William Phillips".

William Phillips.

Enclosure:

Copy of interview.

ELR/ajl

Enclosure No. 1 , despatch No. 1455 dated June 2, 1939, from the American Embassy in Rome.

ROME, May 28 - (AP) - What Italy and Germany, united and ready for action, really want is a sweeping worldwide territorial revision to place them on a basis of economic parity with the wealthy powers, Virginio Gayda, the authoritative Fascist editor, asserted today in an interview.

There can be no hope of peace until they get it, he said.

Gayda, generally regarded as a spokesman for Mussolini and for that reason one of the most widely quoted writers in the world, made it clear that Italy and Germany would not be satisfied merely by winning relatively minor claims such as those on Tunisia and Danzig.

Gayda did not say whether the axis partners would make a formal demand for such revision or how soon they would act to get their demands or in what manner they would go about it.

He said, however, that the signing of the Italo-German military alliance placed the issue squarely up to Britain and France.

And he said ItaloGerman demands for the revision "will dominate the history of Europe in coming months."

This earth, he asserted, has enough for all the peoples who live on it. The British and French empires are bulging with "superfluous" lands, some of them unpopulated and abandoned.

Italy has not enough to live on and division of territories is the only solution of the problem. There need be no war to solve it, but there can be no peace until it is solved.

This is Gayda's view of the world situation today.

Gayda,

Gayda, editor of Rome's leading newspaper, the GIORNALE D'ITALIA, received me at my request in his office in the Sciarra Palace, looking out upon the Corso Umberto, Rome's main business street.

This street, the Via Lata of ancient Rome, is itself rich with memories of events which led to territorial changes in the past.

Roman soldiers under Julius Caesar and other generals once marched through it to the Milvian bridge as they set out on expeditions to Gaul and Britain. Centuries later barbarian hordes poured through it on their way to sack the forum.

Within a moment Gayda, a slim agile man with a quick mind, was talking rapidly about Italy's right to more of the world's wealth.

"With the conclusion of their political and military alliance, Italy and Germany have jointly put the problem of a new European order, founded on a juster division of rights, up to Great Britain and France," he said.

"Italy and Germany demand parity, or the equivalence of the means of independent work and of positions. This is the general problem of repartition of colonies which marks the present historic moment of European history.

"This does not mean the solution of this problem must necessarily bring war. Great Britain and France, with stationary populations have colonial territories vital to them and also superfluous ones. This is so true that many territories capable of great productivity remain unpopulated and abandoned.

"Italy

"Italy and Germany, with growing populations, on the other hand need new territories for their people. The conflict, then, is not between two spheres of vital interests, but between the vital need of Italy and Germany for territories and a regime of superfluous territories of Great Britain and France.

"This is the great general problem which will dominate the history of Europe in coming months.

"The problems of Tunisia, Suez and Djibouti, although important, are minor problems. They concern, among other things, the obligation of France to give Italy the compensation pledged in the London pact of 1915 and unpaid up to now and the obligation of France to recognize the rights of Italian citizens in Tunisia.

"Italy insists that the problems of Tunisia, Djibouti and Suez be solved, but she intends that the more general problem of right to parity, or colonial equivalence, be considered with serious attention."

The claims which Italy has already voiced against France are not directed toward increasing her living standards, but are absolutely necessary to permit Italy, with her teeming and ever-increasing population, to live, Gayda said.

It is this determination to live, and the ultimate goal of obtaining economic parity among nations, that has led Italy into her alliance with Germany, another nation deprived of the means for existence, he said.

I asked Gayda what assurance the rich nations would

have

have that the poor ones, once placed on a basis of parity, would not try to dominate the world.

He dismissed the question with a quick brush of the hand.

"Nations do not go to war for sport," he said. "Only barbarians make war for the fun of it. Once satisfied, the countries now without means to exist will be only too happy to take their place beside those which now roll in riches."

Talk about ending the present world economic crisis by reviving world trade is meaningless, Gayda said, for without adequate resources, Italy has not the money to buy from other countries and no way of getting it.

And the oft-discussed plan of sharing the world's raw materials without territorial revision is likewise impractical, he said.

"It will not solve the problem, because it offers no parity. The nations which control the raw materials would still control those which do not have them," he said.

"It is necessary moreover that the poor countries have the possibility of increasing their production by new natural wealth in order to buy products of other states.

"It is impossible to think of developing a great, free international trade, which is to say an active flow of exchanges, if equivalent economic and financial conditions are not created between countries selling certain products and countries buying them.

"This equivalence can be created only by a just repartition of colonies, which are possessions of natural wealth."

As evidence that the opposing camp fully realizes Italy's crushing poverty of resources, Gayda cited a recent article in an American anti-Fascist publication belittling Italy's chances of winning a war because she had to import steel, petroleum, rubber and other necessary supplies.

"Here in this attack is the very thing we have been saying - that Italy is deprived of the necessities of her national life. In this attack there is also the clearest proof of the necessity for Italy to claim greater economic justice," he said.

Gayda said the struggle between the have-not nations and the have-nations was much like the social struggle within countries.

"But even under the social reforms of Fascism all men have not been placed on a level of absolute economic equality," I said.

"Italy does not ask that in the international field," Gayda replied. "When we ask for parity, we do not mean that England or France give us an equal share of their empires. We ask only enough for our needs. England and France would still have far more than we."

Gayda, bellicose toward the United States in many of his editorials, had some kind words to say for America.

"Americans, living in the great empire which they have within their own home, and which they have built up by conquest, work and ingenuity, are so far away from Europe that they do not understand European matters, so far away from

Italy

Italy that they do not understand her problems," he said.

"If more of them could only come here and see Italy! If they could only understand that Italy wants only an opportunity to live without sending thousands of her citizens away to other countries, wants only to work in peace and freedom. Americans say we are aggressors. If this be aggression, we are."

Once the rich nations decide to share the wealth which they possess and do not need, the world can march forward to a prosperous future, Gayda said, unworried by fear of war.

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

CA

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

FROM

ROME

Dated August 17, 1939

Rec'd 6:30 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

316, August 17, 6 p.m.

My No. 315, August 17, 11 a.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Ciano had an informal talk at the beach yesterday with Soviet Charge d'Affaires whom he had promised to see upon his return from Salzburg. He intimated that he was taking this informal opportunity to fulfill his promise as he was refusing for the moment to see other chiefs of mission because he "could not tell the truth" about the Salzburg meeting and "would not lie". He could, however, tell Helfand the following. He had left for Salzburg in an optimistic frame of mind and had returned pessimistic. In his conversations with Ribbentrop they had reviewed the international scene in general but during his two talks with Hitler latter had harped upon Danzig theme to exclusion of everything else. Hitler had been emphatic that Danzig question must be solved in very near future and gave the impression that he considered his prestige and that of the regime involved.



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CONFIDENTIAL FILE

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--2--316 from Rome..

involved in the matter. To Ciano's surprise Hitler repeated to him in all seriousness the "Polish atrocity" stories that have been flooding the German press. Besides the two formal meetings, Ciano went for a long walk with Hitler when as before Danzig was the main topic of conversation. As a result Ciano felt that unless direct conversations were opened between Germany and Poland seeking a solution compatible with dignity and prestige of both parties Hitler was likely to attempt a coup. Ciano thought that this could be accomplished without war in such a manner as to leave Poland faced with making the decision to attack Germany--a risk which Poland would not take. Furthermore Ciano said that Ribbentrop was keeping almost as much to himself these days as Hitler and he could not imagine how former kept himself in touch with reactions of other countries. Soviet Charge is under impression that Ciano is considerably disquieted by his Salzburg experience and finds himself in an embarrassing position at the moment.

Ciano remarked to Charge that he would make an exception in my case as well since he had also promised to receive me on his return from Salzburg. Ciano informed me today that he would communicate with me tomorrow. He leaves for Albania on Saturday. Although no more precise information is obtainable

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--3--316 from Rome..

obtainable here as yet with regard to the Salzburg meeting
Ciano's very definite determination to avoid receiving
chiefs of mission confirms my belief that Europe is now
approaching a very critical situation.

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GRAY

Rome

Dated August 22, 1939

Rec'd 4:45 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

321, August 22, 7 p. m.

My No. 320, August 22, 3 p. m.

Editorials in all afternoon newspapers emphasize the idea that the proposed German-Soviet non-aggression pact is a mortal blow to the policy of "encirclement", a victory for the axis and a reversal in the balance of power. At the same time the gravity of prospects for the peace of Europe and especially for Poland is reflected.

Regarding Poland it is intimated that the "die is cast" with respect to Danzig and that it will go hard with Poland as a result. Poland is pictured as having no choice but immediate surrender to Germany's "just demands", and it is stated that there are only a few hours left for her to decide at last upon "elementary prudence". All newspapers indicate that if the German-Russian negotiations had come as a surprise to England and France they had caused no astonishment in Italy. Ceyda in almost complimentary vein remarks that Russia has merely refused to

"betray

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2-#321, From Rome, Aug. 22, 7p.m.

"betray her own interests" and that only the blindness of French and English "bankers and capitalists" could have counted upon Russian subservience to the interests or on inertia by the axis powers in the face of attempts to encircle them. Russia according to Gayda had recovered "realism and a national feeling in her foreign policy". Continuing, Gayda finds that the proposed German Russian treaty fits in with the policy of Italy which had been "the first great power to resume normal relations with Russia in 1924". Ideological points of view are not involved in Italy's opinion since she regards the question of internal regime as "entirely extraneous to international relations".

Other commentators in one way or another bring forth the idea that after all Russia is a totalitarian regime and a country that is "moving" compared with the democracies.

PHILLIPS

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
AUG 24 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

C.T.

GRAT

ROMB

FROM

Dated August 24, 1939

Rec'd 7:28 a.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

326, August 24.

This morning's press is characterized by: (one) unequivocal indication that war may now be a question only of hours; (two) a final appeal for peace and an expression of Italian calm and self-control, explicit in certain editorials and implicit in the equal division of front page space between the Russo-German pact and the Fascist calendar of events for the Fascist year beginning next October 28.

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AUG 23 1939

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

44

NO. _____ ROME
This telegram must be _____
closely paraphrased _____
before being communicated _____
to anyone. (B)

Dated August 24, 1939

Rec'd 12:10 p.m.

DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AUG 26 1939

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
AUG 24 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State

Washington

329, August 24, 5 p.m.

By Number 323, August 23, 11 a.m.

The atmosphere at the Foreign Office today is one of gloomy apprehension. They are apparently expecting the worst to happen although hoping for a miracle. Among other precautionary measures adopted are the following:
Italian merchant vessels due to sail today, including the CONTE DE SAVOIA at Genoa and the SATURNIA at Trieste, each with several hundred Americans aboard are being held in port. Notice is being served on private owners that they should be prepared to have their automobiles commandeered. Small motorboats of all kinds have been taken over by the Ministry of Marine. Stocks of gasoline are being requisitioned. There are persistent rumors regarding preparations for troop concentration at Bari. The afternoon press announces that the Duce conferred this morning with the Chiefs of Staff of the armed services.

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FILED
AUG 24 1939

ADVISED ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
SEP 1 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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MA 1-1534
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br and SC)

Rome
Dated August 31, 1939
Rec'd 10:48 a.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

350, August 31, 1 p.m.

The French Ambassador has just informed me that after various efforts on his part to be received by Ciano he was finally received this morning. Ciano informed him that the situation was exceedingly grave and that the only hope of preventing a catastrophe would be for the immediate recognition by France and England of the inclusion of Danzig within the Reich. The Ambassador is telephoning this communication to Paris.

The gravity of the situation which is probably now fully understood by the Italian people, the intensity of their feelings against participation in a war in partnership with Germany and various little signs, such as the reported resignation of Badoglio which, however, has not been confirmed or denied, and other rumors which are yet too uncertain to be reported lead me to feel that at end a situation is developing within Italy itself which might have important internal repercussions.

7-2206 ✓

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[Handwritten signature]

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM Rome
Dated September 1, 1939
Rec'd 7:25 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

355, September 1, 11 a.m.

CONFIDENTIAL.

I am informed that yesterday the Italian Government made another effort to avoid disaster. During the morning Ciano proposed to the British Ambassador the calling of a conference of various European powers including Poland to consider all the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles which are the cause of existing European friction. This suggestion was transmitted to London and through London to Paris. I learn from the British Embassy that no official reply has yet been given. Daladier is understood to have told Phipps that he personally is strongly opposed to such a conference.

PHILLIPS

CSB

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CH/HC

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

ROME

FROM Dated September 2, 1939

Rec'd 9:50 a.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

3:22, September 2, noon

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

My telegram No. 355 September 1, 11 a.m.

The British Ambassador yesterday delivered his Government's reply to Ciano's proposal for a conference which was to the effect that his suggestion was much appreciated by the British Government but that in view of Germany's action against Poland there seems to be nothing to be gained by holding such a conference.

I learn that on Thursday evening Ciano told Lorraine in great earnestness that Italy did not want to go to war with Great Britain and France. He made a similar declaration although in less emphatic terms to the French Ambassador yesterday afternoon.

It is my personal conviction that the Italian Government will try very hard to keep out of war as

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740.0011-EUROPEAN WAR, 1939/53

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G/HC

-2- #362, September 2, noon, from Rome

long as possible, even in the event of British and French intervention against Germany and it seems not unlikely that Mussolini is looking to France and Great Britain to help him find a way out.

The British Embassy here seems very hopeful that Italy will remain neutral. Repeated to Paris, London.

PHILLIPS

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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MJD

1-1335

FROM Rome

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

Dated September 3, 1939.

Rec'd. 4:51 p. m.



Secretary of State,
Washington.

366, September 3, 6 p. m. (SECTION ONE)

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

My telegram No. 362, September 2, noon.

While both British and French Ambassadors have received Ciano's assurances that the Italian Government does not wish to go to war with either of their countries, the situation here is nevertheless very delicate. As indicative of Ciano's anxiety to prevent any such danger, he has begged the French Ambassador to do his utmost to keep the French press from attacks on Italy and from saying anything which might annoy the authorities here. Lorraine feels that Ciano himself has undergone a change in his former pro-German attitude and it may well be that the tragic development of the last few days have shocked and disturbed him as they have the whole of Italy. Perhaps we should not expect any official change in the Italian position, as already announced until the respective positions among the belligerents is more clearly defined.

740.001 EUROPEAN WAR, 1939/91

Confidential File
GHC

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MJD -2- No. 366, September 3, 6 p. m. (SECTION ONE)
from Rome

defined. But I have the impression that Italian public opinion, so hostile to war, is having a decided influence on the government's present and future attitude and this perhaps for the first time in years.

(END SECTION ONE)

PHILLIPS

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MJD

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

This telegram must be _____ Dated September 3, 1939.
closely paraphrased
before being communicated FROM Rec'd. 4:21 p. m.
to anyone. (S-C)

Secretary of State,
Washington.

266, September 3, 6 p. m. (SECTION T/C).

It is too early to guess from this angle the steps which the British and French may take to preserve Italy's neutrality. The question of blockade is uppermost in Lorraine's thoughts and he has confessed to me that in his opinion any move of the Allied Powers, such as a blockade in the Mediterranean which would result in the stopping and examination of Italian vessels, might swing Italian sentiment in the wrong direction. He argues that Italy and other Mediterranean countries have few supplies to give Germany and that few countries outside would be willing to do so, except on a cash basis, impossible for Italy. Nothing should be done, says Lorraine, to antagonize Italy but on the contrary, everything should be done to take advantage of the present attitude of the public and of Ciano's apparent revulsion of feeling against Germany in the hope that gradually Italy may be drawn into closer relations with the Allied Governments.

(END OF MESSAGE)

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THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

~~PK~~
~~PAID~~
PAU
H. H. H.

No. 1575

AMERICAN EMBASSY
ROME, October 5, 1939.

Subject: Count Ciano's Visit to Berlin:
September 30 and October 1, 1939.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
OCT 16 1939
MR. BERLE

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762.65/758

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

With reference to my telegram No. 438 of October 4, 6 p.m., I have the honor to report that the sudden departure of Count Ciano for Berlin at six p.m. on October 1, and the brevity of his visit which lasted but eighteen hours, has formed the chief subject of comment in all circles in Rome.

At the time of this writing it has not been possible to gather authentic information as to the reasons which dictated this dramatic move. All that is officially known is that the Italian Cabinet has met under Mussolini's chairmanship and that the results of Ciano's conversations were discussed there.

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GRU

The following may throw some light upon the background of Ciano's visit. I am reliably informed that in the early afternoon of September 30, Hitler spoke to Mussolini on the telephone, urging him to come himself to Berlin forthwith. The Duce demurred but agreed to send the Foreign Minister instead. Accordingly, Ciano left three or four hours after the telephone conversation.

The fact that Mussolini refused to lend the prestige of his presence in Berlin to the German "peace offensive," and that Ciano's visit to the German capital lasted an extraordinarily short space of time, has led shrewd observers to conclude that the Italian Government has not been willing to associate itself irrevocably with whatever moves the German Government may be preparing. It is to be supposed that the German Government had wished Italy to act as a spearhead in the effort to maneuver France and Britain into a position of having to seem to refuse peace, which as I see it is the chief aim of German policy at the present moment. Germany, having achieved her military objectives, obviously would welcome a cessation of hostilities and the inauguration of negotiations for the revision of the Treaty of Versailles. Relying on Italian cooperation, the Germans apparently sought to make Italy act the part of "honest broker" - in Germany's interests. This function, it is believed, Italy, through Count Ciano, has refused to perform. Such belief is strengthened by Count Ciano's remark to me, reported in the telegram under reference, that Italy's present position would be "maintained indefinitely." This goes far to confirm the feeling that Mussolini has made it plain to Hitler that Italy intends to make its own decisions and

will

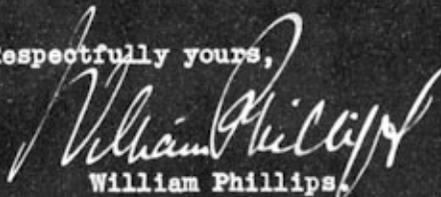
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will resist any effort to draw her into the present conflict, actively or passively.

In this connection there is nothing to prove that Hitler asked for Italy's military as well as diplomatic assistance at this juncture. When Ciano told me that the German Government fully understood Italy's attitude, he confirmed my feeling that the Germans must recognize that Italy is not equipped to make war against a major power and that it would be futile to demand it of her at the present time. By remaining neutral Italy covers a large part of Germany's southern frontier, thereby rendering a military service of much importance.

An interesting and instructive comparison can be drawn between the evolution of Italian policy during the last months of 1914 and Italian policy since the Salzburg meeting in August, 1939. In this connection, the policy of the United States is being watched with keenest attention, since a practical demonstration that we were sympathetic to the Allied cause would profoundly influence the Italian attitude towards Germany.

Respectfully yours,



William Phillips

EL

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

ROME

Dated December 18, 1939

Rec'd 4:35 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

562, December 18, 7 p.m.

By No. 561, December 18, 9 p.m.

Italian newspapers yesterday and today continued to
feature Ciano's speech and the alleged vast repercussions
thereof in the international press. Editorial comment so
far has limited itself to largely amplifying the text of the
speech itself. Yesterday's *OTTOBRE DELLA SERA*, however,
underlined these passages relating to the lack of foresight
of the democracies with regard to the symptoms leading up
to the present conflict and particularly stressed the fact
that in complete accordance with Germany's understanding
Italy was never obliged to come automatically to Germany's
assistance at the outbreak of war.

With regard to the foregoing it is of interest to note
that in the speech itself, speaking of the preliminary Milan
conversations of May last which led up to the signing of the
military alliance Ciano stated that the two countries concern-
ed had indeed upon a period of grace in order to "perfect"

the

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM

ROME

Dated March 13, 1940

Rec'd 9:13 a.m.



Secretary of State,

Washington.

177, March 13, 1940.

I tel. Ciano this morning that the visit of von Ribbentrop had naturally been followed with much interest in the United States and that accordingly I would appreciate any information he could give me on this subject. He replied that the conversations were in accordance with the collaboration between the two countries as provided in the September agreements, the reestablishment of contacts between the leaders. Many subjects of mutual interest in relation to the war and to Germany's plans had been touched upon but no pressure had been brought to bear upon Italy. Ciano reminded me of Mussolini's general attitude of sympathy with Germany. I said that it had seemed to me likely that von Ribbentrop would refer to the relations of Italy and the Soviet Government with a view to possibly persuading Italy to adopt a more favorable and even conciliatory attitude towards Moscow. Von Ribbentrop had in fact touched upon this subject, replied Ciano, and had expressed the opinion that Germany would

view

762.65/817

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267-15

57-100

3-2-47, 1 p.m., from Rome.

view with great satisfaction a closer collaboration
between Moscow and Rome. (END SECTION ONE)

SECRET

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAR 13 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DR
ST

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

FROM

Rome

Dated March 13, 1940

Rec'd 11 a. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

177, March 13, 1 p. m. (SECTION TWO).

Ciano emphasized to me however that there would be no change in Italy's policy in this respect and he used again an expression which he had used in conversation with me some time ago that "Italy would not take the initiative" in her relations with Moscow. He added that he had always stated with clearness his attitude towards Communism and with regard to Italy's relations to the Soviets. Ciano then referred to his speech before Parliament on December 16, 1939, in which he had defined Italy's international relations. He said that there were no new developments emanating from the conversations with Ribbentrop. There had been merely a re-defining of positions and intentions in accordance with the general understanding of the relations between the two Governments. It had been made clear he said that Italy would not alter her position of non-belligerency which he said was in fact a "position of neutrality". (END MESSAGE).

PHILLIPS

CSB

F.W. 762.65/817

GRR

COLLECTION

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

SR - E
PFD

MP
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be **FROM**
fore being communicated
to anyone. (br)

Rome
Dated April 9, 1940
Rec'd 2:45 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington

APR 10 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Seen by Mid

245, April 9, 5 p. m.

My No. 220, March 29, 6 p.

RB
J. H. S.

The increasingly pro-German trend of the regime
as evidenced in the press since the Brenner meeting
between Hitler and Mussolini continues and it is
evident that the average Italian is becoming more and
more preoccupied as to the possibility of Italy being
drawn into the war on the side of Germany. It is a
preoccupation that not only displeases him but frightens
him as well. In various Italian newspaper offices
there is open talk to the effect that Mussolini is
preparing the nation to take some active step in the
near future and that that step will not favor the
allies.

In the meantime, military preparedness along all
lines continues to be the dominant theme of the press
while the Duce's recent public pronouncements have
become more forceful than at any time since the early
part of last summer. On April 7 at Orvieto he stated

762.65/358

FP

APR 1 1940

RECEIVED

703-65
350-112

MP -3- 245, April 9, 5 p. m., From Rome

that whatever spring developments might bring Italy she would hold her own against them while on Saturday inspecting an antiaircraft military school at Nettunia he harangued his listeners in particularly vigorous terms to be ever vigilant against air attack.

CONFIDENTIAL. These various manifestations in my opinion do not mean that Italy is preparing for a military move in the near future but is evidently the Duce's policy to keep Europe and the Italian public more than ever guessing as to his intentions.

(End Section One)

PHILLIPS

PEG

34
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM

PAID

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

Rome

Dated April 9, 1940

Rec'd 2:39 p. m.

Secretary of State, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Seen 4/10

Washington

245, April 9, 5 p. m., (Section 510)

222
751.65

The French Ambassador who has just returned from
Paris informed me this morning that his Government
has decided to adopt in the future a stiffer attitude
towards Italy and will maintain a far closer watch
on Italian shipping in the Mediterranean. His Govern-
ment he said are of the opinion that the Italians
have been taking advantage of the present situation
and of the tolerant attitude of the Allied Governments
to the detriment of the Allies. (End Message)

PHILLIPS

HFD

762-66/358

FP

AV

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JT
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased ~~and~~
fore being communicated
to anyone. (SO)

ROME

Dated April 23, 1940

FROM

Rec'd 3:25 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

285, April 23, 6 p.m.

File 25	DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
APR 24 1940	
DEPARTMENT OF STATE	

As Department will recollect, Ciano assured me yesterday there was no change in Italy's position and that all rumors regarding moves under consideration were unfounded. He has given similar assurances to British Charge today. Certainly the attitude of the public is calmer. Whereas last week many well informed Italians were fearful that the fateful decision was about to be made, today there is far less openly expressed anxiety. Rumors are to effect that strong representations were made to Mussolini from many different sources and that he decided the moment was not ripe for any military adventure.

(END SECTION ONE)

PHILLIPS

71001 EUROPEAN WAR 1939

6453

Confidential File

EU

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM ROME
Dated April 23, 1940
Rec'd 5:35 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

285, April 23, 6 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

Ciano's assurances to me however concern present and not
future and in my opinion we shall have further periods
of greatly increased anxiety. It seems likely that
Mussolini will await outcome of struggle in Scandinavia
before reaching any final decision. But there is always
danger he will act prematurely in the belief that
Germans have won and before there has been any real
decision between contending forces. There are signs
that he is becoming impatient.

Consequently I am not really convinced by Ciano's
assurances except as they apply to present situation.

(END OF MESSAGE)

PHILLIPS

JRE

JR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM

Dated May 10, 1940

Rec'd 3:08 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

328, May 10, 5 p.m.



In addition to Ciano's assurances contained in my No. 324, May 10, 11 a.m., there is no evidence today of any unusual activities of increased precautionary measures.

I have just had a helpful talk with Marshal Caviglia who assures me that all the marshals of Italy, the army and the public are against participation in the war. He added, however, that the Navy is pro-German and regards the British Navy as its natural rival in the Mediterranean. It is Caviglia's opinion that Italy cannot and will not enter the war and he quoted Marshal de Bono as expressing a similar view after a recent call upon Mussolini. At the same time Caviglia foresees the danger that with the Belgian and Dutch ports closed Germany may attempt to make use of Italian ports and that such a move might force the Allies to bring pressure on this country.

I understand that highly trained specialists in the reserves, who would normally be the first to be mobilized

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CONFIDENTIAL
GMR
Pip

-2- #328, May 10, 5 p.m., from Rome.

mobilized were an aggressive step in contemplation, have not been called up and that some reserve officers who were called three weeks ago returned to their homes last week.

PHILLIPS

PHC

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM

To: Secretary of State, Washington
 From: Rome
 Dated: May 14, 1940, noon.
 Rec'd: 9:02 a.m.
 No. 341

The Foreign Minister said to me this morning when I handed him the note concerning the motion picture negotiations (see Department's telegram of May 9, no.109) that, while he would hand it to his experts he could not promise to give it much consideration as the situation was so serious. In reply I stated that the effect on Italo-American trade of a total push-down on the conversations relating to films would be most unfortunate and emphasized our wish to better trade relations between the two countries.

I then asked the Minister if he would not speak frankly to me as I sensed at once something more grave was impending.

Ciano replied that there were now only ten chances out of one hundred that Italy would remain out of the war whereas when we had talked a week ago they were about fifty-fifty. Although Ciano could not tell me when Italy would participate I gained the clear impression that it would be very soon. When I spoke of my responsibility with respect to Americans in Italy he gave no indication, as he had previously done, that there was no need to warn them to leave. In fact he said nothing and I now believe that I should take action along this line. I shall endeavor to accomplish this with

F 44 • 740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 2920

GHR

as little publicity as possible, although I understand that for the next few days all reservations on American ships are taken.

The Minister said that the Duce had decided with respect to Italy's participation, that German victories in the Netherlands and Belgium were complete according to information obtained today and that information from Hitler concerning his campaign progress had always been accurate. As evidence that only a small group were opposed to Italian entry into the war, which was favored by a majority in Italy, Ciano referred to the belligerent manifestations which were going on in the country. Ciano then insisted that there was still a slight chance that Italy might continue as a non-belligerent and said he did not know when she would come into the war. On the other hand his manner indicated that an early state of war was moving on rapidly. When I said that for the first time I was completely depressed on leaving him he offered no reply except to express the hope that I continue to keep in close touch with him as long as he should continue Foreign Minister.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM ROME

Dated May 21, 1940

Rec'd 4:32 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

Secret

392, May 21, 5 p.m.

SECRET.

A colleague whose name I am not permitted to reveal but who has exceptional access to Ciano has reported to me in the utmost confidence the substance of his conversation with the Minister on Saturday last. It is as follows:

The decision has been reached to enter the war and Mussolini and the General Staff are of the opinion that the opportune moment will come during the second half of June. However, it might be earlier or later. Italy's efforts will be conducted by sea and by air and will be directed against Malta, Corsica and Biserta. Mobilization of the army can be completed immediately thereafter. It is possible but not probable that Italy will become involved with Switzerland. No movement is contemplated against Yugoslavia or the Balkans inasmuch as the supplies to Germany and Italy from those countries must not be disturbed. Nothing that the British or French can do such as lightening the blockade

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740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939/2855 2/28

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Confidential File

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-2- #392, May 21, 5 p.m., from Rome

blockade by new control measures or any appeal by President Roosevelt can alter the decision. In fact a certain irritation was expressed with regard to the President's "interference".

I cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of the foregoing but undoubtedly it represents the views of the Foreign Minister expressed on last Saturday in the utmost confidence to a friend.

PHILLIPS

JRL:NK

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

AC

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

Rome

Dated May 23, 1940

Rec'd 5:18 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

402, May 23, 6 p.m.

FOR WELLES.

Your letter May 4.

I do not think that there is anything to be done
now which could be helpful. Everything points to the
fact that the decision has been made to enter the war
at an early date and I believe that any further step on
our part would only be resented and could accomplish
nothing.

PHILLIPS

HPD

Secret

740.0011 E.W.
740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 2855 4 / 28

PS/CH
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2855-28

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM Rome

Dated May 28, 1940

Rec'd 10:50 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

RUSH

426, May 28, 2 p.m.

PERSONAL FOR WELLES FROM KIRK.

"I came down here hurriedly for the sole purpose
of telephoning you to say that there was something very
much on my mind which I wanted to discuss in Washington
and to ask if you thought I could come. If so I propose
to try to arrange from here for passage on the first
Clipper flight from Lisbon as no such arrangement can be
made speedily in Berlin. I now find that connections
from here are so doubtful that I probably could not
reach Washington for a week or more and furthermore that
as events seem to be moving so rapidly whatever use
there might be in my suggestions would be negative if
I should want to present them in person.

(END SECTION ONE)

PHILLIPS

HPD

Secret

*Reply
5-29-40
O.C.W.M.W.*

*740.0011 E.W.
note
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140.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939/2855

7/28 PS/CH
Confidential File

2855 7/28

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM Rome

Dated May 28, 1940

Rec'd 10:08 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

RUSH

426, May 28, 2 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

I therefore feel I must give you by cable an indi-
cation of the matter in mind although I mistrust this
form of communication and realize that any such outline
is probably worse than none at all. The point is that
I am convinced that a continuation of the progress
marked during the past two weeks by the German arms will
destroy the kind of world which is essential to the
existence of our national life and that consequently the
fight is already our own. We are now being largely dis-
counted as a factor in this fight because it is expected
that it will be over before we are effectively a part of
it and it is certain that great care will be taken by
Germany to keep us out. (END SECTION TWO)

PHILLIPS

HTM

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

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

FROM Rome
Dated May 23, 1940
Rec'd 1:48 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

RUSH.

423, May 28, 2 p.m. (SECTION THREE)

It may not be the moment to speak of the element of morale but our immediate entrance into the war could not help but affect profoundly both sides and furthermore, without any certain knowledge I am told that we could fly over immediately several hundred planes and ship many more within the space of a week. My proposal therefore is that we make up our minds to enter the war immediately. Before doing so, however, we should submit at once a general plan for a peace that would take into consideration not only the preservation of those values and interests essential to the integrity of the countries at war with Germany but also the fact that a strong and reasonably satisfied German people is essential for lasting peace and order. In brief it must be a peace which both sides could (begin underline) justifiably (end underline) accept.

HPD

PHILLIPS

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

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

FROM

ROME

Dated May 28, 1940

Rec'd 1:37 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

RUSH

426, May 28, 2 p. m. (SECTION FOUR)

If Germany refuses we declare war and take such active part in it immediately as we can without jeopardizing the actual defense of our country. The other American Republics should follow.

I realize fully how this must sound and how many considerations it ignores, but I am not leading from hysteria. I am convinced that if Germany wins a quick war and dictates a peace there will be no place for us in the kind of world that will follow. If, on the other hand, Germany is eventually beaten by its present opponents it will be at the end of such a war that not only may a just peace be precluded but the social and political system on which our own life is based may be overthrown by general revolution. My plan, therefore, is to attempt to inject some sanity into the present madness and if we fail in that we shall then throw on our weight in order to turn the scales at the moment when
a quick

REB -2- #426, From Rome, May 28, 2 p. m. (SECTION FOUR)

a quick victory may be essential to Germany. In so doing we shall only be taking part in a fight which in the last analysis must be ours if we are to preserve our own existence.

Would it be of the least use for me to come over to demonstrate in person my conviction in what I say? If possible, or advisable please just flash me an indication in care of the Embassy at Rome but if I hear nothing by day after tomorrow I shall return to Berlin."

(END MESSAGE)

PHILLIPS

HPD

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM

Rome

Dated May 29, 1940

Rec'd 12:48 p. m.

Secret

Secretary of State,
Washington.

429, May 29, 4 p. m.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Ciano stated yesterday on the golf course to an
Italian friend that "things would happen" between
June 10 and 15.

PHILLIPS

HTM

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740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939/2855 10/28
Confidential File

2855 10/28

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

ROME

Dated May 31, 1940

Rec'd 10 a.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

Secret

RUSH

437, May 31, 2 p.m.

140-211 E.W.

Ciano received me at one o'clock and I communi-
cated to him orally the President's message to the
Chief of Government contained in the Department's
154, May 30, 6 p.m. He went over it carefully and
took penciled notes of its contents. He then informed
me that he would probably be unable to see Mussolini
until this evening and would either late this even-
ing or tomorrow morning communicate to me
Mussolini's reply. He gave as his opinion, however,
that all the points which the President has raised in
his message have already been given careful considera-
tion by Mussolini. The Chief of Government had taken
his decision to enter the war and it was now only a
question of a short time - a matter of days - when
this step would be taken.

I said that I hoped he fully realized the profound
change

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-2-#437, May 31, 2 p.m. from Rome

change which would occur in the attitude of the American public towards Italy as soon as this country entered the war, to which he replied that this fact had also been taken into consideration and that everything would be done so far as possible to avoid injury to American interests.

PHILLIPS

KLP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

Rome

FROM Dated June 7, 1940

Rec'd 9:55 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

RUSH.

480, June 7, 2 a.m.

During my interview with Ciano this morning I
asked ^{for} further enlightenment with regard to the approximate
time that Italy would enter the war. He replied that this
would happen "in a few days, certainly during next week."
He told me that he himself would join his regiment but that
he would be stationed not far from Rome and he planned
to return to Rome twice during each week. Meanwhile
Anfuso would be in charge of the Foreign Office.

PHILLIPS

HTM

Secret

740.0011 E.W.

740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939/2855 20/28 PS/CH

Confidential File

2855 ²⁸/₂₈

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM

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

Rome

Dated June 24, 1940

Rec'd 1:22 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

Secret

618, June 24, 3 p.m.

740011 EW

SECRET. A report has just come to me which though
unconfirmed emanates from sources which I cannot ignore to
the effect that Italy has sent, and is sending troops
to Spain and that Spain will declare war on Great
Britain on Thursday the 27th. The purpose of this
movement is apparently to capture Gibraltar.

PHILLIPS

TFV

740011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939/2855 25/28 PS/CH
Confidential #116

2855 26

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RAW

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

FROM

Rome

Dated June 25, 1940.

Rec'd. 1:15 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

630, June 25, 3 p.m.

CONFIDENTIAL.

My 618, June 24, 3 p.m.

The Spanish Naval Attache has this morning denied categorically to Captain Kinkaid any personal knowledge of Spain's intention of declaring war on Thursday. At the same time Kinkaid received the distinct impression that the Naval Attache thought that Spain would eventually enter the war. Furthermore the Naval Attache did not deny or admit that Italian troops were being sent to Spain.

PHILLIPS

Secret

740.0011 S.W.
740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 2855 26/28
Confidential PHIP
PS/OH

HTM

2855 ²⁶/₂₈

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

Rome

Dated August 1, 1940

Rec'd 10:50 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

Secret

777, August 1, 11 a.m.

I am reliably informed that important officials of
the German Embassy here have declared on several occasions
that Roosevelt's defeat is of vital importance to Germany;
that the German Government has authentic information of an
undertaking by the President to bring the United States
into the war after the elections and that Germany will
therefore spare neither money nor effort to prevent his
reelection.

REED

PEG

740,001 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 2855 27 / 28 PS / CH

Confidential File

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note
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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

seen by MID
DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
SEP 21 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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

FROM ROME

Dated September 20, 1940

Rec'd 2:25 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
SEP 24 1940
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

897, September 20, 4 p. m.

My No. 894, September 19, 6 p. m.

Certain of my colleagues express the opinion that the principal object of von Ribbentrop's visit is to discuss the situation arising out of Russia's attitude toward recent developments in southeastern Europe. To support this view they cite the Soviet Government's reservations regarding the creation of new Danube Commission without consulting that Government and refer to persistent but unconfirmed reports that the Soviet Government has formally notified the German Government that it does not recognize the transfer to Hungary of Transylvanian territory.

The Greek Minister seems convinced that no Italian move against Greece or Yugoslavia is up for discussion at present as he has information which he considers conclusive that the German Government has put its foot down on any action by Italy which would cause

disturbances

762.65/936

FILED
SEP 25 1940

GRR

REB C-#897, From Rome, Sept. 20, 4 p. m.

disturbances in the Balkans. He admits, however, that the Italians are continuing to strengthen their forces in Albania and believes that they are thus making preparations to strike at Greece and possibly Yugoslavia when a suitable opportunity offers. Such an opportunity might occur should Italy's offensive succeed against Egypt and the British fleet be driven from the eastern Mediterranean. Italy would then be a more equal partner in the Axis, especially if, in the meantime, Germany should fail to crush Great Britain.

This is an interesting theory which, in my opinion, finds some support in the feeling which is now perceptible here that Italy is fighting a parallel war of her own in the Mediterranean and that her continued association with Germany is of increasing importance to the latter.

Repeated to Berlin.

REED

TFV



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 RECEIVED
 MAY 11 1941
 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

EMBASSY OF THE
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 RECEIVED
 DIVISION OF
 RECORDS AND RECORDS

Rome, April 28, 1941.

June 8, 1941

Dear Mr. Secretary,

As you know, the President has asked me to write personal letters to him from time to time, which of course I am glad to do. Today I have written him a gossip sort of document, which, however, contains one suggestion which may or may not be of value. At any rate, I want to give it to you for what it is worth.

Cut off, as we are, from American news and steeped in information emanating from German sources, it is very difficult to gauge the actual situation that is developing between Germany and the United States. If we are getting close to a break, we shall have to consider the probability of a simultaneous break in our relations with Italy. For although war with us would be intensely unpopular in the minds of the Italian people, the order from Berlin to sever relations would probably dispose of the matter.

In these circumstances, and before any such ultimatum from Berlin to the Italian Government, would it be worthwhile to put before this Government our position vis-à-vis Germany, and at the same time something to the effect that

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

711.65/148

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AUG 19 1941

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the Italian people may count upon our sympathetic understanding of their problems after the war is ended. Would it be wise to instruct me to tell the Italian Government at the appropriate moment that we are not the enemies of the Italian people and that it is only their bondage to Hitler that separates us for the time being? For purposes of record, I should like to have something to indicate that we have in mind the approach to Italy's problems after the war in a spirit of fair-mindedness and justice. The moment for such a communication has certainly not as yet come.

You will recollect that towards the end of August 1939 the French Ambassador was instructed to inform the Italian Government that all the problems between France and Italy could easily be disposed of to the satisfaction of both countries. This assurance was, I understand, repeated at a later date, but, determined upon going to war, Mussolini replied that the offer from the French Government came too late.

Of course I do not know what our military strategy would be; possibly, inasmuch as Italy is the weak link in Germany's armor, war upon Italy would be a military necessity, in which case my suggestion is worthless. On the

other hand, in view of the popular trends in Italy away from Germany and the intense dislike of German domination, it might be worth the effort to preserve our relations with this country, or at least put ourselves on record to that effect.

For the moment, the spirits of the Italians have risen somewhat, not so much because they are rejoicing in the British defeat but rather that they have made up their minds that the war will soon be over and that they can once more return to normalcy. It will be a rude shock to them, I fear, when they come to the full realization that the war is not ending soon.

With all good wishes,

Very sincerely yours,

William Phillips

RS

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Rome

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

Dated May 13, 1941

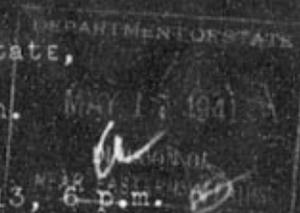
Rec'd 5 p.m.

FROM

Secretary of State,

Washington.

691, May 13, 6 p.m.



From highly confidential source but one which has up till now proved reliable, I have just received following information:

German Government has already asked Turkish and Syrian Governments to grant permission for passage of German troops and supplies through their respective territories. Request for passage of troops was refused but that with regard to transportation of supplies would be granted. Accordingly, Germans have decided to move against Russia in order to obtain control of Ukraine and this will be undertaken from two different directions in a pincer movement--(one) through Russia itself and (two) from direction of Turkey. It is said this campaign will probably begin in about two weeks.

It is said further Germans have abandoned pincer movement against Suez through Egypt and instead will eventually move against Suez from the north.

PHILLIPS

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MAY 21 1941

Confidential File

PS /FLR

FD

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

KD

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

_____ Rome

Dated June 7, 1941
FROM

Rec'd. 4 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

796, June 7, 4 p. m.

My 778, June 4, noon.

79162

Bardossy is quoted by a friend as saying during his recent visit to Rome that war between Russia and Germany was possible although he himself was of the opinion that Moscow would yield at the last moment knowing that Germany would impose her demands by force if necessary. He added that it would be difficult, however, for Stalin to agree to the extensive German demands which envisaged German control of the Ukraine and the oil wells and also the Russian heavy industries concentrated in the south. (SEE also my 794, June 7, 2 p. m.)

JUN 7 1941

RECEIVED

STATE DEPT.

JUN 7 1941

JUN 7 1941

PHILLIPS.

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740.0011 EUROPEAN WAR 1939 / 11771

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JUN 13 1941

Confidential File

MEV

PLAIN

Rome

Dated December 11, 1941

Rec'd 12:33 p.m., 12th

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1941, Eleventh.

The following is a careful translation of the
Duce's speech as published in today's GIORNALE D'ITALIA

"This is another day of solemn decisions in the
history of Italy and of memorable events destined to
imprint a new course on the history of the continents.

Powers of the steel pact, Fascist Italy and Na-
tional Socialist Germany, ever more closely united,
today enter the lists by the side of heroic Japan
against the United States of America.

The Tripartite Pact becomes a military alliance
that aligns around its flags 250 million men resolved
to stop at nothing in order to win. Neither the Axis
nor Japan wanted the extension of the conflict: one
man, one man only, an authentic and democratic despot,
through an endless series of provocations, deceiving
through supreme fraud even the populations of his own
country, wanted war and prepared it day by day with
diabolic

-2- #1941, December 11, from Rome

diabolic pertinacity.

The formidable blows that have already been dealt on the boundless spaces of the Pacific show the metal of which the soldiers of the Rising Sun are made. I say and you feel that it is a privilege to fight with them.

Today the Tripartite Pact, in the fullness of its moral and material resources, is a powerful instrument for war and the sure guarantee of victory. Tomorrow it will be the artificer and organizer of just peace among the peoples.

Italians, men and women: Rise to your feet once more. Be worthy of this great hour. We shall win!"

WADSWORTH

HSM