

PSF

A.J. D. Biddle, Jr. 1937-41^{May}

MEMORANDUM

A Digest of Opinion of Norwegian Informed
Observers Bearing on European Outlook and
War Tendencies.General
Opinion on
Next Two
Years.

In Norwegian Government circles it is generally felt that the present tense European situation will be liquidated within the next two years, either through statesmanship and diplomacy or by military force. This will be for two reasons: first, all the leading European nations will have completed their armament within two years, thereby neutralizing the advantage now held by the nations whose armaments are more advanced than others; and second, it is held here that beyond the next one and a half to two years, the peoples of the variously heavily arming nations will revolt against their Government's continued exhausting taxation for armament purposes. They will be no longer willing or able to bear the burden. The Governments are beginning to realize this, and it is felt that serious thought will soon be given to preparations to meet the situation. This, barring a war in the meantime, will cause these Governments, in self interest, to seek round-table discussions towards liquidating top-heavy armaments.

Interesting
Views of
Munitions
Manufacturing
Circles re-
War Tenden-
cies.

I beg to refer to my "Chart Showing Prices Paid for Dynamite-Glycerine (in Norwegian Currency, 1884-1936)" forwarded by me May 8, 1936. As then pointed out, munitions manufacturing circles here regard this chart as a "war-tendency barometer". At date of my last year's despatch, the price was approximately 130 øre per kilo.

per kilo. At the turn of the year (1936-37) the price had advanced above 2 kroner. At this writing the price is approximately 3 kroner, - a new high since the period 1918-19 - and not a ton available for purchase. Until December it could be purchased with difficulty in Holland - but now, even that market is closed. Incidentally, the main Norwegian munitions plant has two years' supply on hand, at low cost. Munitions circles here look for this situation to continue thus for at least two years. They do not necessarily, however, look for a war in the interim, barring consequential incidents.

Past Two and Next Two Years Expenditure for Britain, Resulting From Not Maintaining Adequate Defense.

Norwegian business and other informed circles hold it will be difficult even to estimate what Britain's not having maintained an adequate defense has cost her in prestige, intra-Empire disturbances, current extraordinary defense expenditures under pressure, et cetera.

In the aggregate cost over the past two years and the next two years, it is held that Britain must include financial accommodation and economic assistance to other nations - either to hold them as allies or hold them off as potential enemies, until Britain will have attained her own adequate strength in striking power. This will all be part of the price she must pay. Naturally she would like her friends and neighbors to contribute towards this "price" - but should they be unable or unwilling to do so, she will have to bear the burden herself - as her entire future is at stake.

As Norwegian Circles Viewed Britain Short and Long-Term Objectives on December 11.

Referring to my cable of December 11, 1936, to the Department, the following are excerpts:

"The following comprises the British long-term objective in foreign policy: Britain aims acting in capacity

capacity of honest peace broker towards eventual general European agreement envisaging German and Russian participation. Immediate objective: to break up Italo-German combination through action favorable to Italy (note: this was realized through subsequent Mediterranean Pact). In connection therewith, Vansittart's conviction gaining credence in high British circles to effect: Germany should be regarded as Britain's potential aggressor; this warning has regard to British and German relative armed positions, whereby estimated peaks are attainable in two years and eighteen months respectively. British aim to block Germany's increasing alliances to south and west, thus hoping to get Germany eventually into general agreement - also to block Italy's grabbing bases near Gibraltar."

As regards Britain's holding off Germany until she can rearm, Norwegian circles see Britain now apprehensively looking at the German economic situation with a view to conceiving means to avert a breakdown and explosion.

Germany:

Generally viewed, the Spartan spirit has entirely replaced the Athenian, which fact works for the disadvantage of all Europe. In other words, a thoroughly military-minded generation tends to create a situation seething with potential repercussions.

Reported
Russo-German
Secret Con-
versations.

Referring to my cable of December 19, 1936, to the Department, the following are excerpts:

"Reliable sources inform me secret German-Russian conversations taking place envisaging cooperation at price of neutralization of Polish and Japanese fronts. This means Germany not to assist Japan against Russia

and

and Russia not to assist Poland or France against Germany. British circles concerned lest this lead to war through Germany's getting free hand. Understand Russia would be prepared to tear up recent agreements if Germany would do likewise. Such arrangements would indicate Voroshilov's aims overshadowing Litvinov's objectives. Though indications are reported to be of sufficiently definite character to cause apprehension in Scandinavian and British high circles, like all matters of such importance, the reported plan is subject to change or abandonment through terrific pressure which might be brought."

Since early December, 1936, rumors regarding the possibility of an eventual Russo-German rapprochement have come to me confidentially from four distinct sources: quarters here identified with British, Finnish, Polish and German high circles. Differing somewhat perhaps in detail, they nevertheless all point to the same possible outcome: an eventual Russo-German rapprochement. I was at first inclined to classify information to this effect, emanating from important and informed Finnish and Polish communicants in Oslo, as home-inspired, due to the geographic and political positions of both these countries, and their possible desire for focussed sympathetic attention. I may add that information from the foregoing sources was obtained subsequent to that which was transmitted to me by circles here close to the British, and which prompted my above cable of December 19th.

Now, however, in the course of the past few days, comes fresh information of the same character from informed Norwegian observers known to me to be close

to

to German governmental and banking circles. These reports, in effect, point out that German high circles feel that all indications point to Germany's being bottled up; she may be compelled eventually to come to terms with Russia.

Having brought the colonial question to the fore, while stressing it as the paramount issue of the day, Germany finds Britain blocking her every day at every turn. Although Hitler would still go far towards holding Britain's friendship, it is conceivable, if present circumstances continue, that Germany will have to resort to the alternative of alliances unsympathetic to these nations now in control of Germany's former colonies. In this connection, some German circles are reported as discussing quite openly now the possibility of a German break with Western Europe, and a new line-up with Russia. They point to Stalin's growing tendency to nationalize Bolshevism - to confine it within Russian frontiers. They can foresee therefore a change in that system's complexion. Anyway, Germany's hatred is directed against Bolshevism solely, and not against Russia. It is conceivable that as an emergency measure an economic-military arrangement might be effected, exclusive of mutual acceptance of the respective political principles of the parties. Besides, the General Staffs of both countries have long advocated an amicable tie-up on some basis, aside from political considerations.

In connection with the foregoing possibilities, informed opinion here points out that any connection which might eventuate between Germany and Russia, would be contingent on what develops politically in Russia. Thus, a strengthening of the Russian Government's position would probably lead to an amicable arrangement with it. It is conceivable, however, that if the Russian Government's position weakens, the Germans might consider means of forcibly availing themselves

of

of Russian territories containing the raw materials and grain they need. Such action would be to a large extent influenced by Poland's attitude. Quarters here have no definite opinion regarding Poland's probable attitude in such circumstances. They feel, however, that Poland might be willing to throw her support behind a German move, were she sufficiently convinced of the likelihood of revolution within Russia resulting from an aggressive move against that country.

In this connection, a meeting of leading Swedish and Norwegian shipowners recently took place here. The leading Swedish representative expressed his opinion: to the effect that Germany would turn to Russia in one capacity or another, once she was convinced Britain would or could do no more for her. Moreover, his information led him to believe that the Stalin Government was so unstable that a revolution paralyzing a united defensive front would take place almost instantly in the event of Germany's taking action against Russia. Though Germany could never absorb Russia in the long run, her initial efforts would more than likely result in occupation of the Ukraine, at least, without much intensive fighting, and would afford Germany the opportunity to reorganize Russia along different lines. He added that perhaps, after all, it would be better to let this come about.

Similar in general character were the observations recently expressed to me by one of Norway's leading statesmen and by a prominent, well-informed officer of the Norwegian Foreign Office. Both are regarded as intelligent observers of international affairs, having importantly participated at Geneva during recent years.

The former observed in effect that Germany was in
increasingly

increasingly precarious economic straits, resulting in a growing schism in leading industrial and political circles. The rate of concentration camp confinements has markedly increased during the past several months, as a result of a growing tendency toward recalcitrant public utterances. The underlying political structure was weakening. It was conceivable that as this weakened, the General Staff's hold on the political situation would strengthen. If this continued, we might look for a growing tendency towards a military deal with Russia - irrespective of continued political barking between the two countries.

My other above-mentioned informant (of the Norwegian Foreign Office) referred to a conversation we had previously had, bearing on the possibility of an agreement either of an aggressive or non-aggressive nature between Germany and Russia. He believed that even the complexities of the political-economic arena of modern Europe had not succeeded in dislodging Bismarck's influence from the minds of the German General Staff. It was more than possible that the latter and the Russian Staff could find common ground on which to make an agreement - and that they would both conceivably welcome the opportunity. He then drew my attention to an article which appeared in a recent edition of the League of Nation's press organ, citing a discussion of recent date between a representative of an important French conservative group and a French Government official. In effect, this discussion disclosed that in reply to the former's question as why France had effected a rapprochement with Russia, and as to why M. Barthou, of all people, should have been the one to advocate it, the Government official explained that M. Barthou had urged the agreement for the simple reason that it was, to his mind, the

only

only way of preventing a Russo-German rapprochement.

German short-term "pin-pricking" and long-term policies as viewed here.

Practised in the art of "war threats" and muddying European waters towards accomplishing his successive objectives, Hitler, since late December has been pursuing a "pin-pricking" policy, with an understanding with the "General Staff", not to go so far as to incur a major conflict. This intermediate policy is aimed at his long-term objective: economic assistance and colonies.

Recent Information re-Hitler's Intentions re-Spain - as a Part of Pin-Pricking Policy.

Recent confidential reports indicate this "pin-pricking" policy continues, and can be looked for to have an important bearing on the Spanish situation. According to this information, the General Staff has persuaded Hitler not to send more troops to Spain, because from Germany's standpoint they consider it strategically advantageous to let this Spanish conflict drag on through the summer.

It will provide an ever-ready spark when necessary - an excuse always handy to throw a fire-brand into the powder barrel - and a constant menace to the allies. Besides, this would mean a prolongation of the presence of a body of soldiers in France's rear - an annoyance envisaged in the "pin-pricking" policy.

Colonial Issue.

In connection with the question of colonies, I am confidentially informed as follows: Von Ribbentrop has been instructed to take up the Colonial matter generally - but not to press the issue.

Britain is adamant, and at present is determined not to yield the colonies - under any circumstances.

She plans to counter with an offer of raw materials - but through the League. This plan entails

advising

advising Germany to establish purchasing bureaus at the required raw material points of origin throughout the Colonies. In order to facilitate German purchases, Britain is prepared to consider setting up a League credit and the removal of trade restrictions.

The foregoing offer, it is understood, will be advanced on the basis of the following understanding:

- a) Contingent on its functioning through the League.
- b) Part of the price of a general European settlement.
- c) It will involve no territorial changes.

Conclusion:
Personal
Observations.

In conclusion, I might add that, taking into consideration the foregoing, it is my belief there are three important factors which should not be lost sight of, in considering the European outlook for the next year:

a) The advent of another great war is not a certainty. As a matter of fact, Hitler may be compelled to change his policy, for its economic results are so unfavorable as to have considerably weakened even Germany's position as a political factor. Both possible opponents and possible allies are watching the economic development in Germany with close attention and are drawing their conclusions accordingly.

b) Probable realignment in Europe resulting from Britain's approaching rearmed position.

c) Britain's determined long-term objective, envisaging a general European settlement.

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

file

Oslo, May 18, 1937.

My dear Mr. President:

Words fail me in describing how happy and proud I am over my appointment as Ambassador to Poland. I am deeply sensible of the great honor which you have conferred upon me through this appointment, and I take great pride in the confidence which you have thus placed in me. It is a real privilege for me to serve under you, for whom I bear the most genuine affection and profound admiration. Moreover, it is a source of deep gratification to continue as part of your Administration, which under your courageous, farseeing, and able guidance, has so effectively coped with the greatest problems that ever faced our Nation. Indeed, it is both gratifying and stimulating for both Margaret and myself to feel that we are members of your official family.

From the bottom of my heart I thank you, and I assure you that I will do everything within my power to justify the confidence which you have thus placed in me.

Faithfully yours,

Tony Biddle

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

PSF; Biddle Folder

June 3, 1937.

Dear Tony:-

It is good to know that you are proceeding to Warsaw and further that you will soon come over here. I am very happy that all has gone so well and it will be good to see you and Margaret.

Always sincerely,

Honorable Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.,
American Embassy,
Warsaw,
Poland.

Oslo, May 20, 1937.

My dear Mr. President:

Supplementing my letter of May 18th, I hasten to inform you that pursuant to a telephone conversation between Bill Bullitt and John Cudahy in Paris and myself here, we arranged, with the subsequent approval of the State Department, to meet in Paris for consultations in respect to Polish affairs. The results of our numerous conferences were, to say the least, extremely helpful to me, for I was thus enabled to acquire first-hand from John Cudahy an intimate background of the situation, both of the past and present, in Poland. Moreover, Bill enabled me to get a very clear picture as viewed both from Russia and Western Europe. On one occasion, Bill very kindly invited the Polish Ambassador to France, Mr. Jules Lukasiewicz, to join our conference. This was also very helpful, for the Ambassador discussed at length the political situation of his country. In a word, my talks with Bill and John, as well as with the Polish Ambassador and other Polish authorities in Paris, have proved very elucidating and constructive. Meanwhile, Margaret and I have read carefully every available book on the history of, and present-day affairs in, Poland.

My first inclination, due to enthusiasm over my appointment and my deep gratification to you, was to proceed direct to Washington in order to express to you personally Margaret's and my happiness, and to consult with you as well as to receive whatever instructions you might wish to give us. Moreover, I felt that I should engage in consultations with Secretary Hull and with other authorities in the Department.

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

However, after my conversations in Paris and additional studies, both from available books and with the Polish Minister here, I felt that it would be more desirable to proceed direct to Warsaw from here, in that such procedure could enable me: a) to complete my exchange of formalities; b) to make a study of the current general Polish situation and local conditions; and c) to make arrangements for our household. After having accomplished the foregoing, I felt that I would be in a position to discuss the situation in Poland more intelligently with you and the Secretary. Bill Bullitt and John Cudahy both agreed that this thought was a constructive one.

Accordingly, I sent the following cable to the Secretary:

"Having had elucidating and helpful conversations with Ambassadors Bullitt and Cudahy concerning background and current Polish situation, and having read the contents of your telegram to Ambassador Bullitt, if no objections are perceived by you I propose to pursue the following program: May 23rd sail from Copenhagen on the S.S. BATORY, arriving the following day at Gdynia (not until June 15th is there a like sailing); from thence I shall proceed to Warsaw to await arrival of credentials, which I am told Department is forwarding at earliest convenience to Ambassador Bullitt, who will send them to Warsaw by plane. The following will also be entailed by my program:

- "(1) Completion of exchange of formalities in Warsaw.
 - "(2) Short study of current general Polish situation and local conditions.
 - "(3) Household arrangements.
 - "(4) Proceed to State Department for consultation and instruction.
- "Leaving Paris Tuesday, May 11th, for Oslo in order to have ample time before departure for Copenhagen on May 21st to take leave formally."

In reply to the above cable, I received one from the Secretary, stating in effect that he agreed that my suggestion was a constructive one and giving his approval thereof. Accordingly, Margaret and I will depart from Oslo on the 21st of this month and will sail aboard the S.S. BATORY on the 23rd from Copenhagen, arriving in Warsaw on the night of the 24th. As soon as we shall have completed our formalities and shall have

have assimilated sufficient of the atmosphere to have become conversant with current Polish affairs, we plan to return to Washington, with the hope of seeing you, and of consulting with the Secretary and with the various Divisions interested in Polish affairs.

I sincerely hope that the foregoing meets with your approval.

In closing, I wish to take occasion to reiterate to you the fact that from the bottom of my heart I am deeply grateful for the confidence which you have placed in me by appointing me as your Ambassador to Poland. Moreover, I wish to reassure you that both Margaret and I will do everything within our power to justify your valued confidence.

Faithfully yours,

Tony Biddle Jr

PSF: Norway
Biddle folder

October 7, 1937.

Dear Daisy:-

Many thanks for yours of the twenty-fourth of September, which I find on my return to Washington from the trip to the Coast. I am glad that things seem to be going well in favor of the Secretary, and I wish I could do something to help.

All goes well here in spite of the Black episode and the customary attitude of most of the Press about things in general. The western trip was a tremendous success.

Always sincerely,

Mrs. J. Borden Harriman,
American Legation,
Oslo,
Norway.

Oslo, September 24, 1937.

Dear Mr. President:

Since my letter to you of July 2, last, in regard to the Nobel Peace Prize of 1937, there have been some further developments. From confidential conversations held in the last few days, I have learned that Lord Cecil's chances of receiving the Prize have receded, and Mr. Hull's advanced. However, there has arisen another and rather strong competitor in the form of the Nansen Bureau at Geneva, which takes care of 2,000,000 people who after the War lost their nationality. Two members of the Nobel Committee are much interested in its promotion and especially at the present time when it is in a rather difficult financial situation. Professor Stang, Chairman of the Nobel Committee, and another, I understand, favor Mr. Hull, while Professor Keilhau of the Advisory Committee, who, however, has no vote, will write his report in Mr. Hull's favor. It is now a question of securing one more vote.

The President,

The White House.

The Norwegian Minister, Mr. Morgenstierne, has worked unceasingly while he has been here to promote Mr. Hull's chances, and is, I think, rather hopeful that he will be successful.

I will keep you informed of any changes of sentiment.

Faithfully yours,

T. J. Harrison

PSF: Biddle

file confidential

Warsaw, November 10, 1938.

My dear Mr. President:

The plight of the Jewish populations as a whole in Europe is steadily becoming so untenable, and their hopes for some way out from their present and increasing dilemma becoming so dim with the passage of time, that I take the liberty of sending you this confidential outline of my recent observations.

First of all, it is steadily becoming clearer that you personally are the one to whom they all look more and more to take the lead in finding a solution for their unhappy situation. My impression on this score is daily corroborated by requests on the part of various Jewish factions here that I ask you to receive their representatives, should they proceed to Washington in the near future. Chief amongst those who have pressed me along these lines is one V. Jabotinski, leader of the Zionist Revisionists. He is now in the course of attempting to organize a Congress of Jews of this part of Europe, the total amount whereof he puts at about 7,000,000. In fact, he looks upon the Jews of this section of Europe as constituting the object of concern on the part of the Jews in the rest of the world - particularly in the United States.

You may recall that from time to time I have written and cabled regarding my conversations with Jabotinski. He has a brilliant mind, and an engaging personality, and has at his disposal a "grapevine" system for the gathering of information - hence, he is extremely well-informed. Moreover, he is diametrically opposed to the policies of Mr. Weisemann and at heart extremely anti-British.

He

The President,
The White House.

He correctly predicted (a) the British Government's scrapping the idea of partition in Palestine, and (b) a general disapproval amongst the Jews of the world to the idea of the Jews of Palestine assuming a minority position within the framework of an Arab State. He now informs me that as regards Palestine he felt the blackest of the menacing clouds of a month ago had been removed; it seemed now that the Jews were no longer faced with the prospect of a drastic and radical liquidation of the Balfour pledge. He felt that this intention had been frustrated and averted owing to your intervention. He believed that what is now likely to follow is a return to the status quo ante - meaning "ante the Peel reports" - only perhaps veiled by a display of "a few well chosen words" intended to save everybody's face. According to his opinion, most people in Britain would feel thankful in that event and would "rest" - and the moment for the big move would be lost; while the only thing that would not rest would be the "disease." Hence, he took another occasion to state his fears that there was only one factor left, one man who could prevent this half-way stagnation, and this was President Roosevelt.

Naturally, in reply to his repeated question whether there was any chance that you might be willing to receive him, I stated that you had never lost sight of the problem, and that you and your associates were constantly engaged in a search for a solution. I did not think this was the time to request an audience with you - in fact, the committee which you had appointed to study the problem, was in London, and diligently at work.

I am aware that Mr. Jabotinski, like many of his confrères, is concentrating his thoughts and energies in an effort (a) to engage your good offices in calling another world conference to consider territorial outlets for Jewish immigration and (b) to enlist your influence and pressure upon a "Britain, desirous of American cooperation", towards making a generous settlement in Palestine.

Of importantly pertinent interest, usually well-informed circles here impart to me that their reports from London indicate that Chamberlain, or perhaps a member of his Cabinet, might possibly accompany the

King

King and Queen to the United States for, among other purposes, discussing the Palestine question along the following lines: To retain Palestine as a Jewish homeland would be impossible, if immigration were increased. Hence, the British Government might be willing to consider favorably, offering territory at one or more points in their colonies for the purpose of setting up a Jewish State - and, provided the United States joined Britain in the guarantee of such a state. This proposal, according to my informants, might be expected to be a part of an envisaged plan for a colonial settlement within the framework of a general European settlement.

At the present moment the following are high lights on developments in connection with the current European Jewish problem (a) violent repercussions against the Jews throughout Germany as a result of the Jewish boy, Herschel Grunspan's murder of von Rath, Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris, (b) signs of an approaching storm over the community of Jews in Rumania, and (c) difficulties encountered by the Polish official representatives in their negotiations in Berlin regarding the individual rights and properties of the Polish Jews recently ordered out of Germany to Poland. (15,000 Jews recently crossed into Poland under 24 hours' notice from the German Government. From all accounts, German treatment of these unfortunate people was nothing short of brutal. On the other hand, the Polish Government went to great lengths in an effort to extend humane treatment under trying circumstances. See my cable No. 243 of October 29, 7 p.m.)

Hoping that the foregoing will prove enlightening on developments described, and with every good wish, I am,

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle Jr

THE WHITE HOUSE
JAN 29 9 31 AM '41
RECEIVED

PSF; Biddle Folder

HR

8601 Montgomery Avenue,
Chestnut Hill,
Philadelphia, Pa.
January 27, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

Margaret and I tremendously enjoyed being with you on Saturday for luncheon. It was a real treat, and we appreciated every minute of our time with you.

I cannot tell you how happy and proud I am that you want me to continue as your Ambassador to the Polish Government, and that in addition, you wish me to assume the duties as your representative to the Belgian, Norwegian, and Netherlands Governments. I am profoundly sensible of this great honor, and of the confidence you are thus placing in me. I want you to know moreover, that we shall both do everything in our power to justify your confidence and friendship, which we value so highly.

Margaret joins me in renewed thanks for the thoroughly enjoyable and extremely interesting time spent with you on Saturday, and in all good wishes.

Faithfully yours,

Tony Biddle, Jr

The President

The White House.

PSF. Biddle Folder
March 4, 1941

March 4, 1941

Dear Margaret:

Before you and Tony leave, I want particularly to ask you if in view of your experience in Poland you will be good enough to send me reports, from time to time, on the work of the women of England in home defense. I know this will be of great interest to us.

It was grand to see you this afternoon.

This takes you both my love and good wishes.

As ever,

Mrs. Anthony Drexel Biddle, Jr.,
Carlton Hotel,
Washington, D. C.

mal/tmb

PSF: Biddle Folder
1-41

Original letter from King Haakon
to the President and carbon copy
as well as photostatic copy of
the President's reply filed
"Famous People Folder"

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 19

1941

My dear King Haakon

I was very happy to have your letter which Mr. Hopkins brought over -- and I am really encouraged by the news which he gives me of the splendid resistance that is being put up by the British and all of you who are working toward the same end.

I think that Olav's visit here has been thoroughly successful from the public point of view, and it has been, of course, a great comfort to his wife and those three delightful children.

I had not meant to suggest that your children should make any formal tour in our West -- but I have felt that it is important in this country to keep the names of the occupied nations constantly before our public. I say this because a strong public opinion for the restoration of the complete independence of the nations overrun by Germany will become of especial moment when the time for peace arrives.

I do not think you need to worry about what any German broadcast stations say. Everybody here is in accord that your daughter-in-law and the children are properly on this side of the water -- and the same thought applies to the Princess Juliana and her babies, and to the Luxembourg family, which, after all, has no "raison d'etre" for maintaining a Government in London.

At the same time, people thoroughly approve your leadership of your Government in England, as they do that of Queen Wilhelmina.

With your permission I will, of course, continue to do everything possible in the way of advising your family.

Their present abode, outside of Washington, is just large enough, without being in any way ostentatious -- and I hope that this Summer we can make similar arrangements for them to go to a fairly quiet seaside place. The children especially should not spend the Summer here because the climate is very enervating. I hope they will all come to stay with us at Hyde Park before they go to the seashore.

If, later on, the Scandinavians in the Northwest should ask your daughter-in-law to go there informally, as the Dutch have done in several instances in the case of Princess Juliana, I think it would be a good thing to go. We must remember that your daughter-in-law very clearly represents a combination of Norway and Sweden and Denmark, which symbolizes the independence of all three countries.

I hear from Canada that Olav's two trips there did much good. He is a very fine fellow, and it has been very delightful to have him here.

Later - Olav plans to leave later
I am off today on a two day trip
to get some sunlight in the South
for my sinus & I am sure to
see him again before he takes
the Clipper for Lisbon. You

will have seen my speech about resistance in
occupied nations - I do wish there could be
more of it in Denmark & Belgium. Norway
& Holland are doing well - We are thrilled
by the raid on the Lofoten Islands!
Wrap up the splendid work you are
doing - I do not have to urge you.

With my sincere regards

Faithfully yours
Franklin D. Roosevelt

COPY

Feb. 2, 1941
England

Dear Mr. Roosevelt:

As Mr. Hopkins, who I saw on Thursday last, offered to take any personal letter back with him, I take the opportunity to write and thank you and your wife for all the help and kindness shown not only to my daughter-in-law, but now also to my son during his Christmas holiday and then there is another thing I feel I ~~must~~ thank you for and that is for appointing Mr. Biddle as Minister to Norway. He is a friend of mine since he was in Oslo and I feel ~~sure~~ he will do what he can for Norway as he and his wife got very fond of Norway during their stay and I feel I personally can talk quite openly to him without _____ (having ?) him misuse my confidence.

Mr. Hopkins mentioned during our talk that he thought it would be a good thing if my daughter-in-law took a trip to the different parts in America where there are descendants of Norwegians. I am sorry to say I disagreed with him as first of all, I think it is the best thing we can do under the present circumstances is to keep quiet. I have to think of my people at home and if they get the impression that we are only having a good time out of the country, we may spoil everything for the future. You must remember the Germans have told them that we all of us ran away from duty and country and even now when Olav left they gave it out in their radio that he left because of fright for the air raids over this country. So you can see they use anything and everything to _____ (defame ?) us in the eyes of the Norwegians. I myself am keeping very quiet here and only go and inspect our forces who are training here but say no to any entertainment which is not strictly Norwegian.

It has been a very strenuous time for ~~xi~~ my daughter-in-law ever since the war broke out and I am sure it would mean more strain in case she was to undertake a trip as Mr. Hopkins suggested. I feel you wont mind me explaining my point of view on this subject but felt I had to put it to you as you might advise my daughter-in-law if the question really should come up.

Thanking you again for all your sympathy not only to my family but also to my country, I remain with kind regards,

Yours very sincerely,

Haakon R.

PSF: Bidalle



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Ritz Hotel
London
March 26, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

We arrived here safely, after a splendid trip. We have installed ourselves in comfortable quarters at the Ritz Hotel, where we intend to continue living.

I have already been received by the King of Norway, and by the Belgian Government, and I await an audience with Queen Wilhelmina tomorrow, to present my credentials.

King Haakon sends you his warmest compliments and in response to my conveying your message regarding his son and daughter-in-law, has already cabled them to visit Norwegian-American areas, between now and the time of the Crown Prince's return to London. I shall write you more of this at a later date.

Already several leading members of the de Gaulle movement here have contacted me discretely. During my service with the Polish Government in France, as well as during the time that I served with the French Government at Tours and Bordeaux, I considered these particular individuals to be serious, loyal Frenchmen, and patriotic trustworthy officials of the French Government. They have established many sources of information through highly confidential channels, and I feel that the maintenance of discrete contact with them on my part would lead to enlightening intelligence, and a means of checking information received through other channels, regarding activities
both in

The President

The White House.



- 2 -

both in occupied and unoccupied France. They have already told me that they would consider it a privilege to give me, in strictest confidence, benefit of any and all information on this score.

In line with this, they conveyed to me the information contained in the attached memorandum, which I consider interesting in the light of its implications as to the extent of "imposed economic collaboration" on the part of unoccupied France with Germany.

With every good wish and with warmest personal regards, I am

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle

MEMORANDUM

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

[1941]

According to information received through secret channels, the following program was imposed by the Germans, upon unoccupied France, from January 16 to March 1, 1941.* This program called for the shipment to Germany of the following items:

Bauxite clay - 30,000 tons
Aluminium - 10,000 tons
Magnesium - 8,000 tons. Absolute priority was demanded for this item.
"Special Clay" - 2,000 tons
Hematite (A special type of iron ore) - 38,000 tons
Pig Iron - 9,000 tons
Special extracts for tanning - 1200 tons
Carbite of calcium - 4,000 tons
Rubber (Transhipped via Marseille) - 1700 tons
Wool (From Algeria via Marseille) - 10,000 tons
Pyrites (From Spain via Irun) - 10,000 tons. Absolute priority

The size of the program is such that it made impossible delivery of French goods by French railroads; the Germans demanded total priority.

Zinc ore (From Spain via Irun) - 8,000 tons. Absolute priority
Other raw materials (From Spain via Irun) - 22,000 tons
Iron, North African (Previously stored) - 1960 tons
Manganese ore, North African - 1995 tons
Nitrates, Chilean (Via Cette) - 2200 tons
Beans, sardines, turtles etc. (From Portugal via Irun) - 2800 tons
"Azote" (From Toulouse) 20,000 tons
Coffee (via Marseille) 3000 tons
Eggs (From unoccupied zone) 1200 tons
Sugar - 20,000 tons (From northern part of occupied France
and partly from unoccupied France)
Butter - 11,500 tons (From occupied and partly from
unoccupied France)
Dried vegetables - (From Marseille for army) 4,000 tons.

Note: The foregoing items are quite apart from those contained
in the "barter arrangement" just given publicity.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

April 24, 1941

*(copy in State Dept.
Folder #1 copy in
Waller Folder)*

*Biddle Folder
1-41*

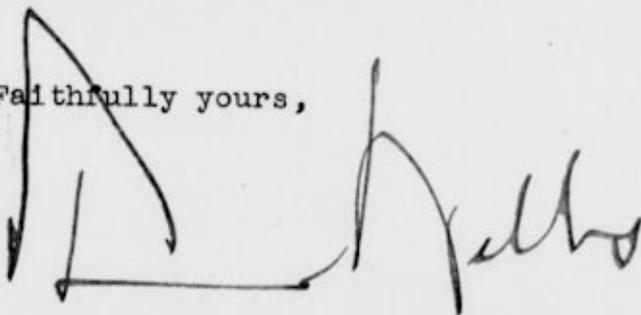
*file
Confidential*

My dear Mr. President:

I am returning to you herewith the letter addressed to you under date of March 26 by Tony Biddle and which you sent to the Secretary and myself under date of April 8. The Department has taken careful note of the information contained in the enclosure to Tony Biddle's letter.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enc.

The President,

The White House.

PSF: Biddle Folder

file
Confidential

OFFICE OF THE
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

Ritz Hotel,
London,
April 18, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

I have just returned to London after interesting visits with the Polish, and subsequently the Norwegian Forces in Scotland.

For your information I am attaching hereto a confidential memorandum covering my impressions. I beg to draw your attention particularly to my observations regarding essential requirements. In the Polish area, I accompanied the Polish President, Raczkiewicz; in the Norwegian area, General Fleischer, Commanding the Norwegian Forces. In both areas, I was permitted a thorough observation of all phases of training and secret defensive preparations.

With all good wishes, I am

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle

The President

The White House,
Washington, D.C.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE POLISH AND
NORWEGIAN FORCES IN SCOTLAND.

MEMORANDUM, ~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

[1941]

I have just returned to London after interesting visits with the Polish, and subsequently the Norwegian forces in Scotland. In the Polish area, I accompanied the Polish President, Raczkiewicz; in the Norwegian area, General Fleischer, Commanding the Norwegian Forces. In both areas, I was permitted a thorough observation of all phases of training and secret defensive preparations.

Polish Forces:

The Polish ground units comprise an experienced fighting force, numbering about 20,000. Many of the officers and men are veterans of the wars in Poland and France - some have fought in Norway as well.

They have been assigned the defense of the Scottish east coast, from the north bank of the Firth of Forth to Montrose. Their activities are coordinated with those of the Home Guard of that area.

Both morale and discipline are good.

The training is intensive and directed along lines of defense against "blitz" tactics.

In general, these forces compose a well organized cadre of seasoned officers and men, capable of handling some seven to eight thousand additional troops. This increase would not only serve to fill out the full corps complement, but would also permit greater depth in the disposition of troops.

While the defense plan is well conceived, there is, in my opinion, an insufficient number of men and field guns for so extensive an area. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the strategic disposition both of troops and guns available

has

has been so carried out as to obtain the maximum effect. As regards existing gun positions, they have been arranged in such a way as to permit cross fire in defense of the more vulnerable stretches along the coast. However, an effective and necessarily prolonged defense against a "blitz" attack, (probably consisting of wave after wave of landing parties, coordinated with dive-bombers, as well as with transport planes, and parachute troops, aiming to land behind the coastal defense line), calls (a) for a larger quantity of 75's and heavier calibre field guns, and (b) anti-aircraft guns to cover gun positions and other vital factors from dive-bombing and aerial machine-gunning.

Besides, there should be an increase in the number of troops available, in order to render greater depth to the defense position as a whole; moreover, these troops should be trained and equipped as counter-shock troops and so equipped as to be capable of a high volume of fire-power.

Essential requirements:

I find there is an urgent need of the following equipment:

Tanks (Of a total of 200 required, only 6 have been delivered to the Polish forces)

Anti-tank guns

Anti-aircraft guns

Signal apparati, especially field radio transmitting and receiving sets. (While the observation posts, gun positions, and headquarters are connected by telephone lines, experience in the various

various "blitzes" on the Continent has emphasized the importance of radio apparatus).

A considerable increase in stocks of 75mm shells

An extension of hospitalization for the corps area:
a minimum of 250 additional beds.

Norwegian Forces:

We went from Kincardine to Newhouse. Together with General Fleischer, Commanding the Norwegian Forces, I inspected part of his troops at Newhouse, Scotland, and subsequently another part at Dumfries.

The Norwegian contingent consists of about 1,500 rugged, experienced and well-trained troops. With the exception of about 125 recruits recently arrived from Lofoten, the rest of the men, and all of the officers, are veterans of the war in Norway.

Part of the troops are mechanized, equipped with Bren carriers, motor cycles, and motor trucks. There is a heavy machine gun unit, a trench mortar unit, and a pioneer unit. The remainder consists of infantrymen equipped with rifles and Bren guns.

The training is thorough and vigorous. The marksmanship both of the infantrymen and machine gunners was of high standing, during the realistic exercises which I witnessed in the mountains nearby the camps.

Special

Special attention is devoted to schooling the officers and men for service as raiding parties. Many had already successfully conducted several of these raids at points along the Norwegian coast. In their training, emphasis is accordingly placed on close combat tactics: with particular emphasis on the use of the "tommy gun" (they told me that this had proven one of the most useful weapons in carrying out their raids).

Efforts moreover, are directed towards schooling the men in the use of all types of weapons in order to give them a well-rounded knowledge of the use of all equipment applicable to modern-day warfare. This is done with view to making them capable of serving as non-commissioned officers and officers, in event these units might serve as a cadre for expansion. The morale and discipline are good, and I was impressed by the enthusiasm with which the officers and troops engaged in the exercises.

General Fleischer told me it was his earnest desire to build up these units as a nucleus for expansion, in that he felt it was essential that Norway should be represented here by a ground force of considerable size. He therefore regretted that from time to time he had to transfer some of his best men to the Merchant or Trawlers fleets.

PSF; Biddle Folder
1-41

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 24, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Will you do the necessary?

F. D. R.

Cable from Ambassador Biddle to the President, dated April 23, 1941, saying that May 3rd is "Polish National Day" and asking that the President send a message to the Polish President on that occasion.

PSF: Biddle Folder

4
File
Personal
Confidential

OFFICE OF THE
UNITED STATES SECRETARY

Ritz Hotel,
London.

April 26, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

For your information I am attaching a confidential memorandum covering the opinion of the military authorities of the governments to which I am accredited in regard to Britain's current military position. In effect they all concurred in the opinion I have set forth in the memorandum.

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle or

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

In discussing Britain's military position with the Military authorities of the Governments to which I am accredited, they each independently expressed in effect the following opinion:

This was a critical juncture for the British Empire. Not only was the "Battle of the Atlantic" becoming daily a more serious problem, but now, the "Battle of Egypt" was rapidly looming as a crucial theatre of operations. So much depended upon the outcome there. The British could meet the Germans with numerical equality. However, they could not match the Germans in terms of mechanized equipment - particularly tanks.

If the Germans reached the Suez, Spain might fall to German hands, Turkey might become more reluctant to resist, and Japan might strike out at Singapore. Even Russia, which might otherwise lend material aid to Turkey, might, in the event of a German seizure of the Suez, make further joint adventure with Germany.

Besides, the situation in Morocco was rapidly deteriorating. Germans were infiltrating the country at a steadily increasing pace - with little if any resistance on part of the French authorities there.

The British forces in the Suez area would therefore urgently need the speediest possible shipment of equipment and supplies from the United States.

Reports on conditions in Syria were more encouraging, and with British forces now in Iraq, Basra offered help as a port of delivery, for that area.

What the British now needed most were tanks, anti-tank guns, heavy bombing planes and transport planes.

From my own angle of observation, it would now appear that Germany aims, on the one hand, at cutting off the fuel oil supply from the Mediterranean Fleet, and even at bottling up the Fleet, and on the other hand, at striking simultaneously at widely separated vital points in order to disperse the British forces and materiel. In connection with the latter objective, Germany undoubtedly hopes to force Britain to weaken her home defenses by drawing on man power and equipment here; This with a view to attempting an invasion in a later stage.

ag

Meanwhile, in view of Casa Blanca's and Tripoli's becoming more and more the gateways for German infiltration into Northern Africa, I am inclined to look for the Dakar area to figure more prominently henceforth in Germany's forward-looking military program.

ap/2

PSF: Biddle Folder

file
presonal

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Ritz Hotel,
London,
April 26, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

I completed the presentation of my credentials to the Norwegian, the Netherlands and the Belgian Governments in comparatively short order, after my arrival here.

Moreover, the Polish President Raczkiewicz, General Sikorski, and their associates, received me with a hearty welcome on the day after my coming to London.

Polish Government:

Both President Raczkiewicz, and General Sikorski wished me to convey to you an expression of their profound gratitude and that of their associates and armed forces, for your having returned me near their Government.

Norwegian Government:

I presented my credentials to King Haakon. His greeting was warm and most friendly. He wished me to tell you that he was deeply appreciative of your having sent a representative to him here, and especially, one who had already served in Norway, and who was familiar with Norwegian problems and Norwegian-American relations. News of my appointment had been promptly radio-broadcast to the people in Norway, and through secret channels, the King had received reports that the news had proven a source of comfort and encouragement for the people there. He could not too strongly emphasize how much your action in this regard meant to his people, as well as to himself, to his Government, and to his armed forces here.

He was most grateful moreover, for the gracious hospitality which you and Mrs. Roosevelt had accorded the Crown Prince and Crown Princess, and for the friendly personal interest which

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

which you had taken in their welfare and activities. He clearly understood, and greatly appreciated your point of view regarding the advisability of the Crown Prince's and Crown Princess' keeping alive in the minds of the people in general, and of the Norwegian-Americans in particular, "Norway's case". He had accordingly instructed his son to postpone his departure from the United States, and to arrange several visits amongst the Norwegian-American communities, with a view to emphasizing to them the determination of the King, the Government, the armed forces and the commercial fleet, to maintain the freedom and the independence of Norway.

The Netherlands Government:

I presented my credentials to Queen Wilhelmina. She extended me a warm and friendly welcome. She asked me to convey to you an expression of deep gratitude on part of herself, her Government, her armed forces and her nation, for your having appointed a representative to her here, during these trying times. She knew her people well, and she was aware that those who were now suffering in German-occupied Holland were equally appreciative, and had derived a real sense of encouragement from this action on your part. She moreover requested me to tell you how grateful she was for yours and Mrs. Roosevelt's kind hospitality to Princess Juliana and for your continued friendly and helpful interest in her welfare and activities. The Queen derived a great sense of comfort from the knowledge thereof, and you and Mrs. Roosevelt had touched her heart deeply.

The Belgian Government:

In the absence of the King, it was decided by the Belgian Government that Minister for Foreign Affairs, Spaak, should receive my credentials. Minister Spaak's greeting was warm and friendly. In behalf of his Government and himself, he wished me to transmit to you an expression of theirs and his deepest appreciation of your having appointed a representative to the Belgian Government established in London. It meant a great deal to the latter, and he was aware from reports that the news concerning your action in this regard, which had been
radio-broadcast

radio-broadcast to the people in German-occupied Belgium, had already had a stimulating and wholesome effect.

The British Prime Minister
Mr. Churchill:

Several nights after our arrival here, Mr. Churchill invited Margaret and me to dine with Mrs. Churchill and himself at 10 Downing Street. We were most warmly received by them both, and during the course of a most enjoyable and interesting evening, we were made to feel very much "at home". As it turned out, it was the night of Wednesday, March 19, which witnessed the worst aerial bombardment London had until that time experienced. When, after dinner, I expressed the desire to see for myself the strides which London had made in air-raid precautions, the Prime Minister invited me to accompany him to the roof. Wearing steel helmets, we spent about two hours watching the attack. All the while, he received reports at various intervals from the different sections of the city hit by the bombs. It was intensely interesting, and I was thus afforded the opportunity of seeing for myself the progress which had been made here in A.R.P. (Air-raid precautions), as against those I had witnessed on the Continent up to late June. For example, the Prime Minister's reports showed that the German bombs on that night had started 1700 fires, and that the various A.R.P. organizations had succeeded not only in rapidly extinguishing them, but also in preventing them from spreading. The results to my mind, represented a great tribute not only to the courage and spirit of the women, as well as of the men, in the organizations engaged in these A.R.P. activities, but also to the efficient coordination of action of these organizations.

In illustrating the progress made since the December 29 Blitz over the "City", the Prime Minister pointed out that that had happened on a week-end, when most of the offices were closed down and the buildings locked up. Accordingly, the bombardment had caught the district with a minimum of roof watchers on the alert. Consequently, the 1500 fires directly caused by bombs on that occasion, had spread to about 4000 fires. He went on to point out, that the 1700 fires directly attributable to bombs, this night when I accompanied him, had been held in check, due to the effective A.R.P. measures adopted since last December.

Having watched the bombardment for several hours, I accompanied the Prime Minister to the cellar, which had been reinforced with extra steel carrying-beams and stanchions to withstand heavy aerial seige. Together we visited the various offices

offices established there for the purpose of keeping the Prime Minister in constant touch with naval, aerial and military activities in all theatres of operation. These activities and the current positions of all British and Allied shipping were indicated by appropriate markers on large maps hung on the walls of the pertinent offices. Staff officers of the night-watch, who were in frequent telephonic contact with the War Office, the Admiralty, the Air Ministry, and the Ministry of Shipping were busily engaged in marking up changes on the maps. The Prime Minister showed and explained to me the operations indicated on each of these.

I was greatly impressed by his clear grasp even of the most minute details as well as of the big picture as a whole. It did not take me long to discern in him the driving energy and other qualities of courageous and determined leadership which had from the moment of his ascendancy to power, served to arouse his countrymen from a state of comparative lethargy and to spur them to meet the threat to their country with unity and fighting spirit.

Before leaving the Prime Minister and Mrs. Churchill, he expressed the hope that I would visit the Polish and other forces connected with the Governments to which I was accredited, as early as possible, for he felt that this would be appropriate and helpful. He added that he hoped I might see my way clear to visit these forces frequently. I told him this was my intention. In fact, I had already made definite plans to visit the Polish and Norwegian forces in the North, at an early date.

In conclusion, he said he and his Government were very happy that you had sent a representative to the Governments to which I was accredited here, and he assured me that I could count upon the cooperation of himself and his Government.

With all good wishes, I am

Yours faithfully

Tony Bidder

2/2/41

PSF: Biddle Folder
File
personal
1-41

DEPARTMENT OF THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE

Ritz Hotel
London,
April 30, 1941

My dear Mr. President:

For your information, I am attaching hereto a confidential memorandum covering the substance of my recent conversations with the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, and with the British Prime Minister's confidential political-military liason officer with the Allied Governments established here.

In that the information thus disclosed to me comes from the Polish Ambassador to the Vatican, the Polish Ambassador at Ankara, as well as from confidential British sources in the Eastern Mediterranean and in Vichy, and in that this information bears on Italian public opinion, Tripoli-bound transport traffic, oil storage at Monopolia, Turkey's position as reflected in Turkish Foreign Minister's downcast attitude, Iraq and Syria, and Marshal Petain's physical condition, I pass it on in the thought that it might serve usefully in rounding out the picture in-the-making.

With warmest regards and all good wishes, I am

Faithfully yours
Tony Biddle r

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

MEMORANDUM

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

Polish Foreign Minister, Zaleski, this morning disclosed to me, in strictest confidence the following substance of a cable just received from the Polish Ambassador to the Vatican:

Observations of Polish Ambassador to Vatican on Italian public opinion.

(a) In the opinion of the Polish Ambassador, the results of the war in Greece had served to boost Mussolini's stock in the eyes of the Italian people as a whole, notwithstanding their realization that Italy had come under German control. This, to a measurable degree, was attributable to wishful thinking on part of the people. Accordingly, they were most hopeful that the war might be brought to an early close, in which event they believed 1/ Italy could retain her recent gains; and 2/ The Germans would move out of Italy. Italian Government circles however, did not share this trend of thought. They looked for a war of long duration, and were less optimistic than the people as to the likelihood of an eventual German exit from Italy;

Tripoli-bound traffic, and fuel oil storage at Monopolia.

(b) With reference to Germany's intensive effort to gain control of the Suez, great quantities of German troops and mechanized materiel had been passing through Italy

Italy to Italian ports. There was a "steady stream" of transports leaving Naples, bound for Tripoli. Moreover, an important storage of fuel oil had been established at Monopolia.

In this connection, Vatican Diplomatic Circles were surprised that the British Fleet and Air Force had not already taken effective steps to obstruct this "stream" of transports and to bombard the fuel storage at Monopolia.

Polish
Foreign
Minister's
remarks.

Referring to this observation in the Ambassador's cable, Minister Zaleski said that while British Foreign Minister Eden told him on April 23 that orders were given the British Fleet, to go "all out" against the transport of troops and materiel to Tripoli, he, Minister Zaleski, supposed that during evacuation of British forces from Greece, the British Fleet and Air Force had had little time for action elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Since conclusion of the evacuation, he was informed the Fleet had been dealing more effectively with Tripoli-bound traffic. His informants said it was a difficult task, however, due to advantage afforded the adversary by short runs between Sicily, Pantaleria, Tripoli, under cover of darkness. While some ships were getting through, it was believed they were small on the whole.

Minister

Depressed
attitude
and remarks
of Turkish
Foreign
Minister.

Minister Zaleski has just informed me confidentially that the Polish Ambassador at Ankara had had a very recent conversation with the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs. He had never seen the Minister in such a depressed state of mind. The latter spoke of the possibility of a German attempt to by-pass Turkey, by making certain islands in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as Syria, serve as stepping-stones for an aerial-transport invasion of Iraq. The Turkish Foreign Minister had then remarked that Turkey's position was becoming rapidly worse. He now feared, moreover, the possibility of Russian connivance with Germany vis-a-vis Turkey.

Disclosures
of competent
source re:
Iraq, Syria
and atti-
tude of
Syrian and
Vichy
Authorities

Of connected bearing, I have just been informed by the British Prime Minister's confidential political-military liason officer with the Allied Governments established here, (a) that reports from Eastern Mediterranean sources indicate the Germans were planning to dispatch about 10,000 troops by aerial transport into Iraq; the plan envisaged using certain Greek Islands and Syrian air fields as "stepping stones"; (b) that Dentz, the French Military Authority at Beirut, had been questioned by British Authorities as to what action he might be expected to adopt in event of a German attempt to land transport planes in Syria. The British authorities subsequently

cabled

cabled London that Dentz "says" he will resist aggression from any and all sources in conformity with orders originally given him by Vichy. However, upon further questioning Dentz as to what action he would take, if the Germans assured him that they want only the use of three or four aerodromes for refuelling, Dentz replied that in that case, he would have to ask for authority from Vichy.

Marshal
Petain's
health.

Of connected bearing, my informant disclosed the following additional information just received from a confidential source in Vichy, which if true, would seem to leave little room for British optimism as to possible resistant action by Dentz, in event Berlin pressed Vichy for permission to use Syrian aerodromes:

Marshal Petain was rapidly showing the strain of the past several months. In fact, he was suffering from Eureka, and was frequently given to fainting spells. He was apparently worn out, and was rapidly falling into the hands of Darlan, who, behind the scenes, was setting the stage for "all-out" collaboration with the Germans.

Accordingly, Darlan now regarded General Weygand as his main obstacle to gaining control over Morocco, as well as over French unoccupied territory.

Ritz Hotel, London.

May 4, 1941.

Dear Mr. President:

We have been over here about seven weeks, and are comfortably settled at the Ritz, feeling very much at home as our sitting room is where we had our wedding breakfast ten years ago. We have taken a small house in the country, but up to now have spent only three weekends there.

I have never in my life had as interesting or as busy a time. First of all we have had many hearty reunions with our Poles and Norwegians, and have been getting acquainted with the Dutch and the Belgians. We have spent eleven days in Scotland with the Polish and Norwegian troops. (I talked to some of the boys who took part in the Lofotan raid).

In addition I have been making a thorough survey of the women's activities and have found that fascinating. I have spent the greater part of each day studying the different organizations and their functions, and will send you my report very soon.

Last but not least, I have been endeavoring to co-ordinate Polish relief from this side.

Shortly after our arrival a well known correspondent wrote an article about Tony calling him "the Ambassador to Freedom" and that title seems to be sticking to him.

Your speeches have been simply magnificent - I only wish you knew how you are adored by all groups in England. One night we went unexpectedly down to the worst shelter in London near the docks. Tony was recognized right away and had to speak in each section - they all cheered wildly for "President Roosevelt". This was a spontaneous reaction as no one knew ahead we were going down to that particular shelter. The head Shelter Warden was a delightful energetic little man called Mr. "Bubley" who is an auctioneer, and who has a loud voice probably strengthened by his professional training, with a persuasive manner. In other words during the raid he "sells" the people in the shelter the idea of calmness. Later on we went to another downtown borough to see more shelters, stopping in to see the Mayor of that borough where we had the most beautiful sandwiches. I later learned that the Mayor had been a plumber, then a caterer - hence the artistic touch in the supper. He was a short, stout, and very polite little man by the name of Mr. Dainty.

The two main topics of conversation in a light vein over here among the English are the daring exploits of the Poles - their conquests in the air and their sentimental conquests in Scotland, and stories concerning "that wonderful Mr. Campbell" - the man who has an enormous farm in Montana. He has been a tremendous success over here - one friend likened him to Will Rogers. He has been a refreshing note during tense days.

In regard to the Polish aviators - they say that unless the R.A.F. want the Poles to bomb Berlin they do not dare to give them even enough petrol to reach Berlin. For once they have enough petrol they go straight to Berlin, and don't worry if they haven't enough to get home again. And then the Scotchmen say that in order to get anywhere courting a Scotch Lassie they must wear Polish soldiers' hats and speak broken English with a Polish accent. There seems to be a natural tie between the Scotch and the Poles - the Poles who have been learning to speak English have a strong Scotch brogue, and they are almost impossible to understand. The tradition of Polish-Scottish friendship dates from the time several hundred years ago when some Scottish kings took refuge in Poland and were royally domiciled in Krakow.

They say that the popular songs of a period represent the prevailing sentiments of the day - one of the most popular songs here is "The King is Still in London Town". From what I hear the greatest psychological blunder the Germans have made in regard to England was the bombing of Buckingham Palace. That unified in one night the determination "to stick it out".

has
 Tony is as busy as a bird dog and never/ he enjoyed anything as much as this new job. He will be in his new office in a few days. It is rather hard to get office equipment here, especially typewriters, so our two secretaries put their portable typewriters and gas masks by their beds each night so that they can grab them up in case there is a raid (that is how precious typewriters are here).

Please forgive the length of this letter. I started out with the intention of writing you a nice brief businesslike letter, and I did not mean to let it reach these proportions.

My thoughts are with you so often and I only wish you knew how grateful I am to you for sending us over here.

Tony joins me in sending you our love.

As always,

margaret

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

PSF; Biddle Folder
1-41

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 5, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE CODE ROOM
STATE DEPARTMENT

The President would like
you to send the enclosed cable
to Ambassador Biddle.

GRACE G. TULLY

FROM

The White House
Washington

TELEGRAM

OFFICIAL BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT RATES

CABLE

May 5, 1941.

BIDDLE
LONDON

YOUR LETTER OF APRIL 23RD. PLEASE INFORM H. M. THE QUEEN
OF THE NETHERLANDS, THAT WHOLLY APPROVE AND AM MADE VERY
HAPPY

ROOSEVELT

Ritz Hotel,
London,
April 23, 1941.

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

file →
My dear Mr. President:

I have just come from a meeting with Queen Wilhelmina. She reiterated what she had formerly said to me upon the occasion of presenting my credentials: (a) She was grateful for your having appointed a Minister to her Government established here; and (b) She was deeply moved by your interest in her nation, by your friendly consideration of herself, and by yours and Mrs. Roosevelt's great kindness and hospitality to her daughter, Princess Juliana. Besides, she greatly appreciated your helpful interest in her daughter's welfare and your valued counsel to her concerning constructive activities in behalf of her nation's interests.

The Queen went on to say she had just received a letter from her Foreign Minister, Mr. van Kleffens, written after his meeting with you. In effect, he had underlined what I had formerly conveyed to her, i.e.; your sense of satisfaction over Juliana's efforts to keep the "Netherlands' case" a live issue in the minds of the people in general, and of the American citizens of Netherlands' extraction in particular - and your hope that she would continue in these efforts. The Queen asked me to tell you that she understood and appreciated your point of view in this regard, and was deeply grateful.

She then earnestly requested me to treat in strictest confidence what she was about to say, and asked me that in conveying it to you, I beg of you to treat it likewise.

Moreover,

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

Moreover, she earnestly hoped you would not mention the matter even to her Foreign Minister, Mr. van Kleffens, (if and when you might receive him again), or even to the Netherlands Minister Dr. Loudon. The Queen thereupon told me the following:

It was her sincere hope that she might pay you a visit at some time in the not too distant future, in order to express to you personally her gratitude. Her visit, of course, would depend, on the one hand, upon the course of the "Battle of the Atlantic", and on the other hand, upon developments on the continent; that was to say, if Germany showed any signs of an "internal collapse", she would have to remain nearby her country. If, however, conditions permitted her visit, she would go to the United States via Canada. Moreover, she would prefer to meet with you at Hyde Park, rather than at the White House, for, out of respect for her suffering people in occupied Holland, she would not want her visit to entail official receptions; in fact, she hoped that such a visit might be carried out with the maximum of simplicity. She added that in conducting themselves, she and her daughter had constantly kept in mind the sufferings of their people, and had accordingly been careful to do nothing which might offend their feelings, such as giving the impression of "having a good time".

In conclusion, she said it was her most earnest hope that conditions would permit her meeting with you, for not only did she wish to convey to you personally an expression of gratitude in behalf of herself and her nation, but also she felt confident that an exchange of views would prove constructive and mutually interesting.

Finally, she reemphasized her hopes that you would treat this as a matter strictly between you and herself, and guard it in utmost confidence.

With my every good wish, I am

Faithfully yours,

Tommy Bidder

The President
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

PSF: Biddle

Ritz Hotel
London,
May 7, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

For your information, I am forwarding hereto attached a memorandum covering information received by Polish Foreign Minister Zaleski regarding Hitler's plan in connection with former Polish Foreign Minister Beck and other statesmen and diplomats of belligerent powers who had already, and who might in the future, become prisoners of war.

With every good wish, I am

Faithfully yours

Tony Biddle. r

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

MEMORANDUM.

5th May, 1941.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Polish Foreign Minister Zaleski tells me he has recently received information that Former Polish Foreign Minister Beck was still in Rumania. Further information which had come to Minister Zaleski within the past few days indicated that Hitler now planned to hold as prisoners of war former Minister Beck and other statesmen and diplomats of belligerent powers who had already fallen into German hands. This also would apply to statesmen and diplomats who might be captured in future. The plan, moreover, envisaged trying these men before a court at conclusion of hostilities on charges of "war-guilt". Minister Zaleski added that this information had come from several usually reliable sources.

PSF: Biddle

Ritz Hotel,
London.
9th May, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

As of possible interest, I am attaching hereto, a copy of a cable sent me from Brazzaville, by Mr. Ben Lucien Burman, representative of the North American Newspaper Alliance.

I crossed on the Clipper with him and his wife and in response to his suggestion, I said I should be very glad to receive from time to time, some word as to his reactions and observations, concerning the situation in French Equatorial Africa.

It is clear from his message, that he is very favorably impressed by the spirit of the Free French forces.

With warmest regards, I am

Faithfully yours,

Tony Biddle

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

MEMORANDUM

9th May, 1941.

Copy of a Cable sent me from Brazzaville by Mr. Ben Lucien Burman, representative of the North American Newspaper Alliance.

As you requested I have made a close study of de Gaulle's movement and of officials here. They represent the finest French. Magnificent spirit, young and old, like early American patriots. They represent every quality cherished by Americans. They are coming here every day, scientists, students, generals, labour leaders, priests and simple soldiers surmounting terrific obstacles to fight Germany. Many lose their lives in the attempt.

I think it of enormous importance that if formal recognition is impossible a formula be devised to establish official contact.

It is vital that aeroplanes and arms should be sent immediately. They are waiting and eager to fight but lack the material. I urge and urge again that you send them some aid. Supplies need not be in such vast quantities as to affect those to British but merely enough to equip some troops here and to maintain the morale of these truly heroic figures.

It is of great importance that they should not feel themselves deserted by the United States. As I have been able to see for myself, they have already accomplished much starting

with practically nothing and with our aid they can be an enormous factor in saving France and restoring her self-respect, to say nothing of her potential war-contribution.

Importance of movement and its great strategical value in African and Mediterranean campaigns has passed completely unnoticed in the United States because of lack of publicity, French here having been doing job and not talking about it.

I have gone over the situation carefully with British officers and officials here who confirm these facts. I am sure that you have found the same opinion in consulting British Foreign Office as to their views.

As you asked me I have looked at the situation here with the utmost objectivity and I am sending you this cable because of tremendous and far-reaching issues involved. I urge you to get this message to Secretary Hull and President Roosevelt at once.

I am on the spot watching events develop minute by minute and I cannot over-estimate world importance of the situation I have tried to describe here. If the de Gaulle movement is given even some slight measure of support from the United States, it can be of vast influence in rebuilding the morale of defeated French people throughout the world.

PSF: ~~Biddle~~ (Biddle folder)

PROPERTY OF THE
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Ritz Hotel,
London.
10th May, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

As of possible interest, I am forwarding hereto attached, a copy and translation of the text of the secret minutes of a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of Danzig, held under the Chairmanship of Herr Schnee, President of that body. A copy of these, among numerous other minutes of this organization, was obtained by a Polish secret service agent.

In going through his confidential files recently, a high ranking official of the Polish Government found this, among other documents, and handed me a copy in the thought that it might prove of interest to my Government. I beg to draw your attention particularly to that section of the minutes which deals with Colonel Lindberg.

With every good wish, I am

Faithfully yours,

Tom Biddle

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

10th May, 1941.

Translation of the Text of the Secret Minutes of a Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of Danzig, held under the Chairmanship of Herr Schnee.

Meeting of the local group Heeresanger (suburb of Danzig), at the elementary school, November 18, 1939, speaker, von Schnee.

The hall was well filled, and after the Party books had been remitted, the leader of the local group greeted the speaker and the assembly and invited Herr von Schnee to speak. "Politics is the knowledge of the laws of life, not only for individuals, but for all Germans and in general for all the people. That is why politics must be conducted in every country. At the beginning the policy of our Fuhrer was to fight unemployment and by his power to assure the security to his people. Thus has developed Germany's powerful position which is envied by all those who do not belong to our people. Economically speaking - I speak about the Reich, not about Danzig - what is important is that extremely favorable conditions have been created, and so our colonies have achieved a standard of life of which no other country can be so proud." The speaker spoke on production, on making petrol, rubber and wool, then he passed to politics. "The Fuhrer knows how best to exploit time, he does not lose any opportunity - should he lose such a moment, who knows what course the history of the world would take. We must imagine Germany as a large garden, the fruit is ripe, one must pick it, otherwise it will fall down and rot. You understand now why the Fuhrer takes

this particular moment under consideration. England is now in a mouse-trap - we are circumventing her. At Munich we provoked her in order to test her power. She failed miserably. Thus we see that she is not so powerful as she appears to be. Our friend Mussolini supports us helpfully and by his speeches and attitude we can see that he can be trusted - although a distrust of him will never disappear. He rules the Mediterranean now and so, England has lost her Empire there, and as one hears, she will disappear from Europe altogether. But these are only presuppositions, and it would perhaps be better for her. Now we must show an example, which must certainly occur because it would serve us to achieve what we sing in our songs: "Let us go to the East, let us drive to the East." I must be very cautious in my lecture, in order to avoid politics and not to anticipate Adolf Hitler's policy. When the Rumanian goes to England in order to make a loan he will probably not have great success, because the English have enough products from India and their colonies - but Germany needs his vineyard and something more. We have conducted favorable commercial treaties with Bulgaria and other gipsies like the Yugoslavs, but they are nothing but gipsies (loud laughter). So now- again I must express myself very carefully - we want to create a great customs union and in this we also shall be successful. You see, when the Japanese provoked quarrels with Russia, it happened on Germany's request in order to test their army. The result was

that Russia miserably failed and later it was at our request
that Lindbergh went to Russia in order to learn more about the
Russian air force. He brought us the news that Russian planes
would be a complete failure, so again we have nothing to fear
from this side. Lithuania has now taken an example from the
Sudeten-Germans. Kowno assures the people of Memel that the
Germans are conquering there. It is not nice what I must say
now, but it would be better for us should the Lithuanians kill
in Memel, at least 20 Germans, then we would be nearer our target,
for although they disarmed us by their friendly attitude towards
Memel yet one day we shall get them alright. Now a word about
Danzig. Danzig is like a child born after 7 months. It lives
by Polish food, yet miserably as Warsaw does not altogether cut
its vital artery so it may yet breathe. I want to ask you to
behave very quietly, to develop the national community
(Volksgemeinschaft) and thus to be united in one totality. The
most important aim now is the reunion of all Germans in Danzig,
and so shall we go forward, only by great union and then one
day the frontier post will fall down and it will be called
Germany."

10th May, 1941.

MEMORANDUM

Copy of the Text of the Secret Minutes of a Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of Danzig, held under the Chairmanship of Herr Schnee.

VERSAMMLUNG DER ORTSGRUPPE HEERESANGER (Danzig)
in der Grundschule am 18.11. 1938; Redner v. Schnee.

Die Aula war gut besetzt, nach Ueberreichung neuer Mitgliedsbuecher und Parteibuecher, begruesste der Ortsgruppen Leiter den Redner und die Versammelten, dann gab er dem Redner v. Schnee das Wort. Politik ist das Wissen der Lebensgesetze nicht nur fuer jeden Einzelnen sondern fuer alle Volksgenossen, ueberhaupt fuer alle Menschen. Darum muss auch in einem jeden Staat Politik gefuehrt werden. Die Politik unseres Fuehrers war von Anfang an die Bekampfung der Arbeitslosigkeit und die Sicherstellung seines Volkes durch seine Macht, so hat sich eine Machtstellung Deutschland entwickelt um die uns ein jeder der nicht zu unserem Volke gehoert, beneidet. Was wirtschaftlich anbelangt ist im Reich, ich spreche vom Reich, nicht von Danzig, die ausserst guenstigsten Verhaeltnisse geschaffen worden, denn unsere Kolonien die wir im Reich geschaffen haben, haben einen Lebensstandard herausgebildet, die es nun kein anderes Land verzeichnen kann. Nun sprach er wieder von den Erzeugnissen, von der Herstellung des Benzinkautschucks und Wolle, dann ging er in die Politik ueber. Der Fuehrer weiss die Zeit auszunuetzen, er laesst keine Gelegenheit vorbegehen, wenn er diesen

Zeitpunkt verpasst, wer weiss wie dann die Weltgeschichte aussehen wuerde denn sehen Sie, man stelle sich vor, um Deutschland ware ein grosser Garten, die Fruechte sind reif, man muss sie jetzt pfluecken, denn fallen sie ab so verfaulen sie. Sie verstehen warum nun der Fuehrer diesen Zeitpunkt wahrnimmt. England befindet sich jetzt in einer Mausefalle, diese umgehen wir, einmal in Muenchen haben wir ihn herausgefordert um seine Machtstellung zu erproben, er hat klaglich versagt, also sehen wir, dass es nicht so machtig ist, wie es zu sein scheint. Unser Freund Italien Mussolini unterstuetzt uns hilfreich, durch seine Reden und Handlungsweise ersehen wir, dass man ihm wohl vertrauen kann, obwohl ein Misstrauen ihm gegenueber wohl nie ganz verschwinden wird. Er beherrscht jetzt das Mittelmeer, so dass England die Herrschaft dort verloren hat, wie man hoert, will es ganzlich aus Europa verschwinden, aber das sind nur Mutmassungen, besser waere es allerdings fuer ihn. Wir muessen jetzt ein Exempel statuieren, das muss Kommen, denn es dient uns dazu um das durchzufuehren, was man in den Liedern besingt; nach Osten lasst uns schreiten, nach Osten lasst uns ziehn. Sie verstehen was ich meine, ich muss sehr vorsichtig reden, um keine Politik zu machen und der Politik A. Hitlers vorzugreifen. Wenn nun der Rumane nun nach England gefahren ist um eine Anleihe zu machen, so wird er wohl keine grossen Erfolge erzielen, denn seine Erzeugnisse hat der Englaender zur Genuege aus Indien und seinen Kolonien, wir aber brauchen seine Weintrauben und noch andres. Wir haben Handelsvertraege mit Bul-

garien und den anderen Zigeunern wie Jugoslawien guenstig abgeschlossen, na ja es sind doch Zigeuner (grosses Gelachter) . Und so wollen wir, ich muss das auch wiederum sehr vorsichtig betonen, eine grosse Zollunion schaffen, es wird uns auch dieses gelingen. Sehen Sie wenn der Japaner Streitigkeiten mit den Russen hervorrief, so tat er es auf Geheiss Deutschland um seine Armee zu erproben, der Erfolg war der, dass der Russe klaglich versagte, dann ging auf unser Geheiss Lindbergh nach Russland um seine Flugzeuge kennen zu lernen. Er brachte uns die Nachricht, dass diese Flugzeuge voellig versagen werden, also auch hierin nichts zu befuerchten ist. Litauen hat sich nun an den Sudetendeutschen ein Beispiel genommen, es gewahrt Kowno jetzt den Memellandern alle Massnahmen die die Deutschen dort ergreifen, es ist nicht schoen, was ich jetzt sagen muss, aber es ist fuer uns besser, wenn die Litauer in Mmemelland mindestens 20 Deutsche erschlagen wurden, dann waren wir schneller am Ziel, so entwaffnen sie uns mit ihren Freundschaftsbeziehungen zu den Memellandern, aber einmal packen wir sie doch. Nun zu Danzig, Danzig ist wie ein sieben Monatskind, es lebt wohl hervorgerufen durch die Ernahrung von Polen, aber klaglich, denn Warschau schneidet ihm die Lebensader nicht ganz durch, so dass es noch atmen kann. Ich moechte Sie nur bitten, sich ganz ruhig zu verhalten, die Volksgemeinschaft so zu pflegen und sich so zu einem Ganzen zu vereinigen, das ist jetzt die wichtigste die Zusammenfassung aller Deutschen in Danzig, dann werden wir vorwärts kommen, nur durch die grosse Einigkeit, dann wird auch einmal der Grenzpfahl fallen und der heisst Deutschland.

PSF; Biddle Folder

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 14, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR
UNDERSECRETARY WELLES:

For preparation of reply.

F. D. R.

Letter from Hon. Tony Biddle, Ritz Hotel, London, 4/22/41 to the President, forwarding a copy and translation of the text of a letter he received from Alexander Bobkowski, son-in-law of Mr. Moscicki, the former President of Poland. The letter describes the whereabouts and critical position of the members of the former Polish Government.

PSF: ~~2-1-1941~~ (Biddle's folder)

Ritz Hotel,
London.
15th May, 1941.

My dear Mr. President,

I beg to refer to my letter and enclosure of May 12, concerning "The German Threat to French Africa", and, for your further information to convey the following substance of information and observations confidentially disclosed to me by informed Allied Governmental sources here. (These include the de Gaulle Administration established in London).

With warmest regards, I am

Faithfully yours,

Tommy Biddle

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

May 15, 1941.

MEMORANDUM.

~~SECRET BY CONFIDENTIAL~~

Supplementing the information contained in the memorandum attached to my letter of May 12, 1941, regarding "The German threat to French Africa", I beg to report the following substance of information and observations confidentially disclosed to me by informed Allied Government sources here. (These include the de Gaulle Administration established in London.)

It is believed by my informants that in attempting to estimate what might be expected of France, one should bear in mind that Admiral Darlan visualized France's replacing Italy in a "No.2" role in a "New German Order" with Spain a possible "No.3" and Italy at the bottom of the list. He moreover pictured himself the "No.1" of the sea forces of such an alignment. Contributing to this turn of mind, it is believed that Darlan felt that a France restored in a democratic sphere of influence, would be discredited for several generations; that her prestige would likewise have seriously suffered throughout her Colonial domain to the extent that Frenchmen even there, would be the objects of ridicule.

On the other hand, however, a France reconstructed within the framework of a "New German Order" would, by reason of effective French collaboration towards a German victory, enjoy the support of German force and prestige throughout the French colonies - the colonial native populations would be made to respect the French.

Most recent news indicated that the French military authorities in Syria had for some time been shipping to the Raschid Ali forces in Iraq, important quantities of guns and ammunition which had been stored in Syria. This, together with an expected rapid increase in German aerial invasion of Syria, might force the British to action in that country. Were this to come about, it is believed that Britain would have to count with the likelihood of Darlan's using this as a pretext to turn the French Fleet against Britain.

Of connected bearing, several of my informants, and especially the official of the de Gaulle Administration, expressed the opinion that after witnessing events in France and Syria, there was little if any reason to expect Morocco, any more

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

than Vichy or Syria, to resist German pressure when Hitler was ready to exert it thereon in full. At any rate, it was wiser from a tactical point of view, to expect nothing from Morocco in the form of resistance and to set up the strategical plan accordingly.

In connection with this opinion, my informants drew my attention to the steady, infact increasing, infiltration of Germans into Morocco, as well as to a confidential report they had recently received indicating that General Weygand had turned down the offer of the officer commanding the Spanish troops in Spanish Morocco, to consult with a view to setting up the framework of collaboration in event it became necessary to defend their respective territories against potential German action.

The substance of the foregoing disclosures, which I am hereby passing on in the thought that it might prove helpful in piecing together the picture in the making, indicates to my mind that developments are now leading to an early show-down between the British and the French.

Ritz Hotel,
London,
May 12, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

For your information I am attaching hereto, a confidential memorandum containing in substance, certain intelligence reports and observations concerning the "German threat to French Africa", as imparted to me by M. Rene Pleven, Director of Foreign and Economic Affairs, and Secretary General of the Council of Defense of the Empire of the de Gaulle forces, (previous to France's collapse, he was a member of the Joint Anglo-French Purchasing Commission). I beg to draw your particular attention to this memorandum.

Attached moreover to this memorandum are Annexes
(A) Juridical position of France in relation to Morocco;
(B) A report on the situation in French West Africa (Dakar);
(C) Position of the French Fleet under the control of Vichy (as of early April, 1941).

In stating the "de Gaulle" case, M. Pleven emphasized that from the very outset, Brazzaville's road had been marked by "tough sledding". The British had straight-a-way extended a friendly and encouraging hand, and, within the limits of their capacity, material assistance. Brazzaville was deeply appreciative. The men and women who composed the French forces were real people - French patriots of intelligence and backbone - people animated by the same kind of spirit which had inspired our people in their struggle for the independence and liberty of the United States.

The position occupied by the de Gaulle forces in French Equatorial Africa was, from the strategic standpoint, becoming more and more important vis-a-vis Morocco, as well as the Dakar area - not to mention the air routes from Takoradi to Khartoum. In fact, were the German air force to engage in a Morocco-based aerial thrust in the direction
of

The President

The White House

Washington, D.C.

of Takoradi or even across the routes leading therefrom, it might become necessary to establish an alternative aeroplane assembly plant at Pointe Noire, French Equatorial Africa. In such case, this center could be made to serve the same purpose as does Takoradi at present. Besides, there was a railway from Pointe Noire to Brazzaville, and river transportation thence to Benan.

M. Pleven ventured the hope on part of himself and his associates, that Washington might see its way clear to make some gesture of sympathy and understanding to Brazzaville.

In this connection, he said Brazzaville found itself constantly faced with difficulties. For example, about four weeks ago, the authorities concerned in Washington, had refused Export Licences for shipment of Iron Hoops for cotton bales to French Equatorial Africa. Arrangements for their shipment therefore, had had to be made to a British colonial port, costly in terms both of loss of time and added expense.

He then pointed out that recent reports indicated that the United States was shipping to Morocco 10,000 tons of petrol, 6,000 tons of kerosene, and 1,000 tons of lubricants. Other reports indicated the shipment of cotton goods to Dakar. This would add to Brazzaville's difficulties in that Nazi agents in their machinations vis-a-vis the Cameroons and Equatorial Africa, would more than likely attempt to sow seeds of discontent amongst the latter by playing up the benefits thus accruing to the natives as well as the White populations of Morocco and Senegal.

Of connected bearing, he said that while Brazzaville purchases were handled by the British, it would greatly simplify and facilitate business between French Equatorial Africa and the United States, if Washington might see its way clear towards approving the setting up of "Special Accounts" in the names of French Equatorial Africa and of the French Cameroons.

He earnestly hoped moreover, that Washington would honor the passports issued at Brazzaville, for French law provided for the issuance of passports by the Governor of a French colony, during a period of emergency.

Then too, there was the question of several ships which the Free French forces had commandeered in order to prevent their falling into German hands. These were formerly the property

property of the Messagerie Maritime. Brazzaville would now like to assign them as carriers in the chrome and nickel trade from New Caledonia. This desire however, gave rise to a serious question, i.e. whether the authorities of the United States would treat the ships as free from impeachment.

In conclusion, I should like to point out that the fact that M. Pleven has from time to time disclosed confidential information to me, is in part due to our former close contact previous to France's collapse. At that time, he was a member of the Joint Anglo-French Purchasing Commission, and on several occasions his cooperation served very helpfully towards my carrying out my Mission near the Polish Government at Angers. Moreover, I subsequently came into frequent contact with him during the period of my Special Mission to the French Government - up to the date when he left for Brazzaville to organize the de Gaulle Administration there, I regarded him as a serious, sincere, courageous and intelligent patriot.

With warmest regards, I am

Faithfully yours,

Tony Biddle

May 12, 1941

MEMORANDUM

The German threat to French Africa, as confidentially disclosed to me by Monsieur Rene Pleven, Director of Foreign and Economic Affairs and Secretary General of the Council of Defense of the Empire, of the de Gaulle Forces. Attached hereto is Annex A, covering the Juridical position of France in relation to Morocco; Annex B, a report on the situation in French West Africa (Dakar); Annex C, position of the French Fleet under the control of Vichy. (as of early April, 1941).

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

In handing me the aforementioned and attached reports, Mr. Pleven expressed the belief that the substance thereof might prove of interest to my Government. At the same time, he urged that they be treated in **utmost** confidence.

He then confidentially revealed that information he had received during the past few days indicated that the German hold over the Protectorate of French Morocco had seriously increased. This deterioration of the situation had been marked by the following factors:

1) The personnel of the Armistice Commission had been raised to more than 200. Whereas until now, it had been centered in Casa Blanca, it would soon establish itself at Fedala, Marrakesh, Fez, Meknes, and Rabat. A General would shortly be appointed at the head of the Commission, and was said to be arriving about May 15.

2) Rumors were circulating in the Protectorate to effect that 200 German airmen were expected in Casa Blanca. Moreover, according to unconfirmed reports, the German delegates at Wiesbaden had declared their intention of setting up an airbase in Casa Blanca.

3) Vichy - and especially M. de Brinon, was issuing a large number of visas to Germans of all categories who were sent to strengthen the 5th column in the Protectorate. General Nogues and General Weygand were trying to restrict the number of these arrivals by stressing the great feeling aroused among the population, and the harmful activity of the Germans among the natives. Several cases had arisen over people coming from Tangiers with visas signed by de Brinon and being refused entry to the French Protectorate. The vast majority of the Germans arrived by Algiers - where Darlan's vassal, Admiral Abrial, was in command, or by Ujda. Weygand and Nogues were powerless to stem the tide.

4) German propaganda among the natives was being steadily intensified. Moreover, the German officials made no secret of this fact. During a recent interview, the German consul in Tetouan declared to his French colleague, that the representatives of the Reich could not be held responsible for the spontaneous feelings of good will manifested to them by the native population. A German officer had made contact with the Glaoui of Marrakesh, but had apparently received a cool reception.

5) The great majority of the population was not deceived by the intense anti-British and anti-de Gaulle propaganda in which Vichy was indulging. 90 percent of the people continued to regard a British victory as their only hope of salvation - and desired it ardently. The French radio broadcast programs from London were always listened to with great attention. However, by replacing certain officials by its own men, and above all, thanks to the spirit which prevailed in the navy, the Vichy Government had succeeded in establishing in Morocco a regime similar to that of the Gestapo. Any demonstration of feeling in favor of Great Britain or of General de Gaulle was virtually prohibited.

The population did not however hide its anti-German feelings. In the various Governments of the Administration, despite the changes made since the Armistice, a large number of officials remained hostile to the policy of Vichy, and this hostility increased as the German hold became stronger.

This state of mind might one day become a factor of Prime importance.

6) In January last, when German uniforms had first made their appearance in Casa Blanca, the reaction of the French population was expressed by the often repeated wish: "if only the Americans would come and rid us of these people". The latest reports from Morocco confirmed the fact that this feeling had been steadily growing. The prestige of the United States

was

was very high in the Protectorate and, in respect of the Americans, there existed none of that suspicion which Vichy had managed to arouse in certain quarters vis-a-vis the British.

With the exception of the navy, the French authorities in Morocco had received very favorably the suggestion made by M. Monick, Secretary General of the Protectorate, of close economic collaboration with the United States which would result in a virtual "commercial invasion" of the Protectorate by the United States, and would thus hold the Germans in check. In order to realize this idea - excellent in itself - a long lapse of time was unfortunately necessary. German penetration was taking place so rapidly, and threatened to take a form such that an economic conquest of Morocco by the United States could not be achieved in time. In addition, it would be ineffective against the military menace and would probably merely accelerate the German seizure of Morocco. Already, the German hold over the country was such that it could be argued that there was very grave danger in a policy of sending supplies to Morocco. In present circumstances and in view of the developing threat, the supply of petrol, for instance ran the risk of providing fuel for the squadrons of the Luftwaffe, for the German mechanized units which might come across Spain, or for the Vichy troops which might on instructions from the Germans, try to reconquer the colonies which Free France was keeping outside the sphere of the Armistice.

From the United States, a visit which would be at the

same

same time a demonstration of friendship and a display of strength would meet more effectually the needs of the moment. It would be received with relief and great joy, both by the French and by the native population of Morocco.

The difficulties with which Germany was meeting in Egypt and in the Near East, might provide a favorable occasion for such a move.

Collaboration on an important scale from the high ranks of the Administration and the army would undoubtedly be given to whom ever would deliver Morocco from the German menace.

7) From the military point of view, the following figures could be given.

One Commander in Chief of the French army in Morocco, General Verges - a man of weak character - disposed of about 50,000 men, divided up fairly evenly over the Protectorate. In case of need, these troops could be reinforced by the calling up of reservists, and by Moroccan formations. However, they had little ammunition and practically no modern materiel (anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft guns, mechanized transport).

They had only about 100 tanks or armored cars.

In early April, the French naval forces stationed at Casa Blanca consisted of: a 35,000 ton battleship, the "Jean-Bart", not yet completed; 4 destroyers, 3 torpedo boats, and 15 submarines under the command of Admiral d'Harcourt, in his own words, "the least anti-British of the French Admirals."

The air force's (600-700) machines, to a great extent
paralysed

paralysed by German supervision, were under the command of General d'Astier, a brave soldier and a good Frenchman who was doing his best.

In the Spanish zone, including Tangiers, there were about 120 - 130,000 men, both Spanish and natives, among whom a few Germans had managed ^{to} insinuate themselves. These troops had a certain amount of mechanized transport but practically no aircraft apart from the German machines which could be sent from the bases established in southern Spain.

8) German penetration in other parts of Africa:

- (a) French West Africa (Dakar) - see Annex B attached.
- (b) Southern Algeria and the Sahara. As a result of the visit of Admiral Platon at the beginning of April to Southern Algeria, the Sahara, and the Niger, it was reported that 300 German experts were expected to arrive in the Colomb-Becher region to carry out preliminary work, in connection with the Trans-Saharan Railway. This obviously furnished a convenient pretext for German penetration into the very heart of Africa.
- (c) Rio de Oro. Moreover the arrival of a large number of Germans in Rio de Oro - between Morocco and French West Africa was reported from Portuguese sources. Already Villa-Cisneros was said to have been transferred into a submarine base.

All these facts to which should be added the exception of Libya - showed that the Germans definitely intended to gain control of North and West Africa. Prompt action alone could prevent the realization of a plan which, if successful, would greatly influence the future development of the war.

In this respect it should undoubtedly be recognized that the Allies were faced with a wholly unscrupulous adversary. When Germany was in need of a strategic base she did not hesitate to occupy a country by force if necessary. Such methods were very regretful; but whoever wanted to win this war could not rule them out completely; no, no more than he could do without tanks and planes.

ANNEX A
NOTE ON THE JURIDICAL POSITION OF
FRANCE IN RELATION TO THE MOROCCAN EMPIRE

In her efforts to establish her protectorate of Morocco, France proceeded by stages. During the first period, marked by the conferences of Madrid (1880) and Algeiras (1906), she took part in the establishment of a regime of international control of the Moroccan Empire. At that time, she partially succeeded in obtaining the recognition of her special political interests resulting from her common frontier with Algeria.

In the second period, from 1904 to 1928, France endeavoured to obtain recognition, from the Powers which had political or economic interests in Morocco, of her right to complete liberty of action. To that end, she was obliged to conclude agreements with each of these Powers, often at the cost of considerable sacrifices. By the Convention of April 8th, 1904, Great Britain declared that she was not opposed to the development of the French political influence in Morocco. In exchange, France allowed England full liberty of action in Egypt. The Franco-Spanish convention of 1904, completed by the Agreement of 1905, recognised France's special rights in Morocco, resulting from her position as a neighboring Power with an extended common frontier. Spain, for her part, was granted rights on the coast of North Africa.

By the Franco-German Agreement of 1909, Germany declared that she had no political interest in Morocco. The French Government, resolved to safeguard economic equality in the Moroccan Empire, stated its intention not to interfere with Germany's commercial and industrial interests.

A second Franco-German treaty, signed on November 4th 1911, gave France complete freedom to assist the Moroccan Government. In exchange for the "protective rights" thus obtained over the Moroccan Empire, France ceded to Germany vast territories in Equatorial Africa.

Once assured of her liberty of action vis-a-vis the other Powers, France had then to have her protectorate accepted by the Moroccan Empire itself. For this purpose, a treaty was concluded at Fez on March 30th 1912. This agreement, which defined the juridical relations between France - the protecting Power - and the Moroccan Empire - the protected Power - confirmed the Sultan's acceptance of the provisions of the Franco-German Treaty of 1911. Its principal clauses were designed:

- 1) to allow the French Government to introduce administrative, legal, scolastic, economic, financial and military reforms;
- 2) to permit French military occupation of a part or of the whole of the Moroccan territory;
- 3) to oblige the French Government to safeguard the religious position, the respect and traditional prestige of the Sultan, the exercise of the Musulman religion and the functioning of the religious institutions;

- 4) to oblige the French Government to protect the Sultan or his successor, at all times, against any attempt on his person or his throne, or compromising the security of his States;
- 5) to allow the French Government the initiative as regards all measures necessitated by the Protectorate regime and having to be enacted by the Sultan;
- 6) to entrust the task of representing the French Government to a Resident-General with full powers to act in Morocco in the name of the Republic.

(The Resident-General is the Sultan's only intermediary in his relations with the representatives of Foreign Powers and in their relations with the Government of Morocco. He is, above all, responsible for all questions connected with foreigners in the Moroccan Empire.

He has power to approve and to promulgate, in the name of the French Government, all decrees enacted by the Sultan).

- 7) to entrust the French diplomatic and consular agents with the representation and the protection of Moroccan subjects and interests abroad.
- 8) to forbid the Sultan to conclude any Act of an international character without the previous consent of the French Governor.

* * * * *

The establishment of the Protectorate has left France with a certain number of restrictions imposed upon her by the international agreements she had previously signed. For instance, in the economic sphere, her liberty of action is limited by the obligation to maintain complete equality of treatment between all nations, to which she subscribed in the Franco-British Treaty of 1904 and in the Franco-German Agreement of 1911. Restrictions

are also imposed upon her in the financial sphere, especially as regards the operation of the State Bank of Morocco.

From the political standpoint, the position is different. In view of the renunciation by the other States of the right to exercise any political influence over Morocco, France is free to act as she thinks fit in this domain. The only limitations which can be imposed on her are those resulting from the Protectorate Treaty itself.

It follows that, should France not fulfill her obligations as a protecting Power, no other nation would have the right to take her place. Even Spain - who, through her geographical situation and the zone of Morocco which she possesses, might be considered to be in a privileged position - cannot invoke any clause which would allow her to take the place of France should the latter default.

(As far as the United States are concerned, they definitely affirmed at the Conference of Algeiras in 1906, their political disinterestedness in Morocco. A declaration by the United States delegate which figures as an annex to the final Act of the Conference, stressed the fact that the American Government had no political interests in Morocco and that in participating in the work of the Conference it had merely wished to help to ensure to all nations the most complete equality in Morocco as regards commerce, treatment and rights. Consequently, the American Government declined any obligation or responsibility at the time when the settlements adopted by the Conference would be put into force).

Could the Sultan take advantage of the non-observance by France of her obligations under the Treaty (in particular, those of Article 6 which states: the Government of the Republic agrees to protect His Majesty the Sultan of Morocco at all times against any attempt on his person or his throne, or compromising the security of his States) to declare the Treaty to have lapsed and to ask for the protection of another Power?

Theoretically, there is nothing to prevent it. But it should be observed that the Protectorate Treaty contains no stipulations regarding any differences which might arise as to its interpretation or its application and that, on the other hand, there is no international authority competent to decide on the observance or non-observance by France of the obligations which she undertook by the Treaty of 1912.

On the other hand, the fact that during the Conference of Algeiras, America made it absolutely clear that from the political standpoint she had no interests in Morocco, can be considered as conferring upon her a greater liberty of action to take, as regards Morocco, whatever measures the security of the American continent might necessitate.

ANNEX B

FRENCH WEST AFRICA

I. State of Public Opinion

The attitude of weakness and inertia displayed by the population of French West Africa as a whole arises out of the fact that this population feels itself to be very far from Europe and is quite unconscious of the danger of the Germans seizing control. "Why begin the struggle again since we are fortunately out of danger" is a very common expression.

On the whole, public opinion is in favor of Free France and the Allied cause, but this feeling is no more than passive and purely platonic.

As in North Africa, the upper ranks in the Army and the Administrations remain faithful to the Vichy Government. The same is, of course, true of the naval officers.

II. German Penetration in West Africa.

Long before the war, a veritable Fifth Column existed in French West Africa, composed of Germans and Italians, ostensibly Jews, anti-Fascists and anti-Nazis. It had many accomplices - both witting and unwitting - in the Administration and the Police. Since the Armistice, these agents have redoubled activity. Dr. Klauke, ex-director of the Lufthansa at Bathurst, is at their head. He has at his disposal a widespread Intelligence Service, and co-ordinates the work of Italian and German agents. He makes frequent visits to Morocco by air.

The method of penetration is as follows: Officers and N.C.O.'s are despatched in civilian clothes, with the complicity of the local Administration, which thus conciliates its attitude - apparently irreproachable - with what it terms "the necessities of the Armistice and of defeat". All the German supervisory agents have foreign passports (Swiss, Belgian, Swedish, etc.). They arrive in Dakar either by 'plane or amongst the passengers on French ships coming from Morocco; they land under cover of darkness, helped by the police of the port. On arrival, they are immediately taken to the homes of "reliable" persons.

During the months of January, February and March, six additional naval officers arrived in this manner. The German agents manage to mingle with the Jewish refugees who have arrived in recent months, a fact which makes it difficult to track them down.

The end of March saw the arrival of an Austrian officer of the German navy, sent to "control and organize supplies for German submarines off Dakar and at a point on the coast where this officer is to set up a supply base with the help of agents on the spot whose mission it was to prepare the ground".

None of the German or Italian officers or N.C.O.'s wears uniforms.

To sum up, it can be said that:

- (a) The Italians are in the subordinate role of agents;
- (b) The Germans (alone accredited to a very small number of high military and civilian personalities) centralize and make use of the information obtained;
- (c) A certain number of experts (about a dozen German naval officers) prepare the ground for the subsequent transformation of the region of Dakar into a supply-base for submarines. Their method is to camouflage this base to as great an extent as possible, with the aid of the means indicated above. They are above all suspicious of the friends and "connections" of the American consul in Dakar, who is closely watched.

III. Military situation

The military and naval forces are at present of the following order of magnitude:

(a) ARMY

25,000 - 30,000 men, mostly natives, with white officers and N.C.O.'s. They are well-armed and well-equipped, but have practically no mechanized forces. There are about 25 tanks and 30 armoured cars. Stocks of munitions and petrol are abundant.

(b) AVIATION

There are at present very few aeroplanes stationed in French West Africa, but it must be remembered that, by air, North Africa is only a few hours away. The Air Force in North Africa is estimated at about 800 'planes, about 500 of which are said to be in running order. In West Africa, there are considerable stocks of aviation petrol and several excellent aerodromes.

(c) Navv

One 33,000-ton battleship ("Richalieu"), out of commission and able to be used only as a floating battery.

Two 8,000-ton cruisers

One repair ship for submarines (the "Jules Verne")

Two destroyers

One torpedo-boat

Eight to ten submarines

Six sloops.

In addition to the crews of these ships, large numbers of naval personnel have been taken to Dakar since September 1940. They are said to amount to at least 15,000. Appropriately embodied, this element could constitute shock troops, more effective perhaps than all the native Army troops whose morale is only mediocre.

ANNEX C.

PSF Biddle

Position of the French Fleet under the control of Vichy.
(as of early April, 1941.)

- 1) TOULON:
 - 2 Battleships ("Strasbourg" and "Provence")
 - 4 Cruisers of 10,000 tons.
 - 3 Cruisers of 8,000 tons.
 - 17 Torpedo-boat destroyers.
 - 12 Torpedo-boats.
 - 20 Submarines.

- 2) ORAN:
 - 1 Battleship ("Dunkerque"), of which the repairs are greatly advanced, and can soon be put into service again.
 - 3 Torpedo-boats.
 - 4 Submarines.

- 3) BIZERTE:
 - 6 Torpedo-boats.
 - 6 Submarines.

- 4) BEYROUTH:
 - 2 Torpedo-boat destroyers.
 - 4 Despatch-boats.
 - 6 Submarines.

- 5) CASABLANCA:
 - 1 Battleship of 35,000 tons ("Jean-Bart"), which has been actively worked upon, but which is not yet ready.
(no ammunition)
 - 4 Torpedo-boat destroyers.
 - 3 Torpedo-boats.
 - 15 Submarines.

- 6) DAKAR:
 - 1 Battleship of 35,000 tons ("Richelieu"), immobilized, can only serve as a floating battery.
 - 2 Cruisers of 8,000 tons.
 - 1 Submarine training ship, ("JULES-VERNE")
 - 2 Torpedo-boat destroyers.
 - 1 Torpedo-boat.
 - 8 or 10 Submarines.
 - 6 Despatch-boats.

- 7) MADAGASCAR - EXTREME-ORIENT.
 - 6 Submarines.

PSF Biddle

PSF; Biddle folder

Ritz Hotel

London,

May 15, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

While the British press in its first wave of reaction treated the dramatic arrival of Herr Hess in Scotland as an event in effect, worth more than a military victory in the field, my experience in observing Nazi Germany's subtle machinations from several now German-occupied European capitols, led me to keep an open mind as to the real significance of this event.

Accordingly, I felt that while Herr Hess might conceivably be a refugee from Nazi Party conflict, as a result of opposition to closer collaboration with Russia, the possibility should not be overlooked that his sudden arrival here might be a subtle card played by Herr Hitler on the one hand, to inspire confusion in England and doubt as well as confusion in Turkey, Spain and France, and on the other hand, as a spur to the isolationists in the United States.

In a desire to ascertain the reaction of someone in whose judgment of Nazi mentality I had confidence, I consulted Lieutenant Joseph S. Lipski, former Polish Ambassador to Germany, and now Aide-de-Camp, in capacity of political adviser, to General Sikorski.

Emphasizing that in effect his views were in accord with mine, as above set forth, he pointed out that the alleged discovery of letters in Germany after the departure of Herr Hess was characteristic of Nazi technique. This "discovery" had afforded Berlin radio pretext to play up the alleged disclosure of the letters - that the purpose of Herr Hess' daring voyage had been to discuss peace. This was all part of the game to inspire confusion and doubt here and abroad.

Lipski then said that in watching carefully for further traces

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

traces of Nazi technique, he had found that while the first German communique had implied that Herr Hess was mentally deranged, the subsequent communique had significantly ceased to stress this point. Still later communiqués marked him down in effect as an idealist.

Moreover, further word coming out of Germany had given the impression that about the only serious complaint against Herr Hess was his disobedience of Herr Hitler's rule against his officials' traveling by air.

My informant moreover pointed out the significant absence of news as to resultant purge of any importance. My informant felt moreover that in conceiving this dramatic move, Herr Hitler had been motivated mainly by dread of America's possible entry into the war. Hence, he had timed it in advance of President Roosevelt's awaited speech. Moreover, Hitler's timing had perhaps, from the standpoint of its potential effect on British public opinion, even had regard for his heralded meeting with Stalin.

In view of the foregoing, among other points, my informant was unhappy over the scope and tone of publicity play-up which the British press had devoted to the event. It had lacked organized thought, - in fact, it had merely played into Herr Hitler's hands. He felt that Mr. Churchill would do well to put an end to this press play-up, and at the earliest moment make some statement which would serve once and for all, to clear any doubts and confusion which might have arisen both here and abroad as a result of the incident. On the other hand, if subtly handled, Herr Hess' presence here could be made to serve most usefully.

Lipski then revealed that General Sikorski had requested him to render a full report of his observations for Mr. Churchill.

With warmest regards, I am

Faithfully yours,

Tony Bisselgr.

PSF: ~~Bland~~ (Biddle folder)

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Ritz Hotel,
May 17, 1941.
London.

My dear Mr. President:

For your information, I am attaching hereto a confidential memorandum setting forth certain information from Allied Government sources, bearing directly and indirectly upon Russia's position - and my personal observations thereon.

In that this information comes to me from officials of Allied Government circles who have long been students of Russia's position and of affairs bearing thereon, and who have their own secret channels of intelligence reporting, I feel that their disclosures might conceivably prove helpful in rounding out the picture in the making.

With warmest regards, and every good wish, I am

Faithfully yours,

Tom Biddle r

The President
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

May 7, 1941

MEMORANDUM

Information from Allied Government
sources bearing directly and indirectly
on Russia's position.

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

Information from Czeck sources and observations regarding:

1) Moscow's position in light of Stalin's internal-Political
move.

2) Information from Polish sources and observations

(a) on reports in Turkey, as of last Autumn, indicating
Berlin pressure on Moscow for collaboration in
further Middle Eastern adventures;

(b) regarding repercussions in Teheran;

(c) concerning still unconfirmed reports of early
attempt by Stockholm to bring Helsinki into a
"Friendship and Guaranty" Pact.

3) Concerning concentration of about 3 divisions of
German troops in Tromsø-Kirkeness Area of Norway.

1) - Czechoslovak Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr.
Hubert Ripka, today informed me that his Government had
received information

(a) that in April, German technicians had been sent
into German-occupied Poland and into Rumania with orders

to

to complete the perfection of communications by May 15;

(b) that there had arisen a difference of opinion in military and inner political circles in Russia as to the merits of Russia's collaboration with Germany.

He then pointed out that there were now, large concentrations of German troops in Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria.

Taking these, among other indications into consideration, and having an understanding of the Russian mentality, he was inclined to interpret Stalin's recent assumption of Office of Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars, as a move to gain a tighter grip on internal affairs - preparatory to meeting a nearby crisis - whether he decided to trade or fight it out with Germany.

He thought moreover, that Hitler would consider it necessary to bring Moscow to an early definite understanding in order, among other reasons,

(a) to assure access to fuel and grain sources essential to conduct of a prolonged war; and

(b) to minimize the risk of a two-front conflict in event of an attempted German invasion of England.

2) Of pertinent bearing, Polish Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Arciszewski, revealed

(a) that as far back as late Autumn, 1940, when he was in Turkey, there was considerable talk that Germany was urging

urging Russia to collaborate in a thrust to the Middle East, scheduled to commence May 15th;

(b) Today a cable from the Polish Minister in Teheran indicated that an atmosphere of panic prevailed there. It was felt by the people that with further trouble in Iraq, and in event the Iraqi forces gained the upper hand, the Russians would seize the northern ^{portion} ~~position~~ of Iran.

Minister Arciszewski went on to say that, taking these and other items of information into consideration, both he and Polish Foreign Minister Zaleski, were inclined to believe that Germany's play vis-a-vis Russia, envisaged forcing her into a more than hitherto positive form of collaboration, in terms, both of assured German access to Russian fuel and grain supplies, and of further joint adventures in the direction of India;

(c) Of connected bearing, Minister Arciszewski then said that his Government's still unconfirmed reports from Helsinki and Stockholm indicated 1/ that Swedish Foreign Minister Gunther, was due to arrive in Helsinki tomorrow (May 8) with a view to inviting Helsinki into a "Friendship and Guaranty" Pact; 2/ that Stockholm's move in this regard had been encouraged, if not inspired, by Moscow; 3/ that Finland had recently come distinctly under German influence; and 4/ that this condition, together with a growing spirit of revenge against Russia, left
little

little ground for hope that Helsinki would accept Stockholm's offer.

3) - Of further connected bearing, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Lie, disclosed that a Norwegian observer, recently arrived here from Finland, after journeying through that country from Tromsø, reported the following; (I immediately transmitted this information to General Lea, Military Attache at the American Embassy to the Court of St. James.)

(a) Concentration of about 60,000 (young) German troops, or three divisions with full equipment in the Tromsø-Kirkeness area;

(b) The presence of a number of transport ships off the coast of that area;

(c) His belief that these troops had been shipped there by boat from southern Norway;

(d) The purchase of several hundred pairs of skiis in Finland, for use of these troops. (He had seen a large shipment of them in transit).

Commenting on the foregoing, Minister Lie said that in attempting to interpret the purpose of this move, he and his associates felt that while on the one hand, it might envisage a thrust in any one of the following directions: Iceland, or Spitsbergen (including the islands of Jan Mayen and Baer), or Greenland, on the other hand, it might be aimed as a move to bring

bring pressure on Sweden and Finland directly, and on Russia indirectly. With reference to Spitsbergen, the Minister pointed out that an airbase there could, among other purposes, be made to serve as a link in air traffic between Germany and Japan, in event that traffic across Russia were interrupted.

In this connection, I am personally inclined to feel that this troop concentration envisages serving a two-fold purpose by stages: in the first, or present stage, pressure directly on Sweden and Finland - and indirectly on Russia; in the second stage, a pivotal spring-board for northern or westward action.

The foregoing, among other information, does not to my mind, necessarily indicate immediate German action vis-a-vis Russia; rather, it suggests a characteristic German play for pressuring position (bearing in mind, however, that the plan undoubtedly envisages a position sufficiently strong to afford effective action, if pressure failed to attain desired results).

At the same time, reports from many informed sources indicate to my mind, that Russia is neither ready nor willing to become involved in military action at this time, and that Mr. Stalin would go far to appease Herr Hitler. Whether, however, appeasement might take the oft suggested form either (a) of permitting German railway brigades and "technicians" to take over supervision of transportation as well as fuel and grain resources in the Ukraine, as a means of guaranteeing German access thereto; or (b) collaboration in further eastward-bound adventures; or both, remains to be seen.

Several

Several points which from Herr Hitler's standpoint seem to be taking on more definite color are (a) his effort to prepare the basis for a war of longer duration; and (b) that he may be expected to exploit Russia's apparent weakness to the maximum degree.

Among other reports which contribute to my reactions on this score are the following:

(a) Stalin's recent closing down of the Norwegian and Yugoslav Missions in Moscow. In this connection, Norwegian official circles here attribute this directly to German pressure;

(b) The retention in office of Molotov who has been so closely associated with the policy of collaboration with Germany;

(c) Polish Abbey Kaczynski's statement to me concerning the observations of his brother, one of Warsaw's foremost electrical engineers, after his escape from Russia where he had been held prisoner: After his brother was taken captive during the war in Poland, he was placed in a prison camp. One day when the Russian authorities discovered he was an expert on electric power plants, they took him out of the camp, and placed him in charge of a large public utility plant in one of the larger centers near the frontier. A man of military experience, as well, he had the opportunity to observe the character and condition of Russian military forces, not only in Russian-occupied Poland but also behind this area. He said that while what he saw in the Polish area was impressive, it might be marked down as a "show window" - for the troops behind this area might best be described as "sloppy", and poorly equipped. He was convinced that Russia was not ready to deal with a characteristic German Blitz attack.

file
personal

May 20, 1941.

Dear Margaret:

Thank you ever so much for your letter which was most interesting. Please do it often.

As you may know, I have had to take it easy for the last couple of weeks but I am feeling very much better now and am starting in again with a regular schedule.

I hear such nice things about both you and Tony and it is certainly a comfort to know that you are both there. Do take care of yourselves and write me again soon.

Affectionately,

Mrs. A. J. Drexel Biddle,
The Ritz Hotel,
London, England.

mal/dj

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 19, 1941

MISSY:

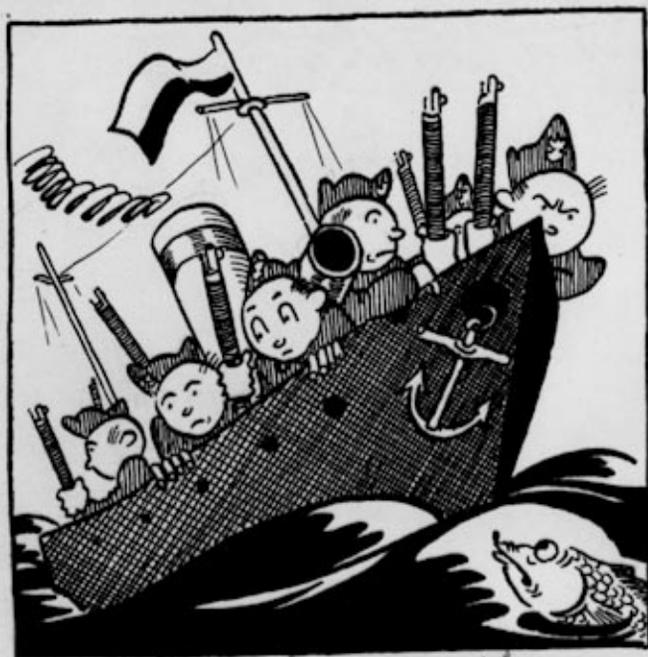
To prepare a nice letter to
Margaret from me.

F.D.R.

Poles in Scotland
according to a
Polish Artist

Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.
Ambassador of the United States of America

Mrs. Biddle



1. Poles Leaving France

In eyes of Polish
artist M. Walentynowicz

1) Leaving France



2 Poles arriving in Scotland

2) The wounded Polish
soldier arriving
Scotland



3. First meeting in Scotland

3) First meeting
in Scotland

III



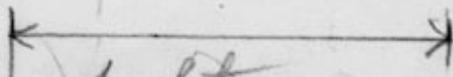
4 - Second meeting in Scotland

4) Second meeting
in Scotland



5 - Scottish Paradise

5) "Scottish" Paradise
after long privacy



~~predstavu~~

~~scadly rysumek oddielnic~~

*File B.F. Biddle folder
personal*

Copy of Air Marshal Sir Charles Portal's
last words to Bomber Command upon leaving
and taking farewell of the Officers.

If you can keep yourself from going crackers
At all the things that you're advised to do;
When Hitler sends his horrid air attackers
With squibs and bombs to try and frighten you;
If you can hear that hellish Banshee warning
Without that sinking feeling in your breast;
If you can sleep in dugouts till the morning
And never feel you ought to have more rest;
If you can laugh at every blackout stumble
Nor murmur when you cannot find a pub;
If you can eat your ration and not grumble
About the wicked price you pay for grub;
If you can keep depression down to zero
And view it all as just a bit of fun;
Then, Sir, you'll be a bloody hero,
And what is more, you'll be the only one!

May 27th 1941
London.

Dear Mr. President -
I am enclosing
a little poem which
I thought might amuse
you.

Most of the people in
London will be up very
early tomorrow morning.
We are all setting our
alarm clocks so as
to hear your "fireside
talk" —

my love to you —

As always,

Margaret Biddle

PSF: Biddle Folder

*It
Personal*

Ritz Hotel,
London,
May 29, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

I had the pleasure of an hours' audience with King George yesterday. My visit took place just after he had heard a full recording of your historic and magnificent address. He was discernibly moved and described your speech as a momentous, powerful, and stirring utterance, which he and his people greeted as a welcome encouragement at this critical period of the war.

The rest of our conversation might be characterized as a "Tour d'horizon", and I noted with interest his clear grasp of current developments as well as his realistic outlook in relation to those in the making.

Please accept Margaret's and my most sincere congratulations on your truly magnificent message. We were deeply moved and genuinely thrilled by this further mark of your courageous intelligence and grand leadership.

With warmest regards and every good wish, I am

Faithfully yours,

Tony Biddle, Jr.

The President

The White House,
Washington, D.C.

PSF: Biddle Folder
pages 1-41

Hyde Park, N. Y.,
May 31, 1941.

Dear Tony:-

Your notes and memoranda sent
about May seventh are of extraordinary
interest. Ever so many thanks. Keep up
the good work.

My love to Margaret.

As ever yours,

Honorable J. Anthony Drexel Biddle,
Ritz Hotel,
London,
England.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 31, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE SECRETARY OF STATE

I think these letters
from Biddle will interest you.
Please let me have them back
for my files.

F. D. R.