Evacuation Tn th Through Turkey, V - 8, Fld 1
3.6 - SHIPS FOR EVACUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ships, Port, Location</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hills, Harwich, Salem, Massachusetts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware, Pennsylvania</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Boats without safe Conduct</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cebu, Philippines</td>
<td></td>
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WAR REFUGEE BOARD RECORDS
Reference is made to your 64, June 29. Preliminary investigations here have disclosed the following information with regard to the cessation of movement of refugees from Constanza to Istanbul in May and June.

The sinking of the KARITZA occasioned the withdrawal on the part of the Bulgarian authorities of permission to release ships for refugee purposes. The Bulgarians fear the loss of additional small ships and the Germans alleged that they required the tonnage for military purposes. Steps were taken thereafter to secure small Turkish ships engaged in transporting merchandise from Istanbul to Varna, Bulgaria, under agreement between the Turkish and German Governments, since the Turkish Government does not wish to use the big ships in foreign waters. The Jewish agency informs us that it has arranged for
arranged for four Turkish and one Greek ship to transport refugees on their return voyages from Constanza to Istanbul. The ships now ready for sailing at Constanza and the approximate number of passengers they can transport are: SS KAZBEK 450, HAFKURA 150, BILBIL 350, MARINA 350, and the Greeks SS HYRNA 1200 passengers. There is reason to hope that should the above mentioned five ships, the first of whose departure is expected daily, successfully conclude their voyages, they will be followed by these or other ships of similar type and under similar circumstances. Katzki and I are working with representatives of the Jewish agency and the Joint Distribution Committee to break the deadlock which is delaying the departure of these ships. Upon their arrival at the port of Istanbul we have the assurance of Ambassador Steinhardt that as a result of his personal agreement with Cevadecikalin, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there will be no difficulty in permitting the ships to disembark in Istanbul, their passengers without proper papers and in arranging for their transportation through Turkey to Palestine.

Another factor leading to the delay of the above-mentioned ship movement is the reorganization of the Russian government control of its operations connected with this.
3-#2018, July 5, 3 p.m., from Ankara.

with this so-called illegal transportation. We are informed that the Rumanian Government has established an inter-ministerial committee for immigration which includes representatives of several government departments as well as one Jewish representative, Zissu who is reported to be a close friend of Mica Antonescu and a rich man. People leaving Rumania must be in possession of exit permits and the formation of this new committee interrupted arrangements which had been made for securing such permits. An interim period was evidently necessary to arrange for these new connections.

The Rumanians are reported to have decided to permit children and adults over 45 to leave the country and it is reported that the Germans have accepted their plan. Many of these refugees have come to Rumania illegally from Poland and some are now arriving from Hungary.

An appreciable number of the 2600 refugees above-mentioned will be children who were released from Transnistria as a result of the efforts of the War Refugee Board in March 1944.

The information contained in your 64 has been conveyed to Schwartz in Ankara. Ambassador Steinhardt and I recommend that the program outlined in your 64 be undertaken with
-4-#2018, July 5, 3 p.m., from Ankara.

undertaken with concurrent participation in the responsibility by the WRB since from our explorations to date the type of proposals mentioned therein seems to be only immediate means for rescuing appreciable numbers of refugees from the Balkans.

The above will be elaborated upon fully in a report which will be sent to you in due course.

KELLEY

EDA
RR
1066; June 14, 8 p.m.

FOR THE WRB FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Ankara No. 76.

As it now appears extremely doubtful that either a German or Bulgarian safe conduct will be granted for the SS TARE, as the SS MARTIZA has been sunk and the SS MILKA detained for an indefinite period of time by the German authorities at Burgas, and as no Turk vessel irrespective of its tonnage may carry refugees without permission of the Turk Government in each case, I have deemed it essential to have a talk with the Secretary General of the Foreign Office with a view to inducing the Turk authorities to authorize the use of a number of Turk vessels to transport refugees from Balkan ports to Istanbul.

The Secretary General expressed his regret at the situation which has developed with respect to the TARE, MARTIZA and MILKA and said that notwithstanding various Turk laws and regulations resulting from the war.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1.11.72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972
-2- #1086, June 14, 8 p.m. from Ankara

the war which stood in the way of an immediate acquiescence
he believed it would be possible to find some means
of meeting my request. He said he would look into the
matter at once with the purpose of ascertaining what
Turk vessels were available either in Balkan ports or
Istanbul and which the Turk Government might be able
to make available for the desired purpose.

Acikalin raised the question of responsibility in
case one of these ships were to be sunk while
operating without safe conduct with a considerable number
of refugees on board observing that it would be most
unfortunate were the Turk Government to be criticized
for having endeavored to assist in a Humanitarian act.
I replied that the position of Jewish refugees
in the Balkans was now so desperate that it was
reasonably certain they would prefer to run the risk
of attempting a passage without safe conduct rather than
to be left to the tender mercies of the Nazis.
Acikalin then said that under these circumstances he
would endeavor to make some Turk vessels available
for this purpose.

STEINHARDT

WSB BB
Refugee Ship Sinks in Black Sea

ISTANBUL, Turkey, May 31 (Reuters) - The 25-ton Bulgarian motor vessel Maritza, which has been used for transporting Jewish refugees from Rumania to Turkey, sank in a gale in the Black Sea while returning to Constanta from Istanbul. At the time of the accident, no refugees were aboard. Her crew of seven were saved.
Refugee Ship's Sinking
May Strand Hundreds

A dispatch from Bulgaria reports the sinking of the 250-ton Bulgarian mohorship Maritza, which had been used to transport Jewish refugees from Romania to Turkey. The Maritza was on its way back to Constanza, Romania, so no refugees were aboard. Its loss, however, may strand hundreds of Jews in Romania. The Maritza carried 200 on each trip from Hitler Europe to Turkey, where they were sent to Palestine.
Following is Ankara's No. 66 from the Ambassador for the War Refugees Board:

Today I received an unconfirmed report that the Bulgarian SS HABITA
sank at sea while on route to Constantza on her return from Istanbul
after she had disembarked on May 10, 316 Jewish refugees.

In view of the recognized unsanctioned of the HABITA (refer to my
message of March 26, No. 327) we must regard it an act of providence that
the ship did not sink while carrying refugees on route to Istanbul.

DECLASSIFIED
Following is Ankara's No. 60, from the Ambassador for the War Refugee Board.

Reference is made herewith to my message dated May 2, No. 786.

On May 17 the Bulgarian ship SS MARIIZA from Constanza with 316 Jewish refugees on board appeared off the port of Istanbul and permission to enter was requested. Despite the fact that the MARIIZA again arrived without proper papers and that the refugees on board were without Turkish entry or transit visas and without Palestine entry certificates, it has been directed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the refugees be permitted to land, and the Ministry of Communications has been requested to provide immediate transportation to Palestine for them. The British authorities in Istanbul last night issued the requisite Palestine entry certificates.

STRIKHAJT

DORIVAGHL 5/22/44
CORRECTION ON
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: May 19, 1944
NUMBER: 907

The number of this telegram was erroneously marked 207. The correct number is 907.
MAY 10 1944

Dear Mr. Leavitt:

The following message for you from Dr. Schwartz was received from the American Legation, Lisbon, under date of May 6, 1944:

"On the fifth of May the Steamer MILOA arrived from Constantza with 250 passengers aboard. The French relief budget has been satisfactorily arranged by Saly Mayer for the month of May."

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J.W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Mr. Moses A. Leavitt,
Secretary,
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee,
270 Madison Avenue,
New York, New York.
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED
FROM: American Legation, Lisbon
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: May 6, 1944
NUMBER: 1368

ATTENTION OF LEAVITT FROM SCHWARTZ.

WRB 22.

On the fifth of May the Steamer MILCA arrived from Constanza with 260 passengers aboard. The French relief budget has been satisfactorily arranged by Saly Mayer for the month of May.

NORWEB

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 15 1972
We have just been advised that the "S.S. Milka" arrived again in Istanbul on April 30th carrying 272 refugees from Constanza. This is the second voyage for the "S.S. Milka," which carried 239 refugees on its first trip early in April. The "Milka" is one of three small vessels which have recently been put in use for Black Sea evacuations. The "S.S. Maritza," arrived in Istanbul on April 10th with 244 refugees and the "S.S. Dellacitta" arrived in Istanbul on April 24th with 182 refugees.

During the month of April a total of 807 refugees were evacuated from Constanza to Turkey on these three small boats. All of the rescued people have been permitted transit through Turkey to Palestine.

We are still awaiting German safe-conduct for the "S.S. Tari" which we are advised will accommodate 1500 refugees.

(Signed) J.W. Pehle
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: AMBASSADOR, ANKARA.
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: May 2, 1944
NUMBER: 768

Following is Ankara's 49 from the Ambassador for War
Refugee Board.

Yesterday the vessel SS MILKA from Constanza carrying
272 Jewish refugees appeared off the Port of Istanbul and
asked for permission to enter the port.

The Foreign Minister has directed the refugees to land
and has requested the Communications Minister to provide trans­
portation to the Syrian frontier for them in spite of the fact
that the vessel again arrived without proper papers and the
refugees on board are without Turk entry or transit visas and
without Palestine entry certificates. The British in Istanbul
are today issuing the requisite Palestine entry certificates.

It is necessary for me to advise the Board to refrain from
expressing publicly at this time our appreciation of the Foreign
Minister's action in allowing the continued transit to Palestine
of Jew refugees arriving in Turkey illegally. It is feared
that such public expression at this time might embarrass Turk
relations with Arab countries and might be used against the
Foreign Minister by his political opponents who are not very
active. Therefore it is recommended that any public expres­
sions of appreciation be deferred until later especially since I am

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73

By R. H. Parke Date SEP 18 1972
advised that the Bulgarian vessel SS MARITZA, which will present a situation similar to the NILKA, is due to arrive in Istanbul shortly.
SECRET OF

Washington

1318, May 1, 6 p.m.

SUB: IV

FOLLOWING FROM JOSEPH SCHOENAU FOR LEVITT-JOINT

DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE NEW YORK.

Following report received from Shanghai first

from Shanghai, April 1944 through local community.

All figures below mentioned are local currency

and in thousands. Our credit balance is as follows:

January 1944: 23,983

February 1944: 33,891

March 1944: 36,662

April 1944: 37,500

Receipts in April almost all total receipts for the year.

Expenditures for feeding, 15,487; housing, 39,118; clothing, 9,2; cash instead of food, 20,993; monetary assistance, 140; various donations, 140; administration expenses, 96; total expenditure until 31st March approximately 23,000. Since April first till today spent entire cash balance approximately 36,662. Are without funds and without possibility of paying over-

due bills and without money for any expenditures. At present impossible borrowing locally; urgent help required telegraph immediately in case no assistance forthcoming immediately will be forced to stop next week hot meals and reduce bread distribution. Mailing

monthly statements with fullest particulars.

Local community will make special one time grant

$5,000 to meet emergency. SS NILA arrived Istanbul

from Constanta yesterday carrying 372 refugees who

leaving by train today for Palestine. This is fourth boatload to arrive.

Best Available Copy

[Signatures and dates]

[Names of individuals and organizations]

[Stamp: BEST AVAILABLE COPY]
This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Governmental agency. (BR)

Secretary of State,

Washington.

746, April 25, 11 p.m.

FOR WRB FROM THE AMBASSADOR ANKARI, No. 46.

The Bulgarian SS HELAGITTA arrived in Istanbul yesterday afternoon with 152 Jewish refugees on board. As stated in my telegram 713, April 19, I do not anticipate any difficulty in arranging for the prompt transit of these refugees to Palestine.

STEENHUIJNDT
NGB-562
This telegram must be
paraphrased before being
communicated to anyone
other than a Governmental
agency. (BR)

Ankara
Dated April 23, 1944.
Rec'd 7:50 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

733, April 23, 4:00 p.m. COMMUNICATIONS
AND REFUGEE
ANKARA NUMBER 44 FOR THE "WAR REFUGEES" BOARD
FROM THE AMBASSADOR,
Department's number 351, April 19.

I very much appreciate the Board's generous
telegram and shall of course continue my efforts to
facilitate the disembarkation and transit through
Turkey of refugees irrespective of whether their
arrival in Turkish ports is legal or illegal.

STEINHARDT
Dear Mr. Leavitt:

The following message for you from Dr. Joseph Schwartz was received through the American Legation, Lisbon, under date of April 14, 1944:

"Carrying 243 passengers the ship MILCA has arrived in Istanbul from Constanza. It is expected that the International Red Cross ship BELLAGITA will arrive with (? children and 15 adults aboard and the steamer MARITZA arrived on April 10 with 244 refugees. In groups of about fifty and at regular intervals Turkish repatriates coming from France are arriving. We are meeting entirely the costs of their care."

Very truly yours,

[Stenciled] J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Mr. Moses A. Leavitt,
Secretary,
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee,
270 Madison Avenue,
New York, New York.

Philab 4/20/44
This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Government Agency.

This is control copy.

AMBASSADOR,

ANKEBA.

FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD

WRB no. 27.

Hirschmann has informed us in detail of the enormous difficulties you overcame in personally arranging with the Turkish authorities to allow the refugees from the SS HILMA and the SS MARITA to land in Istanbul and to be supplied immediately with railroad transportation through Turkey to Palestine.

Hirschmann also informs us that there will in all probability be other boats approaching Istanbul, which are in the same category, and that these also would not be authorized to disembark their passengers in Turkey without your personal intervention.

Highest commendation is due you for the resourceful application of the goodwill you had built up with the Turkish officials in dealing successfully with this work of mercy in these crucial months.

HULL

(G2)

WRB:GLN:K0

4/19/44
Hirschmann has informed us in detail of the enormous difficulties you encountered in personally arranging with the Turkish authorities to allow the refugees from the SS MILITA and the SS MARITA to land in Istanbul and to be supplied immediately with railroad transportation through Turkey to Palestine.

Hirschmann also informs us that there will in all probability be other boats approaching Istanbul, which are in the same category, and that these also would not be authorized to disembark their passengers in Turkey without your personal intervention.

Highest commendation is due you for the resourceful application of the goodwill you had built up with the Turkish officials in dealing successfully with this work of mercy in these crucial months.

This is War Refugee Board Cable to Ankara No. 27
PARAPHRASE OF TELZORAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Ambassador, Ankara
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: April 19, 1944
NUMBER: 713 (Section 1)

As Ankara's number 40 the following message is from the Ambassador for the War Refugee Board and it refers to number 337 dated April 18 from the Department.

Between the voyages of the SS MARITZA and the SS MILKA on the one hand and that of the SS BELLACITA on the other, there is a fundamental difference. The MARITZA and the MILKA sailed without either the proper papers or the authority to enter a port of Turkey and practically all of the refugees on board were without Palestine entry certificates and were also without Turkish entrance or transit visas. Illegal is the word used here in referring to voyages of this character. The BELLACITA on the other hand has the proper papers, permission to enter the port of Istanbul and it is said that all of the refugees on board have Palestine entry certificates as well as Turkish transit visas. Legal is the word used here in referring to voyages of this character.

STEINHARDT

DECOR: MPL
4/21/44

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept., Letter 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Ambassador, Ankara
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: April 19, 1944
NUMBER: 713 (Section 2)

Up to the present time the BELLAGITA has not arrived but no difficulty in transiting the refugees on board to Palestine is expected by me. With reference to further illegal voyages by the MARITZA and the NILKA I feel reasonably well satisfied that if the number does not go beyond five hundred a month, I can persuade the Minister for Foreign Affairs to allow the entry and transit of refugees carried on such illegal voyages as each occasion may present itself. Doubtless the carrying capacity of the railroad to the Syrian frontier from Istanbul will in each instance affect his decision. With reference to the substantial increase in the transit to Palestine from Istanbul arriving here legally which has taken place during the past two or three months and being thoroughly familiar with the additional load which the transportation system will support, my best judgment is that approximately an additional five hundred refugees arriving each month illegally would be the maximum for whom rail transportation could be provided by the Foreign Minister.

STEINHARDT

DECEDEN
4/21/44

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 4/11/72
By R. H. Parka Date, SEP 18 1972
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, Ankara
DATED: April 15, 1944
NUMBER: 337

FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD TO AMBASSADOR STEINHARDT, ANKARA, TURKEY.

This is WAR Cable to Ankara No. 22.
Reference your Nos. 625 and 626 of April 8.

Schwartz being advised of your recommendation regarding Portuguese' boat with which we concur.

Your efforts in arranging transit for refugees arriving on SS MARITZA are greatly appreciated. In view of recent voyages of MILKA, MARITZA and BELLACITTA, Board would be interested to know if there is possibility that such boats can continue evacuation operations.
CABLE TO AMBASSADOR STEINHARDT, ANKARA, TURNKEY FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD

This is WTB Cable to Ankara No. 22.
Reference your Nos. 629 and 626 of April 6.
Schwartz being advised of your recommendation regarding Portuguese
boat with which we consent.

Your efforts in arranging transit for refugees arriving on
SS MARIBA are greatly appreciated. In view of recent voyages of
MILKA, MARIBA and NELGAHTA Board would be interested to know if
there is possibility that such boats can continue evacuation operations.

April 13, 1944
12:00 p.m.
Mr. Friedman

J. W. Pehle

Why shouldn't we send a cable to Steinhardt immediately asking why the three Bulgarian ships which recently came to Turkey cannot repeat the voyage? Apparently Bulgarian ships do not necessarily need a German safe conduct in order to traverse the Black Sea. In any event the decision can be made in Turkey and we ought to suggest further voyages for these ships.

Already done.
This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Government Agency. (BR)

Secretary of State,

657, April 13, 4 p.m.

FOR WRB FROM THE AMBASSADOR.

Department's 236, April 5.

Ankara 35.

The refugees referred to in my 564 of March 29 as having arrived on the SS MILKA are the same as those referred to in the press report of April 1.

STEINHARDT

NMW
This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Government agency. (BR)

Secretary of State,
Washington.

655, April 13, 4 p.m.

For WRB FROM THE AMBASSADOR
Department’s 298, April 9.

Ankara 35.

The refugees referred to in my 554 of March 29 as having arrived on the SS MILKA are the same as those referred to in the press report of April 1.

STEINHARDT

MRR
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Minister, Lisbon
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: April 14, 1944
NUMBER: 1106

Transmission of the substance of the following paraphrase to Leavitt, Joint Distribution Committee, New York, through the War Refugee Board is requested by Joseph Schwartz.

Carrying 243 passengers the ship MILCA has arrived in Istanbul from Constanza. It is expected that the International Red Cross ship BELLACITA will arrive with (? children and 15 adults aboard and the steamer MARITZA arrived on April 12 with 244 refugees. In groups of about fifty and at regular intervals Turkish repatriates coming from France are arriving. We are meeting entirely the costs of their care.

NORWEB

DQR: NPL
4/17/44

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Minister, Bern
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: April 14, 1944
NUMBER: 2348

In substance the following is a paraphrase of the reply of the Swiss Federal Political Department dated April 13 to my note dated April 7 which transmitted the request of the Department that in its own name Switzerland immediately support the request of the International Red Cross Committee to all belligerents for the steamship BELLACITTA’s safe conduct.

The Political Department, while eagerly desiring the modification of the representations which the International Committee has made, will refrain from supporting them in Berlin by reason of the decision concerning the similar case of the TARI, a Turkish steamship, which the Federal Council adopted. The note of April 12 sent to the Legation of the United States answering its communication dated March 25 explains the reasons for this decision.

My number 2301 dated April 13 contained the substance of the note referred to which was dated April 12.

HARRISON

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972
This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Government Agency. (BR)

Ankara

Dated April 9, 1944
Read 9:05 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington,

630, April 9, 5 p.m.

FOR THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

Ankara's 30.

The following telegram has been sent to Ambassador Harriman.

I deeply appreciate your cooperation in obtaining safe conduct for SS MILKA which arrived in Istanbul with 239 refugees who have since been moved to Palestine. Also for SS MARITZA which arrived in Istanbul yesterday and whose 244 refugees will leave for Palestine by rail on April 10. Also for SS BELLACITTA which is now expected to sail from Constanza on April 9.

Repeated to Department.

STEINHARDT
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Ambassador, Ankara
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: April 9, 1944
NUMBER: 628

The following message as Ankara's number 85 is from
the Ambassador for the War Refugee Board.

Yesterday in Istanbul there arrived the Bulgarian SS
MARITZA with two hundred and forty four Jewish refugees
from Constanza. The authorities of Turkey have agreed today
to allow all of the 244 refugees to land in Istanbul and to
supply them with railroad transportation to Palestine leaving
Istanbul on April 10 although only fifteen of the refugees
have Turkish visas and Palestine entry certificates.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972
As Ankara's number 26 the following message is from the Ambassador for the War Refugee Board.

Kindly inform Joseph Schwartz JDC representative at Lisbon that there being apparently a sufficiently large number of refugees to justify the use of ships besides the SS TARI if the safe conduct for that ship should be forthcoming and that the granting of a German safe conduct for the Turkish SS TARI not being certain, I urgently recommend that he try to conclude his negotiations for a Portuguese ship with the Portuguese shipping company. Foregoing refers to WRA No. 16.

STEINHARDT
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, Ankara
DATED: April 5, 1944
NUMBER: 293

FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD TO AMBASSADOR STERNHAUZT, ANKARA, TURKEY.

Reference your Nos. 547 of March 27, 564 of March 29 and 578 of March 30.

With respect to terms and conditions of charter of SS TARI, the Board recognizes that you have made the best deal possible under the circumstances, and as previously indicated you are authorized to charter the boat on the terms offered.

The Board is deeply concerned with the turn which the negotiations for a Turkish vessel have taken. For more than two months you and Mr. Luriez have been carrying on painstaking negotiations with the Turkish Government in order to obtain boats for the evacuation of refugees from Russia. In these long drawn out negotiations the Turkish Government has submitted many proposals and counter proposals. Upon your recommendation the War Refugee Board has immediately accepted practically every condition imposed by the Turkish Government even though neither you nor ourselves considered some of them entirely reasonable. However, up to now the Turkish Government has failed to make a boat available. Accordingly the Board finds it extremely difficult to understand why the Turkish Government which continuously has expressed its desire to cooperate in the refugee program and which must be aware that the United States is in view of military necessities is not in a position to guarantee the replacement of the SS TARI with a passenger vessel in further delay of this highly urgent matter.

In the circumstances the Board believes, if you are in accord, that the Board's views in the matter should be brought to the attention of the Turkish Government is a frank manner and the issue should be squarely put whether that Government is prepared to cooperate by chartering the TARI without further delay and upon the basis of the guarantee already offered.

According to a press report from Ankara dated April 1.

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. Letter 11-11-74

By R. H. Fiske Date SEP 1 1972.
two hundred thirty nine Jewish refugees from Romania who arrived illegally in Istanbul have been taken by rail to Palestine. We assume that these are the refugees who arrived on the SS MILKA and were referred to in your No. 264. The Board was surprised at the attitude of the Turkish Government reported in your cable and is gratified to learn that as a result of your intervention these refugees have been permitted transit through Turkey to Palestine. Your efforts deserve the highest commendation.

If the impression were created in this country that the Turkish Government is not fully cooperating in the refugee rescue program there would undoubtedly be a reaction here quite unfavorable to Turkey. In view of the fact that several private organizations have been active in the host negotiations and are fully cognizant of the situation it is not improbable that unfavorable publicity here may result if the Turkish Government continues to maintain its present position.

These matters have been discussed with the Turkish Ambassador in Washington.

The Board and the Department are taking all possible measures to support the request of the International Red Cross for a German safe conduct for the TARI. Similar steps will also be taken in the case of the SS BELLICITTA mentioned in your No. 978.

This is WBB Cable to Ankara No. 18.

Mme. Chevannes (for the Sec'y) Abramson, Akain, Bernstein, Cohn, Dubois, Friedmann, Gaste, Hodel, Laugden, Lemen, Lief, Mann, Marvin, McCarthy, Murphy, Paul, Perl, Polak, Raina, Sargoy, Smith Standish, Stewart, Weinstein, R. D. White, Files.
The War Refugee Board has been informed by Intercross that the BELLACITA will be available immediately for transportation of Jewish refugees from Mangalia to Istanbul as soon as safe conduct have been obtained. Intercross has requested safe conduct from all belligerents. Because of recent developments in the Balkans it is most urgent that the evacuation ship leave at once. In view of the humanitarian aspects of this matter, you are requested to ask the Swiss Government to support at once in its own name the request for safe conduct which Intercross made to the German Government. (The Legation is informed that the Swiss Government's support should not appear as intervention in a representative capacity but should appear as its own action.)

HULL
(GLW)
CABLE TO MINISTER HARRISON, BERNE

April 3, 1944
2:30 p.m.

War Refugee Board advised by International Red Cross that Bulgarian boat "BELAGITA" is immediately available as soon as safe conduct obtained for transportation Jewish refugees from Mangalia to Istanbul. Inter cross has requested safe conduct of all belligerents. In view of recent Balkan developments it is most urgent that evacuation ship leave at once. In view of humanitarian aspects of the matter please ask Swiss Government immediately to support in its own name the request of Inter cross for safe conduct from the German Government.

cc: Miss Chauncy (for the Sec'y.), Abrahamsen, DuBois, Friedman, Model, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Pehle, Stewart, Central Files (Rx. 194), Cable Control Files (Rx. 2375).

JHMannidb 4/5/44
The War Refugee Board has been informed by Intercross that the BELLACITA will be available immediately for transportation of Jewish refugees from Mangalia to Istanbul as soon as safe conduct have been obtained. Intercross has requested safe conduct from all belligerents. Because of recent developments in the Balkans it is most urgent that the evacuation ship leave at once. In view of the humanitarian aspects of this matter, you are requested to ask the Swedish Government to support at once in its own name the request for safe conduct which Intercross made to the German Government. (The Legation is informed that the Swedish Government's support should not appear as intervention in a representative capacity but should appear as its own action). You are requested to inform the Government of Sweden that this Government agrees to such safe conduct for the movement of the BELLACITA for the purpose mentioned above as the British Government may agree to.
April 3, 1944

CABLE TO MINISTER JOHNSON, STOCKHOLM 2:30 P.M.

War Refugee Board advised by International Red Cross that
Bulgarian boat "DELACITA" is immediately available as soon as
safe conduct obtained for transportation Jewish refugees from
Nangalie to Istanbul. Intercess has requested safe conduct of
all belligerents. In view of recent Balkan developments it is
most urgent that evacuation ship leave at once. In view of
humanitarian aspects of the matter please ask Swedish Government
immediately to support in its own name the request of Intercess
for safe conduct from the German Government.

... Miss Chambery (for the Sea'), Amsberson, DuBois, Friedmen,
Hodel, Longlair, Lessow, Mann, Pehle, Stewart, Central Files (Rs.194),
Cable Control Files (Rs. 387).

[Signature]

JMN 4/3/44
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Embassy, Moscow
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: April 4, 1944
NUMBER: 1164

The following message is for the War Refugee Board.

It is stated by the Foreign Office that the Government of the U.S.S.R. is prepared to aid in the safe passage of the Bulgarian ships BELLACITA, MARITZA and MILKA which are transporting Jewish refugees to Istanbul from Mangalia.

As soon as information is supplied regarding recognition marking of ships, their courses, and dates of departure from Mangalia and arrival at Istanbul, the Russian Military authorities will be given the necessary instructions. Please refer to Department's message number 548 dated midnight March 21, 1944.

The following is sent to the Department of State. Since the Embassy does not know what codes are available at Geneva please repeat this message to the Consulate there for the Red Cross.

The foregoing repeated to Ambassador Steinhardt at Ankara.

HARRIMAN
This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Government Agency. (BR)

Secretary of State
Washington

Istanbul
Dated: April 1, 1933
Rec'd: 7:40 p.m.

239 Jewish refugees from Jemendi were transferred yesterday at Istanbul from the large motorboat EILBA directly to a train destined for Palestine. One refugee stated that their exodus was expedited by the Rumanian Government.

J.J.H.

[Handwritten note: BERRY]
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Ambassador, Ankara
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: March 30, 1944
NUMBER: 573 (SECTION ONE)

The following message is from the Ambassador for the Department and the War Refugee Board. It is Ankara # number 15.

On the general subject of refugees the Foreign Minister and I had a talk this morning.

1. Reference was made by me to his offer in the course of our previous talks (please refer to my number 455 dated March 15, 1944) to aid us in obtaining for the SS TARI a German safe conduct as soon as possible. Numan said he would take up the matter with Von Papen and try to persuade him to ask his Government to grant safe conduct to this ship. Numan was advised by me that a proposed charter for the SS TARI which contained provisions that I considered both unfair and unreasonable had been submitted to us. His reply to this was that I should submit the proposed charter to him and he would strike out any unreasonable or unfair provisions, if we could not reach an agreement with the Turk State Steamship Lines.

STEINHARDT.

DOR: MPL
4/3/44

cc: Miss Chauncey (For the Sec'y) Abrahamsen, Alvin, Bernstein, Cohn, Dubois, Friedman, Gaeton, Rodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Lusford, Mann, Mannon, Marks, McGregor, Murphy, Paul, Pehle, Pollak, Reine, Sargoy, Smith, Standish, Stewart, Weinstein, H. D. White, Files.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1:11:72
By R. H. Paris Date SEP 18 1972.
For the purpose of transporting these refugees to Palestine, the suggestion was made by Human that a ship be sent to Istanbul by either Great Britain or the United States. Upon being advised by me that no British or American ship could reach Istanbul, Human said he would be glad to take over any ship at Iskenderun or Marne and under the Turkish flag bring it to Istanbul. From the Minister's remarks it was clear he was convinced that the present and past illegal traffic in refugees is organized and that he is not willing to have his hand forced by what he regards an organized illegal traffic in refugees. With regard to this he expressed regret that the HIZA incident should come up at the very time he and I were making arrangements for a large scale movement of refugees by means of an increased rail movement and the SS YAFF.

In addition to the seventy five transit visas being allocated every ten days he said he could not see how the single track railroad with two weekly trains from Istanbul to the Syrian frontier could accommodate more passengers in view of the steadily increasing congestion but that the Minister of Communications and he would discuss the matter. Human also said that his government is seriously considering the suspension of all passenger traffic because the congestion was so bad at present.

5. Reference was then made by Human to Allen's reply in the House of Commons to a question as to whether with regard to refugees the Turkish Government was collaborating with Great Britain. I was shown a statement by Human which he proposed to issue regarding this humanitarian work in which he expresses the intention and the desire of the Government of Turkey to cooperate.

STEINHARDT

DECIMAL

4/1/44

cet: Miss Chauncey (For the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Akzin, Bernstein, Cohn, Dubois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Leeser, Luxford, Mann, Nonnou, Marks, McGrath, Murphy, Paul, Polike, Pollak, Rabin, Sherry, Smith, Stickel, Stimson, Wallstone, H. B. Rose.
For the purpose of transporting these refugees to Palestine the suggestion was made by Musaei that a ship be sent to Istanbul by either Great Britain or the United States. Upon being advised by me that no British or American ship could reach Istanbul Musaei said he would be glad to take over any ship of Turkish or Mideast origin and under the Turkish flag bring it to Istanbul. From the Minister’s remarks it was clear he is convinced that the present and past illegal traffic in refugees is organized and that he is not willing to have his hand forced by what he regards as organized illegal traffic in refugees. With regard to this he expressed regret that the MIKA incident should come up at the very time he and I were making arrangements for a large scale movement of refugees by means of an increased rail movement and the SS TARI. In addition to the conveyance by rail transit visas being allocated every ten days he said he could not see how the single track railroad with two weekly trains from Istanbul to the Syrian frontier could accommodate more passengers in view of the steadily increasing congestion but that the Minister of Communications and the would discuss the matter. Musaei also said that his government is serious in considering the suspension of all passenger traffic because the congestion was no bad at present.

5. References was then made by Musaei to Klein’s reply to the House of Commons to a question as to whether with regard to refugees the Turkish Government was co-operating with Great Britain. I was shown a statement by Musaei which he proposed to issue regarding this humanitarian work in which he expresses the intention and the desire of the Government of Turkey to cooperate.

Klein Chauncy (For the Secy) Abrassamson, Akain, Barettito, Dohn, Darr, Friel, Hasen, Hesel, Hesler, Hoss, Hugemamp, Murphy, Paul, Poles, Polish, Shopping, Smith, Statteh, Statteh, Statteh, W. in Man. Phil.
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED
FROM: The American Ambassador, Ankara
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: March 30, 1944
NUMBER: 576

The following message is from Hirschman for the War
Refugee Board and refers to my number 527 dated March 25, 1944.
It is Ankara number 16.

It is my understanding that thus far a German safe-conduct
for the SS BELLACITTA has not been forthcoming and that the
Bucharest representative of the International Red Cross who
seems to control the situation regarding this ship will not
allow her to sail until such safe-conduct is obtained.

STEINHARDT

DOR: MPL
4/1/44

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Ambassador, Ankara
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: March 30, 1944
NUMBER: 579

The following message is Ankara's number 17 and is from the Ambassador for the Department and the War Refugees Board.

Reference my number 573.

This afternoon the Minister for Foreign Affairs telephoned me and said that in the case of the approximately two hundred and fifty Jewish refugees without Turkish visas or Palestine entry certificates who were on board the SS MILLIA, he had decided to make an exception. The Minister also said that he had issued instructions that the refugees are to be allowed to land in Istanbul and that in order to accommodate the refugees he had asked the Minister of Communications to detach four non-passenger cars from the semi-weekly Istanbul-Aleppo train and attach four passenger cars.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By Robert E. Parks Date SEP 8 1972
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Embassy, Ankara
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: March 29, 1944
NUMBER: 564

The following message is from Hirschmann for the War
Refugee Board and is Ankara's number 13. Please refer to
my number 540 dated March 28, 1944.

On the grounds that they left Constantza without Turkish
visas it is the intention of the authorities of Turkey to
refuse permission for the landing in Istanbul of the approxi-
mately 250 Jewish refugees on the H.M.Q. and they have so
advised the British. In an effort to obtain a reversal of
decision the British Minister is calling on the Secretary
General of the Foreign Office and Ambassador Steinhardt is
calling on the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Mindful of the foregoing, if considerable numbers of
such refugees arrived without visas it will be extremely dif-
ficult to persuade the authorities of Turkey to agree to a
further increase in the number of transit visas to be granted
Jewish refugees from the Balkans.

STEINHARDT

DATE: 3/31/44

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED
FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: March 22, 1944
NUMBER: 549

CONTROL COPY

Following is Ankara's No. 10 from the Ambassador and Hirschmann for Pasha War Refugees Board:

The Ankara representative of the International Red Cross and the representative of the Jewish agency in Istanbul inform us that the Bulgarian SS MILA will arrive in Istanbul March 29 with 250 Jewish refugees from Germania who embarked at Constanta. In order that the 250 refugees will be permitted to land in Istanbul, we have assisted in arranging for the issuance of Palestine entry certificates. This was done on the assumption that the vessel declared to be unsafer by the International Red Cross (see my cable of March 25, No. 637) will arrive safely. Also, we are helping to arrange for transportation through Turkey to Palestine for these refugees.

3-21-44

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: March 25, 1944
NUMBER: 587

CONTROL COPY

The following message from Hirschmann for the WRB.

No. 8.

Reference is made to Department's cable No. 220.

For over a month, we have been aware of the desire of certain individuals to make use of Bulgarian boats MILKA and MARITZA to transport Jewish refugees from Constantza to Istanbul but due to objection of International Red Cross representative in Bucharest to the use of these two vessels as seaworthy, have taken no action in the matter. On the other hand, since the BELLAGITTA is regarded as seaworthy, we are attempting to expedite her from Constantza which is being delayed from day to day for a reason which we have been unable to discover. Either the failure to receive Soviet safe conduct thus far or some connection with illegal traffic in refugees may be the reason for delay.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM:  SECRETARY OF STATE, WASHINGTON

TO:  AMBASSADOR, ANKARA

DATED:  MARCH 22, 1944

NUMBER:  230

Following for Hirschmann from War Refugee Board.

War Refugee Board cable no. 7.

It is stated in a letter dated February 25, from Inter­
cross that the "Bellacitta", a Bulgarian vessel, is available

...to transfer refugees at the rate of 150 per week to Istanbul

presumably from Mangalia. Red Cross also informed us that two

Bulgarian vessels, "Milka" and "Maritza", are also available

to Jewish organizations for this purpose but since Turkey is

not allowing more than 150 a week to go to Palestine by rail,

it is presumed that the last two mentioned boats will not be

usable since the "Bellacitta" can fill the limit imposed.

Red Cross as intermediary will give notification of sailings

to belligerents. In order to enable immediate refugee sail­
ings you are requested to do everything possible without les­

sening efforts concerning Swedish and Turkish boats. Red Cross

has requested and the United States has granted safe conducts

for the "Bellacitta" and cable is being sent to the American

Embassy at Moscow requesting that the Soviet Government take

prompt action on the British Government's safe conduct requests.

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date 1872
March 16, 1944

12:15 p.m.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Warren

FROM: Mr. Friedman

Please transmit the attached cable from the War Refuge Board to Ambassador Steinhardt and Hirschmann, Ankara, Turkey. Also attached for transmission is a related cable to Ambassador Harriman, Moscow, Russia.

JBF 3/16/44
Cable #230
3/7/44

Cable: Ankara No. 7

Informed by International Red Cross letter dated February 25 that in accordance with arrangement initiated by Hungarian Red Cross, Bulgarian boat "Hollaricita" available to transfer 150 refugees weekly presumably from Salonika to Istanbul. Stop They also advise that two Bulgarian boats "Jeritza" and "Ilka" at disposal Jewish institutions for this purpose but presumably not usable since Turkey not permitting rail transit to Palestine more than 150 weekly and "Hollaricita" capable fulfilling this limit. Stop Red Cross as intermediary will notify sailings to belligerents. While continuing efforts re Turkish and Swedish boats suggest you do everything possible to enable immediate refugee sailings all boats available. Stop

Understand Red Cross has requested safe conduct "Hollaricita", as calling various requesting prompt action by Russian Government for Russian safe conduct request.
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, Moscow
DATED: March 21, 1944
NUMBER: 648

Following is substance of message from WAR REFUGEES BOARD.

We are informed by International Red Cross that the Bulgarian boats, "Maritza", "Milka", and "Balacita", are immediately available to transport Jewish refugees from Mangalia to Istanbul. The Red Cross has requested safe conducts. If possible you should obtain Soviet safe conducts. Advise War Refugees Board, also Ambassador Steinhardt and Red Cross at Geneva.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date, SEP 18 1972
MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Warren

FROM: Mr. Friedman

Please transmit the attached cable from the War Refugee Board to Ambassador Steinhardt and Hirschmann, Ankara, Turkey. Also attached for transmission is a related cable to Ambassador Harriman, Moscow, Russia.

March 16, 1944
12:15 p.m.

JFRIDH-3/16/44
Informed by International Red Cross that Bulgarian boats "Belladonna," "Milka," and "Varitsa" immediately available for transportation Jewish refugees from Varna to Istanbul. Stop Red Cross has requested safe conduct. Stop. Please try to obtain Soviet safe conduct and inform Red Cross Geneva and Ambassador Steinhardt as well as War Refugee Board.
MEMORANDUM

March 16, 1944

TO: Mr. Friedman
FROM: B. A.

Three Bulgarian Boats

Information re Bulgarian boats received by telephone by McCormack from Lt, French, Bureau of Ships, U. S. Navy (Phone 2950):

- Bellacitza - 83 gr. tons
- Milon - 150 gr. tons
- Maritza - 2910 gr. tons

SS. Maritza, built in 1936, is a combined passenger-freight boat.

According to Lloyd's - of German registry, but the Navy confirms that it is Bulgarian now.

Navy was looking for Maritza, hoping to destroy her. (Probably this is a special reason why Bulgarians anxious to put her into refugee service!)

Since SS. Maritza so superior to others, should we not lay our hands on her rather than on Bellacitza? She could be used for transport down to Aegean, Palestine, etc., and not only to Istanbul, if British give safe conduct.
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Martha, built 1936, 1930 tons.
Formerly German (Lloyd's), but now German (Lloyd's), now looking for her to destroy her.

[Via de Comité]

March 16.
CABLE TO STEINHARDT FOR HIRSCHMANN FROM WAR REFUGEES BOARD

In a cable of January 5, 1944 from Geneva, State Department was advised that the Rumanian Red Cross had asked the International Red Cross to secure safe conduct permits covering voyages of a Bulgarian boat named "Bilacita" for three months. The boat was to make weekly voyages over this period carrying 150 Jewish children on each from Mangalia to Istanbul for eventual transportation to Palestine. Visas and transportation had been assured. The program had been authorized by the Rumanian and Turkish Governments.

On January 7, the United States accorded safe conduct to the "Bilacita".

On February 17, it was reported from Geneva to the State Department that the British had granted safe conduct but that similar permits from the Russian and German Governments had not been obtained. The International Red Cross at Geneva accordingly resigned to accept responsibility for guaranteeing the safe conduct of the boat on its scheduled trips but agreed that it would notify the interested governments of the facts involved. It was considered that a further postponement of the proposed evacuation was undesirable and it is expected that operations may have commenced by the time you receive this advice. Meanwhile we are contacting Geneva for a further report on this matter.

Above is for your information. Please advise us of any developments noted by you.
We have been advised by Minister Johnson that Mr. Aurel Theodoru, Director of Service Maritime Roumaine (a government enterprise) has been in Stockholm and has mentioned 12,000,000 kronor as a preliminary figure for the sale of the BESARABIA and the TRANSYLVANIA, the above price apparently covering both ships. Theodoru suggested that these vessels be purchased for refugee evacuation from Constanza. He asserted that if the vessels were purchased by Intercross or the Swedish Red Cross, as a condition of the sale the Rumanian Government would guarantee to grant safe-conduct and would further guarantee to obtain a German safe-conduct. Theodoru proposed that the purchase price of the two vessels be deposited in Sweden with a guarantee that the funds would be made available for purchases of goods for delivery in Rumania after the war. According to the proposal these goods could be held blocked in Sweden in the name of the group or organization purchasing or chartering the ships.

The Board is cognizant of the information concerning these ships furnished in your report of February 20 and your 1065 of June 14 and also that certain small vessels apparently have now been obtained for refugee evacuation from Rumania. However we would...
I would appreciate your reaction to the above proposal.

HULL
(OMV)
We have been advised by Minister Johnson that Mr. Ansel Theodoru, Director of Service Maritime Roumaine (a government enterprise) has been in Stockholm and has mentioned 12,000,000 kroner as a preliminary figure for the sale of the BESSARABIA and the TRANSYLVANIA, the above price apparently covering both ships. Theodoru suggested that these vessels be purchased for refugee evacuation from Constanza. He asserted that if the vessels were purchased by Intercross or the Swedish Red Cross, as a condition of the sale the Romanian Government would guarantee to grant safe-conduct and would further guarantee to obtain a German safe-conduct. Theodoru proposed that the purchase price of the two vessels be deposited in Sweden with a guarantee that the funds would be made available for purchases of goods for delivery in Romania after the war. According to the proposal these goods could be held blocked in Sweden in the name of the group or organization purchasing or chartering the ships.

The Board is cognizant of the information concerning these ships furnished in your report of February 20 and your 1065 of June 14 and also that certain small vessels apparently have now been obtained for refugee evacuation from Romania. However we would appreciate your reaction to the above proposal.

THIS IS WOL CABLE TO ANKARA NO. 22

1:50 p.m.
July 15, 1944

MDMA 7/15/44

Miss Chauncey (for the Secy) Abrahamsen, Schn, Dubois, Friedman, Hodel, Levenson, Mann, Stewart, Central Files, Cable Control Files
AMERICAN,

STOCKHOLM,

1430

The cable below is ERB no. 86.

Please refer to your 2836 of July 9 concerning the proposal to sell the BESSARABIA and TRANSYLVANIA.

We are communicating the Romanian proposal to the embassy in Ankara for comment.

HULL
(GLF)
CABLE TO MINISTER JOHNSON IN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN, FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

Please refer to your 2538 of July 9 concerning the proposal to sell the BESSARABIA and TRANSYLVANIA.

We are communicating the Romanian proposal to the embassy in Ankara for comment.

THIS IS WIRE CABLE TO STOCKHOLM NO. 56.

1:50 p.m.
July 15, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Maxwell, Stewart, Central Files, Cable Control Files

MNarkairo. 7/15/44
In connection with the general transportation problem involved in evacuation operations from the Balkans the following may be of interest. During the past week Mr. Aurel Theodoru, director of Service Maritime Roumaine (a government enterprise) has been in Stockholm. (This is our 48 for War Refugee Board in response to their No. 3622, 10 p.m.) According to him the Rumanian Government is extremely anxious to sell two of its vessels, SS TRANSYLVANIA and SS BESARABIA, presently tied up at Istanbul. These he said are virtually new combined passenger and cargo vessels of 6500 tons with sleeping accommodations for 550 each. On short trips the vessels he added could accommodate over 2000 persons each. Apparently the Rumanians are very anxious to sell these vessels for a variety of reasons and have mentioned a preliminary figure of twelve million kronor for both.
-2- 2538, July 9, 11 a.m. from Stockholm

kronor for both vessels. The alleged original cost of each was twelve million and under present costs are allegedly valued at thirty five million kronor.

Theodoru has suggested that the vessels be purchased for refugee evacuation from Constanza. If the boats are purchased by the International Red Cross or the Swedish Red Cross the Rumanians, he asserted, would guarantee safe conduct and would further guarantee, as a condition of sale of the vessels, to obtain German safe conduct. Theodoru seems convinced that the Rumanians could obtain full assurances of such safe conduct. Theodoru also proposes that the purchase price of the vessels be deposited in Sweden with a guarantee that the funds be available for purchase of goods for delivery in Rumania after the war. These goods it is proposed can be held blocked in Sweden in the name of the group or organization purchasing or chartering the vessels. It is stated that the vessels are in first class condition and available for immediate use.

Whether the proposal is desirable from our point of view could, it would seem, only be determined on information not available here, such as whether the vessels are tied up at Istanbul for the duration, whether
-3- 2538, July 9, 11 a.m. from Stockholm

whether their operation by Rumanians would be harmful to us, whether the vessels are necessary to us, etc. Accordingly the Legation in reporting the above is not (repeat not) in position to make recommendation.

JOHNSON

WSB:BB