● PSF

Poland

Jan. - Mar. 1939

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

File President's Confidential

PSF Poland

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

12-7-38

January 6, 1939

My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing copies of the following strictly confidential despatches from Ambassador Biddle which have been marked for the President:

No. 839, dated December 7, 1938 concerning Minister Beck's observations on his "balance diplomacy";

No. 842, dated December 10, 1938 concerning Minister Beck's observations on reported clash of views in upper Nazi circles;

No. 843, dated December 8, 1938 concerning Minister Beck's observations on the anti-Catholic program said to be considered by Hitler.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosures:

Copies of three
despatches, as
listed

The Honorable

Marvin H. McIntyre,

Secretary to the President,

The White House

PSF Poland

TRIPLICATE

No. 839 Warsaw, December 7, 1938

Subject: Minister Beck's confidentially imparted observations (a) oh his "balance diplomacy"; (b) Poland's and France's respective relations with Soviet; (c) French-German declaration of December 6 and 1/ its estimated effect upon Poland's pacts with France and Germany, and 2/ value of France's and Britain's declarations with Germany as a long-range basis for foreign policy; (d) Polish-French relations, and Beck's discernible desire for improved understanding and closer relations; Beck's clarification of Poland's pre-Munich and post-Munich position.

[redacted] CONFIDENTIAL

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

In conversation with Minister Beck on various aspects of Polish foreign policy, he emphasized that, from Poland's angle, maintenance of the delicate balance between Moscow and Berlin was more difficult and even more important than maintenance of the balance between Berlin and Paris. Equilibrium in Polish policy between her two major neighbors was particularly difficult, mainly due to Berlin's inherent misunderstanding and mistrust of Moscow. On the other hand,

however, Poland found it measurably easier to balance her relations between Berlin and Paris, in that the passage of time had served to mitigate Paris' first flush of resentment over the Polish-German Non-Aggression Agreement; in fact, in recent years Warsaw had found that fundamentally the Polish-German Non-Aggression Agreement had ceased to have an unfavorable bearing upon the Polish-French Alliance. On the other hand, Berlin had accepted the Polish-French Alliance as representing no hindrance to the Polish-German Non-Aggression Agreement.

Turning to Poland's and France's respective relations with the Soviet, and more particularly their comparative appraisals of the Soviet's potential military strength, Minister Beck remarked that in 1922, when he, as Military Attaché at the Polish Embassy in Paris, had remarked to General Foch that the Soviet Army (then in the course of reorganizing) would bear watching in terms of potential strength and European balance, Foch had manifested distinct annoyance with Beck's remark, adding that such an idea was illusory and preposterous. At that time, and subsequently, Poland, always in a better position than France to watch closely and appraise realistically Soviet internal developments, was aware of the Soviet's mounting military strength. Minister Beck then remarked that it had been with a combined sense of amusement and interest that years later General Gamelin had loudly

acclaimed

acclaimed the Soviet Army as an outstanding force and as a potential balance in the European politico-military arena. The Minister then stated his opinion that, while Poland had kept abreast of military developments in the Soviet during past years, hence realizing its mounting strength, Poland had taken full account of the immediate and long-range bearing of certain weaknesses in the structure resultant from a series of "purges" over past years. Therefore, Beck felt Poland was apt to evaluate the Soviet Army's potential strength more realistically than France, which was apparently inclined to over-rate the Soviet's strength.

Turning then to the subject of the French-German declaration signed December 6, Minister Beck remarked with a sense of satisfaction that M. Bonnet had advised Polish Ambassador Lukasiewicz well in advance of France's undertaking and had kept him abreast of negotiations. At the same time Bonnet had pointed out that his Government considered the French-German declaration would work no hindrance either to the Polish-French Alliance or the Polish-German Non-Aggression Agreement.

About the same time, Chancellor Hitler had advised Polish Ambassador Lipski that Germany intended to join in a declaration with France and that he likewise considered that this declaration would have no unfavorable bearing upon

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the Polish-French Alliance and the Polish-German Non-Aggression Agreement. It was significant to me that Hitler failed to mention the possible effect of the then forthcoming French-German declaration upon the French-Soviet Alliance. In fact, I interpret this to mean that Hitler deliberately eliminated mention of the latter pact as a means of evidencing his non-acceptance thereof.

In response to Bonnet's aforementioned message to Beck through the Polish Ambassador in Paris, Beck had replied he was in accord with M. Bonnet's opinion that the French-German declaration would not affect the Polish-French Alliance nor Poland's Non-Aggression Agreement with Germany. In fact, he added his belief that France's action now removed any existent differences of views between Poland and France. In other words, the German-French declaration in effect had placed Poland's and France's respective relations vis-à-vis Germany on the same level.

Though Beck has not expressed it in so many words, I gain the impression he is not inclined to look for either France or Britain, in terms of the long-range outlook, to base with any degree of permanency their respective foreign policies on the declarations with Germany. Minister Beck imparted his high esteem both for M. Daladier and M. Bonnet. He felt that of the two M. Bonnet had a clearer grasp of the fundamentals governing Polish policy. On the other hand, he felt that M. Daladier's political activities had been so confined to the internal affairs of France that he

had

had had little time to keep abreast of problems confronting Polish policy. Beck had learned with sincere regret that, due to a combination of rapid post-Munich events, M. Daladier was inclined to be annoyed with Poland - especially in connection with Poland's action vis-à-vis Prague. Beck particularly regretted this in view of his belief that M. Daladier had perhaps failed to grasp the whole picture from Poland's own objective standpoint.

By way of further clarification of Poland's position, the Minister pointed out that at no time during the past year had he or his close collaborators believed that either France or England would march for Czechoslovakia or that Czechoslovakia would fight Germany single-handed. (My conversations with Minister Beck, Marshal Smigly-Rydz and Chief of Staff, General Stakiewicz over the past year bear out Beck on this point.)

Minister Beck continued that meanwhile both London and Paris had vigorously pressed Warsaw to commit Poland to a line-up with France and Britain vis-à-vis Germany.

During the period leading up to the Munich Conference, and in response to London's request that Warsaw suppress its violent press attack on Prague, Beck had stated that he would rather be criticized for acting tactlessly at that moment that to be accused three months hence of having "let down" Czechoslovakia.

Here

Here Beck emphasized that, with the conviction in the back of his mind that Paris and London would seek to negotiate rather than fight over Czechoslovakia, he had interpreted London's pressure for his commitment in the light of an attempt to use Poland's desired declaration of alignment in the nature of a "big stick" vis-à-vis Berlin. In other words, he foresaw that:

(a) London's immediate objective envisaged possibly trying to bring Berlin to terms by pointing out that with Poland and Czechoslovakia in the East and Britain and France in the West Germany faced a conflict on two fronts;

(b) London's possible longer-range objective envisaged, in event of bringing Germany to terms, calling a four-power conference to the exclusion of Poland. Moreover, Beck had foreseen that a four-power conference entailed potential dangers for the smaller powers; in other words, that the latter might possibly become the victims of "peaceful settlements" between the major powers. Moreover, he reiterated with emphasis his former statements to effect that Poland, whose claims for the Teschen district had pre-dated and were more justifiable than Germany's claims for the Sudetenland, had from the very outset consistently voiced her insistence upon equal and non-discriminatory treatment of Polish claims - and had so notified the capitals of the

four

four major powers. Hence London's and Paris' agreement to advance the scope of treatment of Germany's claims for the Sudeten territory from autonomy to cession, in which deliberation Poland had had no part, had placed Poland in a position whereat there was no alternative other than to settle her claims in her own way. (I am aware that Beck and his collaborators were faced not only with a question of prestige in the light of their internal political arena but also with what they considered the necessity of "showing" Germany they were willing to fight for what they considered their rightful objectives.)

(c) the recent French-German declaration would undoubtedly have the effect of "putting to sleep" the French-Soviet Alliance. Moreover, Beck felt this declaration placed Poland's and France's respective relations with Germany on the same level. Hence, there should be little if any difference of views now between France and Poland.

From the foregoing and other conversations with Minister Beck, I gain the distinct impression that he has a sincere desire of clarifying Poland's position with Messrs. Daladier and Bonnet towards a better understanding and amelioration in relations between Poland and France.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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AJDB/is
(In triplicate)

THE ORIGINAL
A TRUE COPY

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 843 Warsaw, December 8, 1938

Subject: Reference to my cable No. 258 of December 5, 12 noon, sub-section (c); Beck's reports on Hitler's reportedly envisaged anti-Catholic program and Beck's observations thereon.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my cable No. 258 of December 5, 12 noon, sub-section (c), wherein I pointed out that Danzig Gauleiter Foerster, upon his recent return to Danzig from a visit with Hitler, had told High Commissioner Burckhardt that when the Fuehrer had accomplished his anti-Semitic program, he intended to apply similar methods first

against

against the Catholics and later against the aristocracy and, of pertinent bearing, to report the substance of my recent conversation with Minister Beck.

The Minister informed me that his confidential reports corresponded in effect with what Forster had told Burckhardt, especially as regards Hitler's reportedly envisaged campaign against the Catholics. Moreover, a recent report from Munich had significantly cited a conversation between the Minister's confidential informant and the Cardinal of Munich. In effect, the Cardinal, in response to the Minister's informant's question as to whether the Cardinal believed that the Catholics in Germany were in for a bad time, stated his belief <u>there was little hope</u> for the position of the Catholics in Germany. When, moreover, the Minister's informant had invited the Cardinal to visit him at his home in Munich, the Cardinal had replied that, due to his long-standing friendship for the informant, he did not want, through any act of his, to bring harm to the informant, adding that the time had come when the informant's continued identification with the Cardinal would work a hardship for the informant.

The discussion then turned to the subject of Vatican policy. The Minister imparted he understood on good authority that there was an important element in high Catholic circles in Rome now urging the Vatican to adopt a policy of closer alignment with the policies of the democracies; the

actual

actual outcome of this element's efforts remained to be seen. However, there were indications that this drive was gaining ground.

In response to my inquiry as to the Minister's opinion regarding reports that there were important Catholic circles which favored Cardinal Mond as the eventual successor to His Holiness the Pope, Minister Beck said he seriously doubted that Cardinal Mond would ever appear as a candidate, in the light of his Polish nationality. However, it was true that the Cardinal occupied a unique position, in terms of Catholic political considerations, in that the group under his personal influence occupied a position in upper Catholic circles between two opposition wings. Hence, the Cardinal and his group might be able to swing the balance in the selection of any candidate.

Of pertinent bearing, Danzig High Commissioner Burckhardt recently imparted to me that when recently at a shoot in Germany given in his honor by Himmler, a high ranking Nazi had told him Hitler's anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic leanings found their roots in the following incidents early in Hitler's career:

(a) The Jewish chairman of a judging committee of an architectural contest had, out of personal dislike, torn up the drawings in the face of Hitler's brother when the latter had presented them to the chairman for examination. This had occurred many years ago - he had borne his brother deep

affection

affection and had vowed he would "square" the incident with the Jews in later life. (Burckhardt agreed with my observation that his Nazi informant had obviously neglected to point out that Hitler had adopted the centuries-old German political game of resorting to an anti-Semitic platform as the least expensive form of political rallying point.)

(b) In earlier years a Catholic judge had sentenced Hitler to a term of imprisonment. Hitler, originally a Catholic, had turned against the Church, and had harbored a rankling against everything connected therewith ever since.

My own observations prompt me to feel that if Hitler adopts a drastic program against the Roman Catholics, he may conceivably time it with a more positive turn in his reportedly envisaged drive for an independent Ukrainian state. He and his Nazi henchmen are undoubtedly aware of mounting antipathy among the Ukrainians of the Orthodox Church against the Roman Catholic Church. In such light, Hitler might count upon gaining Ukrainian sympathy, just as Nazidom reportedly expects its anti-Semitic program to gain favor amongst the Mohammedan populations in Hitler's envisaged eastward drive.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

ORIGINAL
A TRUE COPY

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 842 Warsaw, December 10, 1938

Subject: Reference to my cable No. 259 of December 6, 9 a.m., sub-section (a); Minister Beck's observations on reported clash of views in upper Nazi circles.

[redacted] CONFIDENTIAL

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that Minister Beck imparted that his reports corresponded in effect with Danzig High Commissioner Burckhardt's information concerning existent clash of views in upper Nazi circles (see my cable No. 259 of December 6, 9 a.m., sub-section (a)). I was interested, moreover, to find that the Minister concurred in my opinion

(a)

(a) that in the light of history of events since the pre-Anschluss period, and pending definite signs of a show-down in Berlin, the currently reported clash of opinion in high Nazi quarters should, at the moment, be looked upon rather as a basis for temporary consideration than a basis for long-range conclusions, in terms of its potential bearing upon Berlin's domestic and foreign policies; (b) that in connection therewith examination of the record of varying degrees of friction and accord in relations between the so-called Nazi "moderate" and "extremist" elements, before and after major events, revealed that the record corresponded somewhat to our past and current observations on relations between the Japanese Foreign Office and General Staff. While one or the other element forged ahead before or during a given event, the other subsequently, so to speak, caught up with it; (c) that in the past each Nazi-conceived event had been accompanied as in the present case by reports of a cleavage between the two elements, presaging the possibility of an unbridgeable gap.

While expressing his concurrence in the above opinion, Minister Beck expressed his feeling that the currently reported clash in Berlin Nazi circles, coming as it did on the heels of, among other factors unfavorable to Germany's internal position, so violent a wave of indignation abroad, bore watching for signs of more serious than hitherto internal political friction.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

OF THE SIGNED ORIGINAL TRUE COPY

710
AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

12-10-38

January 11, 1939

My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing copies of the following strictly confidential despatches from Ambassador Biddle, which have been marked for the President:

No. 844, dated December 10, 1938, concerning the demand of the Ukrainian minority in Poland for autonomy within the framework of the Polish State;

No. 848, dated December 15, 1938, concerning reports that Germany is planning to establish a "Greater Ukraine" under German auspices;

No. 849, dated December 16, 1938, concerning the Warsaw-Moscow declaration of November 26, 1938.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosures:

Copies of three despatches, as listed

The Honorable
Marvin H. McIntyre,
Secretary to the President,
The White House

ADDRESSED TO

Marvin H. McIntyre

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1033

PSF Poland

TRIPLICATE

No. 844 Warsaw, December 10, 1938

Subject: Supplementing my cable No. 262 of December 9, 5 p.m.; observations on various aspects of the demand of the Ukrainian minority for territorial autonomy within the framework of the Polish State.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my cable No. 262 of December 9, 5 p. m., and to report the following observations on various aspects of the demand of the Ukrainian minority for territorial autonomy within the framework of the Polish State, and to attach hereto a copy of a translation of the text of the formal demand presented by the Ukrainian Deputies in the Sejm on December 9. 1/

While

While the Ukrainian Deputies handed the Speaker of the Sejm the text of their demands, the Speaker refused to admit formal receipt thereof, stating he would deliver a pronouncement on the subject at the Sejm's next session, scheduled to be held before Christmas. Meanwhile, as pointed out in my cable, the demands will be treated officially in the light of a demonstration by UNDO (the Nationalist Organization of the Ukrainian minority) to justify its existence and to strengthen its hand with the Ukrainian minority in the face of the forthcoming municipal elections.

I am aware, moreover, that the Government is now examining the legal aspect of the demands, in the light of its potential bearing upon the Constitution. As a matter of fact, I am inclined to look for the Government to assume the stand that the demand is unconstitutional and, as such, to reject it.

At the same time, I discern unexpressed but deep-lying concern in official circles, from the President down, lest this declaration prove the forerunner of continued and increasing outside pressure vis-à-vis the Ukrainian minority. Their intelligence reports, as well as information from secret police operating in Eastern Galicia, indicate increased agitation traceable to German paid agents in Eastern Galicia, Berlin-inspired agitators in Ruthenia, and German agents operating out of Prague.

The

The demand of December 9 marks the second of its kind within the past seven months, the previous one having been put forward on May 7, 1938. In connection therewith, it may be recalled that I had previously anticipated that Berlin would adopt measures to counter-pressure Warsaw, as a result of continued pressure by London and Paris on Warsaw for a commitment of alignment with British and French policy vis-à-vis Berlin. In fact, previous to May 7 I had looked for Berlin to adopt what I consider its classical pressuring tactics vis-à-vis Warsaw, namely, agitation amongst the German and Ukrainian minorities in Poland. I later found that the Polish Government had anticipated somewhat the same line of activity, and that it was consequently not greatly surprised at the subsequent May 7 Ukrainian demand for autonomy and about the same time a demand by the German minority for certain autonomous treatment.

The Government succeeded in dealing with the Ukrainian leaders subsequent to May 7, and the issue, so to speak, dropped out of sight.

Now, however, the situation confronting the Polish Government is considerably different. Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia (herein after referred to as Ruthenia), now an autonomous entity under the direct influence of Berlin and in the framework of a subjugated Czechoslovakia, has come

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to be regarded by the Polish Government as a center for anti-Polish activities and, as such, a constant threat to peace and order in Eastern Galicia and to the security of the State. Hence, the demand of December 9 represents a far more serious situation in the minds of Polish officialdom than that created by the demand of May 7.

Since December 9, numerous meetings have taken place between the ranking officials of the Polish Government and the military establishment. These conferences have been guarded by the utmost secrecy. As a direct outcome thereof, the Papal Nuncio, Monseigneur Cortesi, agreed to make a trip through Eastern Galicia. Previous to his departure I learned in strictest confidence that his tour of that area envisaged contacting the Catholic clergy all along the line and a vigorous attempt to tranquilize existent restiveness amongst the Ukrainian population.

At this point, it is interesting to note the following outline of the principal demands contained in the twenty-two paragraphs comprising the presented bill calling for the establishment of the Ukrainian autonomy within the framework of the Polish State. (It is interesting that the legal circles of the Ministry of Justice perceive Berlin's hand in the legal phraseology of the text.) It is proposed that the projected autonomous area include within its boundaries the voivodeships of Tarnopol, Stanisławów and Volhynia; also large portions of the voivodeships of Lwów and Polesie, also the southern part of Lublin, a portion

of

of Bialystok and of Krakow. The bill of demands calls for the formation of these Voivodeships into an autonomous province to be known as "Halicz and Volhynia". The boundaries thus outlined would include between eight and nine million population, and the area would represent roughly one third the total area of the present-day Poland. In this connection it is interesting to note that, according to the 1931 census, the Ukrainian and Ruthenian population combined totaled approximately 5,400,000. Moreover, the bill of demands provides that the Ukrainian autonomous state should establish its own civil service and a separate government and parliament, and that a Ukrainian minister be attached to the Polish Government. However, the Polish Government would retain control over foreign affairs, national defence as a whole (the autonomous government sharing to a certain extent the control over local military forces), communications and finance. The courts would have Ukrainian judges, and the Ukrainian and Polish languages were to enjoy equality as official languages of the projected autonomous territory.

In connection with the foregoing demands, the following is worthy of note. My confidential conversations with informed official circles here disclose their point of view along the following lines. The demand of the Ukrainian minority for autonomy was mainly a local affair.

There

There were no more than five million Ukrainian-speaking people, and even among those there were numerous different dialects. The census of 1931 showed that the Ukrainian-speaking population were divided into two columns: those in the Ukrainian column amounting to 3,200,000, and those in the Ruthenian column amounting to 1,200,000. A census today would undoubtedly show a total of about five million.

Except for a few districts, such as Stanisławów and Tarnopol, where the Ukrainians formed a dense majority, the Ukrainians lived throughout Eastern Galicia intermixed with Poles.

The difference between the approximately one million Ukrainians of Volhynia and the approximately four million Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia or old Austrian Poland amounted in brief to the following. The former were mainly of the Greek Orthodox Church and bore a stamp of the approximately one hundred years spent under Russian domination, whereby they enjoyed no participation in parliamentary representation. On the other hand, however, the approximately four million Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia (formerly under Austrian rule) had received about forty years of political training in that they enjoyed a certain measure of political representation in Parliament. As a matter of fact, the Austrians patronized agitation amongst these Ukrainians in order to

incite

incite them against the Poles in an effort to keep the latter from concentrating on their suspected efforts to unite the Poles of Austria, Germany and Russia. The majority of Ukrainians in this district were Roman Catholics of Uniat Rite; only a comparatively small number being of the Greek Orthodox Church. Besides, over one million of this population insisted upon being called Ruthenians, rather than Ukrainians, and they spoke a dialect called Ruski.

My aforementioned informants moreover stated their opinion that current developments represented a problem attributable more to the excitement stirred up from the outside than to local grievances. Besides, the present problem was unlike the Sudeten problem, whereby the German minority within Czechoslovakia had joined the Germans of the Reich, and wherein both the former and the latter enjoyed a common school of thought. In the case of the problem of the Ukrainian minority, the latter bordered the Soviet Ukrainian minority but wanted nothing to do with the latter on account of their having succumbed to Communism, which the Polish Ukrainians felt had robbed the Soviet Ukrainians of their spirit of nationalism.

From my own observations, as pointed out in the earlier part of this despatch, I look for the Polish Government to seek an "out" on legal grounds from accepting the Ukrainians' autonomy demands, at least in their present form. It may

be

be recalled that I have in previous writings pointed out (see memorandum attached to my despatch No. 423 of April 6, 1938, page 4) that important Polish circles here have been divided for years as to what treatment to accord the Ukrainian minority. One section of opinion advocated more liberal treatment in terms of granting them the right of local administration, the right to give Ukrainian names alongside of Polish names to towns and villages, and to extend large-scale Government patronage to the Ukrainians of that area; the other school of thought was opposed to the extension of liberal treatment on the grounds: (a) that the Ukrainians could never be expected to be made loyal to the Polish Government; and (b) that the standard of mass intelligence was so low as to make it dangerous to extend any degree of autonomy. Hence, as the result of the impasse which grew out of this division of opinion, little of any appreciable value was done over the past years towards the solution of the Ukrainian problem. Thus, the Government is now facing the consequences of mistaken judgment and delayed action as to a positive line of action in relation to this problem.

In my opinion, once the Government circles reached the conclusion (a) that the standard of mass intelligence was not up to the status of autonomy; and (b) that the Ukrainian population as a whole could not be expected to become loyal to the Polish Government due to their inherent Ukrainian nationalism, the Government should

have

have concentrated upon mass education with a view to raising the then acknowledged low standard of intelligence to meet the day of a possible show-down as to autonomy - in view of the potential danger of the possibility of having eventually to grant autonomy to an unintelligent mass, which in itself might conceivably prove a dangerous experiment - especially in the era of "isms".

At the same time, I am aware that to gain a clear picture and understanding of the Polish-Ukrainian problem it is necessary to review the record of Polish-Ukrainian relations over a period of many years, wherein these relations have been interwoven with a lengthy account of subversive machinations from the outside. Indeed, during the past fifty or sixty years, it may be said that their relations have been subject to the intrigues of the Austrians, the Germans, and even the Soviets. There is little question, to my mind, that today's restiveness amongst the Ukrainian minority is attributable directly or indirectly to German inspiration. Even Ukrainian leaders with whom I have talked go so far as to admit this as a fact.

Moreover, in appraising the present desire of the Ukrainian professional politicians, my observations lead me to believe that it boils down, in effect to their hopes that the Germans might march into the Soviet Ukraine, do away with Communism, establish an independent Ukrainian Republic, and appoint the so-called intelligentsia of the

Polish-

Polish-Ukrainian minority to the important governmental and academic posts of the projected state.

It is not yet clear as to what action the Polish Government will adopt in the near future as regards the Ukrainian minority problem. One thing, however, is certain, to my mind; namely, that continued German-inspired excitement of the Ukrainian minority may be expected to weaken Poland and, in such light, represents a serious problem for the Polish Government.

Respectfully yours,

Enclosure:
1. Projected law presented by Ukrainian Deputies.

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 844, December 10, 1938, from Embassy, Warsaw, on the subject of Supplementing my cable No. 262 of December 9, 5 p.m.; observations on various aspects of the demand of the Ukrainian minority for territorial autonomy within the framework of the Polish State.

FULL TRANSLATION Source: Confidential

PROJECT OF A CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

for the Halicz-Volhynian Province submitted by the undersigned deputies for the approval of Parliament.

Warsaw, December 8, 1938.

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

for the Halicz-Volhynian Province

Article 1

In order to secure for the Ukrainian nation, within the boundaries of the Republic of Poland, equal political rights with the Polish nation, as well as freedom of cultural and economic development, an autonomous unit shall be constituted under the name of "Halicz-Volhynian Province."

Article 2

1. The Halicz-Volhynian Province shall cover the area of the Voivodeships of Stanisławów, Tarnopol, and Volhynia, as well as the area of the Voivodeship of Lwów less the districts of Kolbuszów, Krosno, Łańcut, Nisko, Przeworsk, Rzeszów, and Tarnobrzeg, and also the area of the communities of Polany and Tylawa belonging to the district of Krosno; further the area of the Voivodeship of Polesie without the districts of Kosów and Łuniniec, the districts of Biała-Podlaska, Biłgoraj, Chełmsko-Lubelski, Hrubieszów, Tomaszów, and Włodawa belonging to the Voivodeship of Lublin, and finally, the area of

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the communities of Gładyszów, Sekow, Snietnica, and Ujscie of the district of Gorlice, the communities of Krempa and Zmigród Nowy of the district of Jasło, Krynica-wieś, Łabowa, Muszyna, Tylicz and the cities of Krynica-Zdrój and Muszyna, district of Nowy Sącz, all of the Voivodeship of Kraków.

Article 3

The provisions of the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935, (Dziennik Ustaw No. 30, Item 227) shall be binding in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province unless the present law shall provide otherwise.

Article 4

1. The President of the Republic, as the State's chief authority, shall have in regard to the Halicz-Volhynian Province the rights stated in the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935, (Dziennik Ustaw No. 30, Item 227) with the application of changes deriving from the provisions of the present law.

2. Official documents issued by the President of the Republic concerning the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall require, in order to be valid, the signatures of the President of the Halicz-Volhynian Council of Ministers and of the respective Halicz-Volhynian Minister.

Article 5

1. The Government of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall have charge of matters pertaining to this land and not subject to the authority of the Government of the Republic of Poland or other governing authorities (Dziennik Ustaw No. 30, Item 227).

2. The following matters shall be excluded from

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the scope of activity of the Government of the Halicz-Volhynian Province and shall be subject to the Government of the Republic or to other governing authorities (Paragraph 1 of the present Article):

a) matters concerning the attitude of the Republic towards foreign countries;

b) matters concerning the armed forces of the Republic;

c) matters concerning the budget of the Republic, government loans, State banks operating throughout the State, and the monetary system.

3. The Halicz-Volhynian Government shall be composed of the President of the Halicz-Volhynian Council of Ministers and Halicz-Volhynian Ministers.

4. The President of the Halicz-Volhynian Council of Ministers and the Ministers shall be members of the Government of the Republic.

5. A decree issued by the President of the Republic shall determine the organization of the Halicz-Volhynian Government.

Article 6

The parliamentary responsibility of the President of the Halicz-Volhynian Council of Ministers and of the individual Ministers vis-a-vis the Parliament of the Halicz-Volhynian Province, and the constitutional responsibility to the State Tribunal of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall be determined by a separate law.

Article 7

1. The Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall perform legislative functions in the territory of this province.

2. The following matters shall be excluded from the scope of legislation of the Halicz-Volhynian Diet and shall be subject to the legislative competence of the Diet and Senate of the Republic of Poland according to the provisions of the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935 (Dziennik Ustaw No. 30, Item 227).

a) matters concerning the attitude of the Republic towards foreign states and especially agreements concluded by the Republic with foreign countries,

b) matters concerning the armed forces of the Republic and especially matters pertaining to obligatory military service, the establishment of the contingent of recruits, the supplying of carts, provisioning and quartering of troops,

c) matters referring to the budget of the Republic and regarding the assessment of taxes and public fees connected therewith and destined for the needs of the State, matters concerning State debts and the contracting of new State debts, acceptance by the Treasury of the Republic of financial guarantees, disposition of Government real estate situated outside the area of the Halicz-Volhynian Province,

d) legislation concerning the establishment of the monetary system, monopolies, establishment of customs duties and commercial relations with foreign states,

e) legislation concerning posts, telegraphs, telephones and radio, railways, navigation and aviation,

f) legislation concerning patents, measures and weights, as well as State banks dealing in the territory of the entire State,

g) legislation concerning Polish citizenship, police and passports.

3. The agreements concluded by the Republic with foreign states concerning cultural and economic problems of the Halicz-Volhynian Province require the consent of the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province. Such a consent shall also be necessary in connection with the establishment of new monopolies in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province.

4. The members of the Diet and Senate of the Republic, elected from the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall not participate in the debates and resolutions of the Diet and Senate of the Republic when the subject of the negotiations and resolutions is a matter falling under the competency of the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province.

Article 8

1. The Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall control the activity of the Government of this Province, shall establish the budget, and assess taxes to be collected from the citizens according to the resolutions of the present law,

2. The control over the activity of the Government of the Halicz-Volhynian Province is expressed in the following rights of the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province:

a) to demand the resignation of the Government of the Halicz-Volhynian Province or of its individual Ministers;

b) to make the President of the Halicz-Volhynian Council of Ministers or individual Ministers responsible before the Constitution;

c)

c) to interpellate the Government of the Halicz-Volhynian Province;

d) to attend to the annual closing of accounts of the Halicz-Volhynian Province and approve the work of the Government of the Halicz-Volhynian Province;

e) to maintain control of the debts of the Halicz-Volhynian Province.

Article 9

1. The Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall be composed of deputies elected by means of general, secret, equal, direct, and proportionate voting.

2. Lists of candidates for deputies may be submitted by 50 electors.

3. One deputy shall be elected per 50,000 residents.

4. Elections shall take place in electoral districts. Each district must constitute a territorial unit and shall elect at least 4, and at the most 6 deputies.

5. The elections to the first Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall be carried out on the basis of an electoral law approved by the Diet and Senate of the Republic of Poland, based on principles determined in paragraphs 1,2,3, and 4 of the present Article.

Article 10

1. The term of the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall be five years counting from the date when it was summoned.

2. The President of the Republic of Poland may dissolve the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province before the expiration of its term; dissolution, however, shall require the explanation of the reason therefor.

3. New elections shall be ordered by the President of the Republic within 30 days from the date of the dissolution of the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province.

4. Voting must not take place later than on the 60th day after the elections have been ordered.

Article 11

1. The provisions of the Constitutional law of April 23, 1935 (Dziennik Ustaw No. 30, Item 227) concerning the Government and the Diet of the Republic, legislation and the budget, shall also be applied to the Government and to the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province, as well as to its legislation and budget.

2. The Halicz-Volhynian laws shall become effective after having been published in the local journal of laws.

Article 12

In case the necessity to use the armed forces of the Republic for the defense of the country does not require other orders, the armed forces stationed in the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall be united in separate formations composed only of soldiers originating from this province.

Article 13

1. The courts in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall act in the name of the Republic.

2. The judges in the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall be appointed by the President of the Republic unless the Halicz-Volhynian laws order otherwise.

3. The administrative control over the courts in the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall be under the jurisdiction of the Halicz-Volhynian Minister of Justice.

4. Lwów will be the residence of the following institutions:

a) the Supreme Court for civil and penal matters,

b) the Supreme Administrative Tribunal for deciding upon the legality of administrative acts,

c) the Jurisdictional Tribunal for the settlement of disputes in matters of competency between courts and other authorities.

Article 14

1. For matters pertaining to schools, social welfare, and cults, special self-governing authorities will be established separate for individual nationalities.

2. The organization and scope of activity of these authorities, as well as the manner of appointing them, shall be established by special law.

3. Permanent subsidies shall be allotted to these authorities from the Halicz-Volhynian budget for the performance of their duties.

Article 15

The Halicz-Volhynian Supreme Chamber of Control with residence in Lwów shall be appointed for the maintenance of state control in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province within the scope determined by the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935 (Dziennik Ustaw No. 30, Item 227).

Article 16

1. Laws governing taxes and government fees issued for the Republic shall be binding in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province should the validity of these laws also be extended to the territory of this Province.

2. The Government fiscal authorities in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall levy taxes and government fees mentioned in Paragraph 1.

3. The revenue from taxes and fees collected in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province is placed in the treasury of this Province. From this revenue the Halicz-Volhynian Treasury shall turn over for general State needs fifty percent of the sum which would be due from the Halicz-Volhynian Province according to the number of population and general income from taxes and government fees in proportion to the number of population and general income from taxes and fees of the entire Republic.

4. The sum due shall be established each year by the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Poland on the basis of a motion submitted by the Halicz-Volhynian Minister of Finance. The Polish Minister of Finance shall publish his decision together with a detailed explanation.

5. By virtue of the Halicz-Volhynian law, additional government direct taxes and individual taxes and fees can be charged for the needs of the Province. Government fiscal authorities shll impose and charge additional taxes and individual taxes and fees in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province.

Article 17

The property of the Republic of Poland situated in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall become the property of this Province.

Article 18

1. Judges, public service officials, and teachers employed

employed in the Halicz-Volhynian Province must in principle originate from this Province. When appointing employees to public offices and posts as teachers in the Halicz-Volhynian Province, those candidates who originate from this Province must have priority.

2. Judges, public service officials, and teachers shall take an oath according to the formulary prescribed for judges, employees and teachers of the Republic of Poland and in the manner prescribed for them.

3. Judges, public service employees, and teachers in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province must prove within one year from the entry into force of the present Constitutional Law that they know the Polish and Ukrainian languages in speaking and writing.

4. A certain number of posts in central offices of the Republic whose scope of activity covers matters which are excluded from the scope of activity of the Halicz-Volhynian Government, as well as in offices subjected to the central authorities, must be occupied by persons originating from the Halicz-Volhynian Province in proportion to the percentage of the population of the Halicz-Volhynian Province and the total number of the population of the Republic of Poland.

Article 19

1. In all civil and government offices as well as in courts situated in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province the Polish and the Ukrainian languages shall be equally considered as official in internal as well as external use.

2. The Halicz-Volhynian law shall define the

circumstances

circumstances under which one or the other of the two languages, or both, should be used.

3. The unions of territorial self-governments shall define their official language for internal use.

4. Civil authorities and government offices, courts and authorities and offices of territorial self-governments shall be obliged to answer applicants in the language in which the applicantion was made, in Polish or Ukrainian, to accept oral depositions and carry on the case in one of these two languages depending on the nationality of the person who makes the deposition or takes part in the discussion. In case an official document shall be made out not as a result of an application presented, it must be prepared in the official language used by the party.

5. The Halicz-Volhynian laws and all official proclamations must be published in the Polish and Ukrainian languages.

6. The laws of the Republic of Poland and all orders of the authorities of the Republic referring to the Halicz-Volhynian Province must be announced in the territory of this Province in the Polish and Ukrainian languages.

Article 20

1. The present Constitutional Law of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall be considered as an integral part of the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935 (Dziennik Ustaw No. 30, Item 227).

2. The provisions of the present Constitutional Law can not be abolished or changed without the approval of the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province.

3. The provisions of the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935 (Dziennik Ustaw No. 30, Item 227) shall

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be applicable to the resolutions of the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province concerning annulment or modification of the present Constitutional Law.

Article 21

1. The present Constitutional Law shall enter into force on the day of its promulgation.

2. The Government of the Halicz-Volhynian Province appointed by the President of the Republic of Poland shall assume office at the latest three months from the date of the entry into force of the present Constitutional Law, and the session of the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province must be inaugurated at the latest 6 months from this date.

3. The President of the Republic of Poland shall order by means of decrees all changes in the organization of courts and division of the State resulting from the present constitutional law.

4. A new Diet and Senate electoral law adapted to the creation of the Halicz-Volhynian Province as a separate public and legal unit and to the new administrative division of the State must be approved by the Diet and Senate of the Republic of Poland at the latest one year from the entry into force of the present Constitutional Law.

Motives

The Republic of Poland intended to base its system on the principle of a broad territorial self-government. Such statement appeared in Article 3 of the Constitutional Law of March 17, 1921 (Dziennik Ustaw No. 44, Item 267), which provided the turning over to representatives of territorial self-governments the proper scope of legislation, especially

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in the sphere of administration, culture, and economy which would be more closely defined by government laws. According to these principles, Articles 2 and 3 of the law of September 26, 1922 (Dziennik Ustaw No. 90, Item 829) define the principles of a general voivodeship self-government and especially of the Voivodeships of Lwów, Tarnopol, and Stanisławów, they determine that the government laws shall decide what matters belong to the scope of competency of the voivodeship self-governing administration and public finances, and also that in matters turned over to voivodeship self-governments the voivodeship departmental councils shall have the right to approve laws within the limits of the resolutions of the Constitutional Law and state laws. Especially as concerns the Voivodeships of Lwów, Tarnopol, and Stanisławów, matters have been defined in Article 9 of the above mentioned law of September 26, 1922, which belong to the scope of activity of the self-government of these three voivodeships. Further on Articles 10 and 16 provide that the departmental councils of these three voivodeships shall be composed of two Chambers, one of which shall be composed of deputies of the Ukrainian party and that the excess obtained after the covering of common expenses shall be divided between the two chambers of the council according to the budgetary proportion of the Ukrainian party (Ruthenian) to the total population of the voivodeship.

Neither the resolutions of the Constitutional Law of 1921, concerning territorial self-governments, nor the provisions of the law of September 26, 1922, have been carried out while the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935 (Dziennik Ustaw No. 30, Item 227) has introduced a system

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of strict centralization, leaving only to the Voivodeship of Silesia certain self-governing privileges granted on the basis of the statute issued by the constitutional law of July 15, 1920 (Dziennik Ustaw No. 73, Item 497).

Without entering into details on the subject of which one of the two systems , the territorial self-government or centralization, is more profitable for the establishment of state power and for the guaranteeing of the cultural and economic development of the population, it is necessary to admit that since the Republic of Poland is not a uniform State from the point of view of nationalities and the parts of which it is composed prove of tremendous difference from the cultural and economic point of view, the application of uniform legal standards throughout the whole country is not advisable. It refers particularly to the southern and eastern districts inhabited mostly by a Ukrainian population which constitutes a considerable majority in these territories, which bears in mind its own specific state life and has well-developed patriotic feelings, and well-determined national tendencies which can not be satisfied within the frontiers of the existing public and legal system of the Republic of Poland.

Under such circumstances the western powers turning over Galicia to Poland have made the reservation that a separate autonomous statute must be worked out for this province. The Republic has an international obligation in regard to this area, this obligation consisted in the issuance of the abovementioned law of September 26, 1922, concerning territorial self-government for the Voivodeships of Lwów, Tarnopol, and Stanisławów.

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The Constitutional Law of March 17, 1921, as well as the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935, take into consideration the individual needs of the national minorities and contains in Articles 99 and 120 provisions the idea of which is to protect the minorities from the national point of view. Especially according to Article 109 of the Constitution each citizen has the right to keep his nationality, his language and national habits. According to this resolution special state laws will guarantee to the minorities a full and free development in Poland by means of autonomous minority unions of a public and legal character within the boundaries of the union of general self-government. It further states in Article 110 that Polish citizens belonging to minorities as far as nationality, religion, or language are concerned, have the right like other citizens, to establish control and run at their own expense charitable, religious, and social institutions, schools and other educational institutions.

Considering, however, that these provisions of the Constitution have not been carried out and are not in the least complied with, the necessity arises to protect in a different manner the national interests of the population and especially of this national group which is the most numerous and which, as we have already mentioned, lives in a compact mass in the southern and eastern part of the Republic. The only way to secure to this Ukrainian population full national rights and freedom of cultural and economic development is the proclamation of territorial autonomy in the districts inhabited by this population.

The idea of the necessity to settle Polish-Ukrainian

relations

relations by means of granting territorial autonomy to the areas inhabited by the Ukrainian population was understood by part of the Polish public. The deputies of the parliamentary union of Polish Socialists submitted a project to the Diet of the Republic of Poland on October 9, 1931, concerning autonomy for the part of the Republic inhabited by a majority of Ukrainian population. According to this project the autonomous area was supposed to cover the entire Voivodeships of Stanisławów, Tarnopol, and Wołyń, all the districts in the Voivodeship of Lwów situated east of the river San, except the districts of Sanok, Przemyśl, Jarosław, and Lubaczów, and the district of Kamień Koszyrski and Sarny of the Voivodeship of Polesie. The legislation concerning local matters was to be subject to the Diet. Lwów was to be the residence of the Diet and this city was to be the center of all the chief authorities which were to be headed by a special Minister and the local government. This project was subject to discussion and rejection by the parliamentary administrative committee.

The claim to have territorial autonomy granted to the areas inhabited by the Ukrainian population has for a long time been the main political claim of all the political parties legally existing in Poland. This claim was submitted on numerous occasions in the Diet during speeches delivered by Ukrainian representatives and for the first time in the speech of the then Chairman of the Ukrainian Parliamentary Representation, Deputy Antoni Wasyłczuk, during the budgetary discussion in the course of the first ordinary session of the first term of the Diet in 1923. This problem

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was later set forth during annual budgetary discussions in the Diet and Senate, demanding the realization of this main claim of the Ukrainian nation residing within the frontiers of the Republic of Poland which sees the possibility of its national existence and of the normalization of Polish Ukrainian relations only in the establishment of territorial autonomy.

In Article 1 of the project is defined, as was said before, the aim of the establishment of territorial autonomy. The latter is to guarantee to the Ukrainian nation within the frontiers of the Republic full political rights equal to the rights of the Polish nation, and freedom of cultural and economic development.

The area which is to be covered by territorial autonomy shall be called the Halicz-Volhynian Province. The area of this province is delimited in Article 2 of the project. In this province have been included all the voivodeships, districts, and communities which are inhabited by the Ukrainian population. Lwów shall be the residence of the authorities of the Halicz-Volhynian Province.

According to Article 3 of the project the provisions of the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935, are in general binding in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province. The President of the Republic in his capacity of chief State authority has in regard to the Halicz-Volhynian Province the rights granted him by the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935.

The Government of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall take care of matters pertaining to this province. The scope of activity of this government shall be limited to such an extent that matters concerning the attitude of the Republic towards foreign states, matters concerning the armed forces of the Republic and finally matters concerning the budget of

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the Republic, loans and State banks, as well as the monetary system, are excluded from the scope of activity of the Government of the Halicz-Volhynian Province and belong exclusively to the competency of the Government of the Republic or any other authority stated in the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935.

The President of the Halicz-Volhynian Council of Ministers and the Halicz-Volhynian Ministers form part of the Government of the Republic.

Legislative functions are taken care of by the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province. In Article 7 of the project are listed matters which are excluded from the scope of legislation of the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province and are subject to the legislative competency of the Diet and Senate of the Republic of Poland according to the provisions of the Constitutional Law of April 23, 1935. The members of the Diet and Senate of the Republic, elected from the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province can not participate in the discussions and resolutions of the Diet and Senate of the Republic of Poland when matters reserved to the competency of the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province are the subject of those discussions and resolutions.

In Article 9 of the project are listed the principles on which the electoral law to the Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province should be based. The electoral law to the first Diet of the Halicz-Volhynian Province shall be approved by the Diet and Senate of the Republic.

Article 12 contains the resolution that in case the necessity of using the armed forces of the Republic for

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the defense of the State does not require other arrangements, the armed forces stationed in the Halicz-Volhynian Province must be united into separate formations and must be composed only of soldiers originating from this province.

Article 13 provides for the creation of the Supreme Court, Supreme Administrative Tribunal, and Competence Tribunal with residence in Lwów.

On the basis of Article 14 of the project, separate self-governing authorities will be appointed for taking charge of matters pertaining to schools, cults, and social welfare, separate for each individual nationality. The organization of these authorities and the definition of the scope of their activity shall be determined by the Halicz-Volhynian legislation.

Tax laws issued for the Republic shall also be binding for the Halicz-Volhynian Province on the basis of Article 16. The State fiscal authorities in the territory of the Halicz-Volhynian Province levy taxes and government fees, and the income from these taxes and fees goes to the Halicz-Volhynian Treasury which turns over for the general State needs fifty percent of the sum which would be due from the Halicz-Volhynian Province in proportion to the number of population and total income from taxes from this province compared with the number of population and total income from taxes and government fees from the entire Republic.

Reservation is made in Article 18 that judges and public service employees as well as teachers in the Halicz-Volhynian Province must originate from this province and must prove within one year from the date of entry into force of the present law that they know the Polish and Ukrainian languages in speaking and writing. There exists a

prescribed

prescribed outline for the filling of service posts by the central authorities of the Republic whose scope of activity covers matters excluded from the scope of activity of the Halicz-Volhynian Government and authorities subject to the central authorities.

In Article 19 of the project, the question of the complete equal rights for the use of the Polish and Ukrainian languages in offices by civil authorities, post offices, and courts has been settled.

Article 20 contains constitutional guarantees for the provisions of the projected law. Finally, Article 21 states the periods and dates when the provisions of the projected law must enter into effect.

.....

No. 848 Warsaw, December 15, 1938

Subject: Supplementing my despatch No. 844 of December 10, 1938; Observations on various aspects of the current press "play-up" of the "Greater Ukraine".

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 844 of December 10, 1938, and to report the following observations on the currently wide-spread press "play-up" of Berlin's reportedly envisaged establishment of a "Greater Ukraine" under German auspices.

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Post-Munich Nazi-inspired rumors aimed at spreading confusion in all European quarters.

When Czechoslovakia had been eliminated as a potential fortress against German eastward infiltration, a wave of rumored projects emanated from Berlin, subsequently traceable to the inspiration of Nazi "extremist" circles in Berlin and obviously aimed at inciting confusion in all quarters of Europe. It may be recalled that almost before the ink of the signatures to the Munich pact became dry, Munich-dateline forecasts were published in the foreign press, pointing to the Corridor, Danzig and Memel as next in line as objects of Berlin's "attention". Then came stories of a projected putsch in Hungary, later followed by a succession of rumors that colonies would next engage Berlin's consideration, and that perhaps even Holland might soon become the focal point of Berlin's roving eye in view of its strategic position vis-à-vis Britain and its colonial possessions.

During the period leading up to the Munich Conference and the early phase of the post-Munich period, the question of an independent Ukrainian state was very much in the background and engaged merely a certain amount of vague speculation in sensationalist press quarters.

Nazi-inspired "play-up" of "Greater Ukraine" in foreign press.

Now, however, as Berlin's reportedly envisaged "Greater Ukraine" looms into the foreground, and increasingly engages the attention of political observers and correspondents of the press of European states other than Germany, the following aspects call for consideration:

Examination

Significant silence of German press.

Examination reveals that while the press outside of Germany is rendering the project a steadily increasing "play-up" and is devoting more and more columns to the various aspects thereof, the press of Germany itself is silent on the subject. It is obvious, therefore, that the foreign correspondents in Berlin are eagerly grabbing for the bait handed them by the various Nazi press bureaus and have succeeded in focusing public interest to an important degree on the subject. Accordingly, in my opinion, the Nazi propagandists have put the foreign correspondents to work for them, and I look for the German press to stand aloof until such time as (a) the Nazi Propaganda Bureau will have had time to appraise world reaction to current publicity and (b) operations in Ruthenia might have shown signs of definite progress. My belief on this score is borne out by disclosures of an informed Nazi, who recently visited Warsaw, in reply to my discreet inquiries.

Signs of Nazi press bureaus' having put foreign correspondents to work for them.

Further examination, moreover, points to the "Greater Ukraine" "play-up's" having been deliverately inspired by Berlin as a tactical maneuver aimed: (1) as a diversion activity to cover up other contemplated intermediate moves; and (2) as a simultaneous campaign to propagandize and "start the ball rolling" and stimulate interest in Berlin's envisaged eventual Ukrainian project.

Press campaign a tactical play.

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Nazi opinion that exploitation of "right of self-determination" will help their eastward drive.

In connection with (a) above, my interest was engaged by the following remarks of an informed Nazi (connected with the Nazi Party Propaganda Bureau in Berlin) to a Polish official, who subsequently imparted them to me. He said that the Nazis counted upon their exploitation of the "right of self-determination" to play an important rôle in their formula for eastward infiltration. They looked for it to spread confusion, not only in states standing in the path of projected infiltration, but also in the western democratic states. In connection with latter, the Nazis looked for important elements in the democracies to play into Nazi hands, by rallying to the support of Berlin-inspired and Berlin-supported demands of the various minorities for autonomy. (Subsequently the aforementioned Nazi spoke to me somewhat along the same lines.)

Unlikelihood of Hitler's risking a conflict with Soviet until assured of alignment of intervening states.

In connection with (b) above, my observations lead me to believe that Hitler might hardly be expected to risk a war with the Soviet over the Ukraine (in the event his formula of subversive machinations failed to shake the Ukraine loose from the Moscow orbit) until Hitler might have assured himself either of the alignment of, or domination over, states lying in the area between Berlin and his objective. However, I look for Hitler to lose no time in setting the scene in Ruthenia for immediate and future anti-Soviet, anti-Polish, and anti-Rumanian activities. In connection with

with the foregoing, it is pertinent to recall the substance of my reported conversation with an observer, enjoying close contacts with inner Nazi circles (see my letter to the Secretary of November 5, 1938, page 3, paragraph 2). This observer remarked that Germany was not building a ramshackle road, such as that which Napoleon built. The road which present-day Germany was constructing would not tumble. While Napoleon was a great General, he had lacked the opportunity to learn many things present-day Germany had learned, and which only the modern world understood - such as, economics and the regularized expansion of population. I interpret this to mean that an almost "power-drunk" and super-confident Germany intends to have no unsympathetic or undigested portions along the way towards its eastward goal.

Moscow's opinion that Hitler still unprepared to risk major conflict.

Moreover, Soviet Embassy circles here inform me that Moscow is of the definite opinion that Hitler is not yet prepared to risk a major conflict. Moreover, I am aware these same circles concur in my impression that Hitler has a number of "axes to grind" of minor character before "sticking out his chin" too far vis-à-vis his Ukrainian objective.

Increasing Berlin pressure vis-à-vis Warsaw at various points.

In line with this thought, Berlin pressure is steadily increasing against Warsaw at various points: (a) agitation of the Ukrainian minority; (b) anti-Polish activity in

Ruthenia

Ruthenia, obviously identified with Berlin; (c) Berlin-inspired radio broadcasts in the Ukrainian language from Prague, Vienna and Leipzig; (d) Danzig Nazis' reported establishment of a political course for Ukrainians - with sixty-five Ukrainians already enrolled, some from Poland, others from Ruthenia and Rumania; (e) evidences of Czechoslovakia's reportedly Berlin-inspired rôle in the campaign to set up a Ukrainian state in form of an illuminated map of the projected state displayed on Czech territory close to the Polish border near Morawska Ostrawa; (f) Prague's continued publication of articles favoring the establishment of a "Greater Ukraine" and support of the Polish Ukrainian minority's desire for autonomy (In fact, it is discernible that Prague is increasingly becoming a center for anti-Polish propaganda - placing an added burden on already strained Polish-Czech relations); and (g) Berlin's recent fresh approach towards bringing the Danzig and Corridor questions to issue in the form of a Goering-inspired article in his National Zeitung, suggesting a permanent German right of way through the Corridor, to provide for construction of a combined auto and rail bahn (see my despatch No. 816 of November 23, 1938, wherein I pointed out that Goering had long advocated such a project). (My observations prompt me to look for a Warsaw-Berlin showdown on the Danzig and possibly the Corridor issued, among other questions contributing to Warsaw-Berlin friction, in mid-January.)

Moreover,

Moreover, recent Memel developments indirectly serve as pressure on Warsaw in the light of their possible repercussions in Danzig. On the other hand, the press, both in Poland and abroad, has accorded considerable space to what is referred to as a rumor to the effect that Germany is expected to develop an important diplomatic action in February and that a number of the chiefs of the German Army were instructed to be prepared to support a new German diplomatic action during that month - and that German reservists are to be called to the colors on February 1. Of pertinent bearing and in response to my discreet inquiries of a Nazi secret agent who recently passed through here, he stated that several weeks ago instructions were given to certain Generals to meet in Berlin in early February to discuss possible "diplomatic" action of important character vis-à-vis Rumania. (While I have so far been unable to verify this statement, I transmit it for what it is worth.)

Hitler's reported determination to bring Rumania to terms.

Various aspects of Hitler's reported plan vis-à-vis Rumania.

Of pertinent bearing, my attention has recently been drawn to reports from usually reliable sources that Hitler's plans now envisage bringing Rumania to terms: (a) through "sicking" Hungary on to Transylvania; and (b) using Ruthenia as a base for operations to shake Bukovina loose from Rumania and attaching it to Ruthenia as an increased nucleus for a projected "Greater Ukraine". (Accomplishment of the latter, according to the opinion expressed by my aforementioned Nazi informant, would probably signal the first signs of

Berlin's

Berlin's identifying itself directly with a movement envisaging the liberation of the Ukrainians. My informant added that in the event Bukovina joined up with Ruthenia and Berlin's envisaged project developed a more positive course, the extremist element in Berlin might conceivably press Hitler to move troops into the Ruthenian area with the aim of accelerating the Ukrainian movement. These extremists had in mind the German elements inhabiting the Soviet, as well as their scheme to push the Ukrainian project - indeed the position of Germans across the border in an area of potential disorder might become endangered and require protection, thus serving as a pretext for forceful action should circumstances prove favorable.

Persistent reports of severe decline (a) in Soviet's economic trend; (b) in morale and efficiency of military establishment.

In addition to the foregoing, however, the following aspects also call for consideration: (a) reported internal weakness in the Soviet in terms of a measurable decline in industrial production and a set-back in the efficiency of the agricultural and industrial cooperatives, also a reportedly marked decline in the standard of the military structure in general - and the commissioned personnel in particular; (b) Moscow's reportedly drastic measures against all detected signs of Ukrainian nationalism and foreign agents.

In connection with (a) my information from British and Japanese diplomatic circles here tallies and corresponds

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in effect with that imparted to me confidentially by Polish Intelligence Service circles to effect that in general the standard of efficiency throughout the economic structure of the Soviet has suffered an important decline during the past year. Particularly the standard of industrial production in the Leningrad district had fallen off. Among other features included in these reports, as representing indications of distinct weakness, were the following: marked loss of efficiency in the system of petroleum and fuel storage; signs of growing weakness in the agricultural cooperatives, presaging a complete breakdown in event of a potential crisis; a notable lowering of efficiency in the operation both of industrial and farm machinery. In this connection there was now a distinct lack of trained technicians and engineers capable not only of operating the machinery but also of understanding the system of repairs and replacement.

Economic decline importantly attributable to scarcity of engineers and technicians.

Moreover, the British Military Attaché of the British Embassy in Moscow reported that in his opinion about 70% of the officers of the Soviet Army had been "purged", thus reducing the morale and efficiency of the military establishment. He added that due to a lack of engineers and technically trained personnel the aviation authorities were having a difficult time keeping their air fleet up to date.

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A set-back for secret agents operating in Soviet.

In connection with (b) above, the long-established system of German, Jap and Polish secret agents has recently suffered a set-back. While the rôle of the Polish agents is mainly that of intelligence, the rôle of the German and Jap operatives is devoted not only to observation but also, and in large part, to agitation. Moreover, there is a marked degree of collaboration between the Japanese and the Germans.

Japanese Ambassador's report of Moscow's strong hand in relation to signs of Ukrainian nationalistic tendency and foreign agents.

The Japanese Ambassador here imparted that Moscow had recently come down so hard on any kind of a nationalistic tendency among the Ukrainians and on anyone suspected of being a foreign agent that information from the Ukraine was becoming steadily more scarce. He added that several weeks ago over fifty officers of Ukrainian origin, serving in the Soviet Army of the Far East, were accused of Ukrainian nationalistic tendencies. They were transported to Kiev, where they were tried and "purged" as a demonstration of Moscow's drastic attitude toward nationalistic activities amongst the Ukrainians. The Japanese Ambassador, moreover, remarked that these and other signs presaged Moscow's adoption henceforth of an increasingly strong hand in dealing with matters concerning the Ukraine territory.

Japanese Ambassador's opinion Hitler would have to be prepared to

If Moscow's efforts to isolate the Ukraine from outside communication proved effective, Hitler, if he continued in his determination to accomplish his Ukraine objective, would

fight if he failed to shake Ukraine loose through subversive machinations and in event he still determined to accomplish objective.

would have to be prepared to measure his military strength with that of the Soviet as an alternative to shaking loose the Ukraine from Moscow's orbit, through "boring from within" and other machinations characteristic of Berlin's formula of infiltration.

The foregoing reports on Russia's weakened internal condition are important in the light of their potential bearing upon the attitude both (a) of the power-drunk Nazi extremist element in Berlin who reportedly envisage increasing the pace of their machinations vis-à-vis the Ukraine with the anticipated decline in the Soviet; and (b) upon those elements in London and Paris official circles who are inclined to look upon Moscow with distrust and hopelessness as a potential European balance and who advocate Moscow's isolation from the British and French Government's forward-looking considerations in terms of European appeasement and pacification.

Of pertinent bearing, the Rumanian Ambassador informed me for the second time that informed observers of Rumanian Government circles are inclined to look for Berlin to accelerate the pace of her campaign toward the envisaged establishment of a Ukrainian state. In the opinion of my informant and his associates, the tendency of upper Nazi circles would be to take advantage of the period of the Soviet's internal weakness rather than risk the possibility of the passage of time's playing in Moscow's favor. The

Ambassador,

Ambassador, in conclusion, emphasized his opinion that Berlin was rapidly setting the scene for carrying out its long-envisaged "mission" of Ukrainian "liberation".

Of connected bearing, I am aware that Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia is now openly and facetiously referred to by agents of the Nazi extremists as "CARPATAUTOSTRADA". Signs of Germany's increasing interest are indicated by reports that Berlin has established a Consulate in Chust, a town of about 30,000 inhabitants and now the new capital of Ruthenia. Recent reports, moreover, indicate increased movements of German military observers in Ruthenia, who headquarter at the German Consulate in Chust.

Moreover, the following reports indicate that while the German press has not yet directly identified itself with the Ukrainian project, certain steps are being taken behind the scenes which suggest measures of preparation along practical lines: (1) Purchase of horses on increasing scale by German military agents. In connection therewith nearly all the cavalry mounts of the last British Cavalry Units to be mechanized were purchased for the German Army. Moreover, the Polish Chief of Staff confidentially imparted that his reports show a recent increase in the scale of German purchases of horses abroad. Moreover, my conversation with the Chief of the German Remount Service disclosed his marked interest in available markets in general for the supply of horses and in the American market in particular,

both

both as to horses and mules (These reports are interesting in that the terrain near the southern section of the Soviet's western border is unsuitable for mechanized equipment.) (2) A number of professors of languages in several universities both in Berlin and other cities of Germany have received instructions to study the Ukrainian language. (3) Several individuals high in Ukrainian political circles imparted that a "Commissariat" for Ukrainian affairs would be established in Berlin at an early date. The purpose of this institution would entail representation of interests of "stateless" Ukrainians living in Germany.

In considering the foregoing aspects of Hitler's envisaged Ukrainian project in an effort to appraise his next move, I am personally disinclined at the moment to look for him to accelerate the pace of his campaign towards this objective to the maximum degree or to risk coming to military grips with the Soviet until he might have fully established his ascendency over the intervening, middle and eastern Danubian area. Indeed, an informed Nazi secret agent recently imparted to me that for such an operation as an invasion of the Ukraine across a hostile Poland or a Poland whose neutrality was suspect would, according to high German military authorities, involve an army of no less than one hundred divisions. When the Germans and the Austrians had occupied the Ukraine in 1918 they had in all forty odd divisions. These had merely sufficed to

police

police the large cities and the main railways but not to occupy and subdue the rest of the country where the population, an armed one, remained free and indulged in considerable sabotage. In line with these remarks it is conceivable that, although the present British Government and certain elements of the present French Government appear to be trying to divert the German "cyclone" eastward, an actual German thrust vis-à-vis the Soviet might spell an eventual trap for Germany. With the majority of her divisions engaged in conflict of questionable outcome in a territory which has already spelled disaster to the invaders, Germany would naturally weaken her potential resistance against a possible attack on her western front. Moreover, by that time opinion in London and Paris might conceivably have altered in respect to a desire to divert Germany's aggressive attention Ukraine-wards. Even now British agents are reportedly busy in the Caucasus region with a view to establishing a foothold therein should it eventually become necessary to establish therein a bastion for the protection of British oil interests and against potential growth in Germany's appetite to infiltrate India in the event Germany succeeded in marching into the Ukraine. Indeed, the British Intelligence Service is not blind to the reported ambitions of the Nazi extremists to reach out eventually for the Caucasus and neighboring oil fields. Moreover, my aforementioned Nazi informant imparted that the more experienced officers of the German high military command did not fail to take the foregoing aspects into consideration.

On

On the other hand, my talks with Soviet diplomatic circles here disclose that Moscow would never come to terms on any sort of a deal with Germany on the Ukraine. Indeed, Moscow would resist with all the forces at its command. I am therefore inclined to feel that, while Berlin will lose no time in setting up the machinics in Ruthenia as a center for campaign for the annexation of Bukovina, possibly Bessarabia and the Polish Ukraine, Berlin may not be expected to risk coming to grips with the Soviet until Hitler will have become assured of his ascendency over the intervening area.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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to

Despatch No. 648 of December 15, 1938

from the

American Embassy,

Warsaw.

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QUINTUPLICATE

No. 849 Warsaw, December 16, 1938

Subject: Supplementing despatch No. 828 of November 30, 1938; Further observations on various aspects of the Warsaw-Moscow declaration; Departure of Polish trade delegation for Moscow on December 14, 1938.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 849 of December 16, 1938, and to report further observations on various aspects of the recent Warsaw-Moscow declaration.

Poland's desire for Soviet markets for textiles, arms, steel, etc.

As pointed out in my previous despatch, Warsaw has been anxious to find outlets for, among other items, textiles, arms, and steel from the newly acquired Teschen area. Moreover, Poland is in need of chemicals, iron and manganese

manganese ore, and other raw materials. At the time of the declaration, I discerned and reported that one of the factors motivating Warsaw's desire for a re-affirmation of the Non-Aggression Agreement and an amelioration of relations with Moscow was Warsaw's desire for new trade openings. As a matter of fact, economic experts in Government circles here perceived a potential opportunity of replacing Czechoslovakia, in certain respects, as a source of supply for Soviet requirements.

Departure of Polish trade delegation for Moscow for purpose of negotiating trade pact.

Accordingly, a Polish economic delegation, headed by Mr. Lychowski, left Warsaw on December 14 for Moscow for the purpose of conducting a series of conferences looking to an extension of the economic exchange between the two countries. I am informed by the leading economists in official circles that it is felt that the barter system, which has hitherto prevailed as a basis of trade between the two states, may be replaced by a trade pact based upon a clearing system.

Moreover, the Poles hope to establish a balance between imports and exports, now distinctly in favor of the Soviet.

Continued speculation in diplomatic circles as to potential bearing of Warsaw-Moscow declaration on Polish foreign policy.

Of pertinent and political bearing on the Warsaw-Moscow declaration, considerable speculation continues in diplomatic circles here as to the potential political aspect of the present turn in Polish-Soviet relations. Polish officialdom has deliberately adopted a position of silence as regards the new phase of relationship with Moscow.

Moscow. This attitude has in turn contributed towards creating a certain air of mystery, both as regards Poland's next move vis-à-vis Moscow and her position vis-à-vis Berlin. Diplomats representing nearby states in the path of Germany's eastward drive continue to regard the new turn in Warsaw-Moscow relations with mixed feelings. While they admit it is an indication of Poland's will to resist German expansion, they are discernibly confused in that they feel Poland's continued resistance might conceivably dash their hopes of diverting (a) Germany's attention towards Poland, and (b) a potential German movement of eastward aggression through Poland. Accordingly, in a spirit of combined "wish-thinking" and what I consider a tendency towards defeatism vis-à-vis Berlin, they make an "open secret" of their opinion that Warsaw's recent declaration with Moscow cannot be expected to amount to much in terms of a potential positive effect upon Polish foreign policy.

Japanese Ambassador's opinion

In this connection, my interest is particularly engaged by the following recent remarks of Japanese Ambassador Sakoh: He did not look for the Warsaw-Moscow declaration to affect to any important degree Polish foreign policy. Moreover, he was of the opinion that Poland would eventually come to terms with Germany, rather than fight over issues now contributing towards mounting friction between Poland and Germany. He believed, furthermore, that the Poles would eventually collaborate with Germany, either in a

scheme

scheme envisaging "peaceful penetration" of the Ukraine, or in a Ukrainian venture, possibly entailing the risk of a military conflict. The Ambassador then stated his opinion that Beck had resorted to the declaration more as a tactical move for personal prestige in terms of the internal political arena than as a move envisaging a shift in foreign policy. Beck's political stock had soared on the heels of the Warsaw-Prague "settlement" over Teschen. Later, however, his stock had declined materially when his efforts to bring about a 'common frontier' with Hungary met with Berlin resistance and consequent failure. Beck had thereupon seized on the idea of the Warsaw-Moscow declaration as a means of diverting internal public attention from his diplomatic failure in connection with the projected 'common frontier", and as a means of regaining his personal prestige. Beck had frequently proven himself a man of great physical and mental courage, intelligence and resourcefulness. He had a difficult rôle at best and, though greatly misunderstood in western capitals, he had directed a foreign policy for his country which was the only policy which Poland, under her delicate geo-political circumstances, could afford. Now, however, with Czechoslovakia out of the way as a potential fortress against German eastward penetration, Germany was fast closing in on Poland - and Poland would probably be forced to "play ball" with Germany, and mainly on Germany's terms.

In

Japanese Ambassador's opinion that aside from a possible demonstration at Soviet frontier Tokyo would prefer to sit tight in China than to become involved in conflict with Soviet in event Germany came to grips with latter over Ukraine.

In reply to my question as to whether Tokyo would collaborate with Berlin in event Berlin's envisaged campaign to set up a Ukrainian state gave rise to a military conflict, the Ambassador stated his opinion that Japan would rather "attend to her own knitting in China" where, despite a long and tedious process, she was building up an enviable position for herself, than march against the Soviet in the event the Germans came to grips with the latter over the Ukrainian issue. About the most Germany could count upon from Japan might be a military demonstration vis-à-vis the Soviet frontier in the east, in order to confuse and divert the Soviet's attention and thus satisfy, to a certain extent, the spirit of the anti-Comintern pact. He then admitted that both Germany and Italy had recently been "putting out feelers" as to Tokyo's reaction to an implementation of the pact with military arrangements.

German and Italian pressure on Tokyo to implement Anti-Comintern Pact with military arrangements.

Clarification of sequence of events leading to Beck's initiating negotiations with Moscow October 3.

While I am aware there is considerable meat for thought in many angles of the Japanese Ambassador's foregoing remarks, I feel there is room for doubt on the following points: (a) contrary to what he said regarding Beck's having seized upon a declaration with Moscow as a means to counter-balance his diplomatic failure as regards his envisaged "common frontier" with Hungary, I am aware that Beck commenced negotiations with Moscow on October 3, two days after Warsaw's "settlement" with Prague and some days previous to Beck's having launched his diplomatic play

for

for a "common frontier" with Hungary. Hence, while the declaration actually did serve to offset his "common frontier" failure, I do not believe he conceived it in that light; (b) as regards the fluctuation in the course of Beck's post-Munich prestige, I am aware that previous to the Warsaw-Prague "settlement" about 65% of public opinion was opposed to his foreign policy. After this "settlement", however, his prestige rose considerably, subsequently declining appreciably as a result of the "common frontier" failure. Then came the Warsaw-Moscow declaration, and it became clear that he gained the whole-hearted support of public opinion behind his policy - and this for the first time since my arrival at this post.

Fluctuations in course of Beck's post-Munich prestige.

In considering the course which Poland's relations with the Soviet might henceforth take, it is well to bear in mind the following: (a) Beck's recent significant remark to me that western opinion, as he had previously pointed out to me, was frequently apt either to over-estimate or under-estimate the Soviet's potential strength. His reports from abroad now indicated there was a distinct tendency in capitals west of Berlin to under-estimate the Soviet as a potential balance. This, combined with Chamberlain's obvious desire to isolate the Soviet from Britain's forward-looking considerations, tended to throw the Soviet, as a potential balance, into political obscurity as concerned western opinion. Beck was not yet convinced that

Factors to consider in appraising future course of Polish-Soviet relations.

the

the facts reported justified discarding Moscow as a hopeless entity, such as was the idea rapidly gaining ground, particularly in London official circles; besides London and Paris were both apt to under-estimate the Soviet as a potential danger. Pilsudski had maintained that the Soviet was potentially dangerous, particularly on two scores - when the Soviet was "riding high" in terms of internal political and economic conditions in that this condition tended to stimulate a desire to press more vigorously the Comintern's activities in the foreign field, and when the Soviet was "low" in terms of international conditions such as was the case today in that the regime might possibly conceive of a diversion activity in the form of picking a quarrel "outside". In line with this thought the Polish Ambassador in Moscow had reported by telephone on the night of December 16 his distinct impression that the regime had now adopted a defensive position vis-à-vis mounting recalcitrance on the part of the internal forces; (b) Beck not only desires better relations with France and a clarification and ironing-out of Warsaw-Paris differences, but also is inclined to look for France to make an early friendly gesture towards Warsaw; (c) my distinct impression gained from yesterday's conversation with Beck that we may expect a show-down in Warsaw-Berlin relations in mid-January.

Personal observations on Beck's adoption of a "wait-and see" position.

Moreover, my own observations lead me to believe that when Beck on October 3 initiated negotiations for a Warsaw-Moscow declaration, he envisaged the adoption of a "wait-and-see" position, with a view either (a) to

building

building up his price for potential collaboration with Germany in the latter's Ukrainian and other objectives, or (b) to resisting Germany's expansion efforts.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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I N D E X

to

Despatch No. 849 of December 16, 1938
from the
American Embassy
Warsaw

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ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

P3F Poland
file
private

12-22-38

In reply refer to
Eu

January 14, 1939

My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing copies of the following strictly confidential despatches from Ambassador Biddle which have been marked for the President:

No. 854, dated December 22, 1938 concerning various aspects of Poland's position;

No. 858, dated December 22, 1938 concerning the rejection by the Polish Government of the Ukrainian Minority's demand for autonomy;

No. 859, dated December 22, 1938 concerning the position of the Jews in Poland;

No. 860, dated December 23, 1938 concerning the British Ambassador's conversations with Minister Beck regarding Danzig;

No. 864, dated December 23, 1938 concerning reports that Hitler might propose the calling of a disarmament conference.

Sincerely yours,

Cordell Hull

Enclosures:

Copies of five
despatches, as listed

The Honorable

Marvin H. McIntyre,

Secretary to the President,

The White House

Department of State

BUREAU / DIVISION: Eu

ENCLOSURE

TO

Letter drafted 1-13-39

ADDRESSED TO

Marvin H. McIntyre

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1033

Pol Poland

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 860 Warsaw, December 23, 1938.

Subject: Supplementing my despatch No. 850 of December 17, 1938 and referring to my cables Nos. 258, 259 and 260 of December 5 and 6 respectively; British Ambassador's conversations with Minister Beck seeking (a) Polish Government's attitude in event of League High Commissioner's withdrawal from Danzig, and (b) Polish Government's attitude in event of Danzig question's coming to issue between Warsaw and Berlin; Current Warsaw-Berlin negotiations on Danzig.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 850, December 17, 1938, and to report the following observations on Danzig developments.

Britain's signature as one of the Big Four who approved the 1924 Statute giving Memel autonomous status under Lithuanian sovereignty is discernibly proving a source of headache for London in view of recent events in Memel. In light of the potential bearing of these events, moreover, upon the situation in Danzig, Britain's membership on the Committee of

Three

There is perceptibly becoming an increasing source of worry for London.

Accordingly, in anticipation of the possibility of Hitler's releasing the pent-up energy of Nazi Danzigers in the near future, energy which he has hitherto confined to certain limits (previously described in my despatch No. 754 of October 20, 1938), London instructed its Ambassador here to sound out Minister Beck as to his Government's attitude in event the Danzig question came to issue in the near future.

In accordance with his instructions, the Ambassador took up the question with Minister Beck on December 21. In reply to the Ambassador's question as to whether the Polish Government might object to the withdrawal of League High Commissioner Burckhardt from Danzig, Minister Beck bore out my belief that the Government here would be loath to have the High Commissioner retire in face of anticipated intensification of Berlin pressure concerning the Danzig question by his reply to the effect that his Government would be inclined to oppose the High Commissioner's withdrawal if the question were to come to issue at the League Council meeting in Geneva on January 15. In this connection, I am aware that while the Government here regards the position of the High Commissioner in the light of a "ghost" of the League, they feel that his presence "eases" the increasingly difficult relations between Warsaw and Berlin in connection with the Free City.

In response to Minister Beck's foregoing reply, the British Ambassador made it clear that his Government

considered

considered the High Commissioner's continued presence in Danzig ineffective, in fact little short of futile. The British Ambassador then put the direct question as to whether the Polish Government might be willing to make a deal with Berlin on the Danzig issue, adding that if such a deal were made along lines satisfactory to both Warsaw and Berlin, London would regard the matter only with the friendliest interest - as a matter of fact, London had come to consider the problem as one mainly between Warsaw and Berlin. Minister Beck replied that negotiations of a sort had recently begun. However, at this early stage it was difficult to foresee the outcome. With holidays approaching, it would be almost impossible to accelerate the pace of these negotiations. However, by mid-January he should have gained a fairly accurate estimate as to where they were leading. Certainly, by early February he would be in a position to know whether the Polish Government could agree to a potential settlement which then might conceivably be in sight.

The British Ambassador then stated it would be difficult for his Government to postpone its decision in the matter much longer. Naturally London did not wish to do anything to embarrass Minister Beck during his negotiations, but after all both London and Geneva had to look to their own interests. Besides, neither London nor Geneva would welcome the prospect of having an arrangement accomplished without having been apprised thereof before the arrangement might have become public knowledge. Indeed, London might be glad to grant its approval to whatever arrangement might be in sight, but

it

it would insist upon being consulted before the matter became a fait accompli. The Ambassador added that it might be possible under the circumstances to make some arrangement whereby Commissioner Burckhardt might still serve to a certain extent as High Commissioner and yet reside in Geneva. Life was daily becoming more miserable for him in Danzig and his position was undoubtedly becoming increasingly the object of ridicule, at least in Nazi circles. The Ambassador was frank enough to point out that both the League and London would prefer to withdraw him before he were obliged to leave under even less favorable circumstances.

Minister Beck thereupon assured the Ambassador that his Government would keep the British Government informed as to the progress in Warsaw-Berlin negotiations. In conclusion, the Ambassador informed Minister Beck that he would inform his Government as to the Polish Government's attitude and hoped that some formula might be worked out whereby not only the faces of all parties interested might be saved but also Beck's position during his negotiations might not be embarrassed.

The Ambassador informed me subsequently that he realized Beck was in an extremely delicate position vis-à-vis Berlin as regards the Danzig issue in view, among other factors, of the trend in the recent municipal elections which resulted in the predominance of the two parties most opposed to Germany, namely the Socialists and the National Democrats (NNDNK) for this decided trend would undoubtedly serve to limit the latitude of Beck's

policy

policy vis-à-vis Berlin.

I am aware that of two face-saving formulae the one of paramount desire in the views of London envisages Burckhardt's immediate retirement - before the Danzig Nazis, as London apprehends, might force him out. The alternative formula, a second choice from London's standpoint, envisages, as I pointed out in my despatch No. 850, December 17, 1938, the setting up of the Free City along Hanseatic lines, entailing: (a) a customs union with Poland; and (b) Poland's release of the right to represent Danzig in foreign affairs.

Before leaving yesterday for a trip, Beck sent me word through a confidential source, cautioning me to guard his secret, that he intended to be out of the country for about ten days as he wanted a complete rest and wanted to gain a clear perspective before coming to certain important decisions. He facetiously added in his message that he had chosen to spend the greater part of the time in Monaco with his good friend the Polish honorary Consul General there, for that was the only country wherein he dared relax without being accused of negotiations for an alliance.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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(In quintuplicate)

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QUINTUPLICATE

No.864 Warsaw, December 23, 1938.

Subject: Supplementing my despatch No. 854 of December 22, 1938; recent reports of Hitler's envisaged European disarmament proposal; observations.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 854 of December 22, 1938, Page 8, in which I cited the Turkish Ambassador's opinion that Berlin would not be likely to tackle its envisaged Ukraine objective until Berlin might have either assured itself sufficiently of France's and Britain's neutrality during such operations, or have "silenced" France through a campaign at the side of Italy, and to report, as of pertinent bearing, that through usually reliable channels reports just reached me to the following effect:

That Hitler was considering proposing a European disarmament

disarmament conference in the near future to include as a basis the four major powers. Proposals entailed (a) establishment of certain classifications of armaments, provided for in Germany's armament program - however not to affect armaments Germany had already manufactured; and (b) establishment of limitations over air strengths on a ratio favorable to Germany. (For example, Berlin would try to urge London to adopt somewhat the same formula vis-à-vis their respective air strengths as is now applied in respect to their respective naval strengths - however, in the case of air limitations their positions to be reversed.) My own observations together with the disclosures of my informants in conversations with official and informed circles, have led me to feel that if the foregoing report is true, Hitler's proposal, in view of former Berlin reports reaching here (which I reported in a recent despatch) to effect Hitler was calling a meeting of his high command in early February to consider various aspects of envisaged diplomatic moves of importance, is apt to be more tactical than sincere in character.

On the one hand, I understand Hitler is already aware that his past soundings as to whether London would be willing to accept an inferior position in terms of air strength in relation to Berlin met with distinct disfavor.

On the other hand, I am inclined to feel Hitler's reportedly envisaged proposal may conceivably be aimed, in view of his envisaged Ukraine venture, as a means of sounding out London as to whether the purpose of increased British armament is of offensive or only defensive character. Moreover, it may conceivably be aimed at placing Britain

in

in a potentially embarrassing position of having to "turn down" in its own best interests what Hitler would "dress up" as an effort to lay the foundation for European peace.

While there is no means available for verifying the foregoing report before closing the pouch, I take occasion to transmit the substance thereof for the Department's information and verification.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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(In quintuplicate)

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QUINTUPLICATE

No.859 Warsaw, December 22, 1938.

Subject: Supplementing despatch No. 801, November 15, 1938; observations on current developments concerning the so-called Jewish problem in Poland.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 801 of November 15, 1938, wherein (a) I described various developments, both current and in the making, as regards the Jewish problem; (b) to refer to my previous writings on this subject wherein I have taken frequent occasion to point out that events then in the making bore the earmarks of forerunners of a more drastic wave of anti-Semitism here; and to report the following observations upon the current turn of events in connection with the Jewish problem here.

As

As forecast in previous writings, the position of the Jewish community in Poland is rapidly taking a turn for the worse. Preceded by a series of articles and editorials in the Polish press treating with the problem, and in most cases emphasizing the necessity for international treatment of the Jewish problem in a global rather than a limited sense, looking to a solution in terms of large-scale emigration, the following events took place during the past 24 hours. General Skwarczynski, (Chief of OZON) and spokesman for what he numbered as 116 OZON Deputies, yesterday afternoon (December 31st) made an interpellation regarding the subject of Jewish emigration to the following effect:

On behalf of his group he took occasion to repeat with emphasis that OZON condemned any acts of peril and persecution, but contended vigorously that the number of Jews was excessive. The economic and cultural development of Poland called for large-scale Jewish emigration. Hence, they addressed the Government to ascertain what the Government intended to do in the matter. Aware of the Government's arduous study of the problem, they now wanted to have an account of what work had actually been done. More precisely, they wanted to ascertain the Government's plan (a) for emigration; (b) what territorial outlets were being considered; and (c) what financial plan was being worked out.

During that same evening, Colonel Wenda, Chief of Staff in the direction of OZON affairs, followed up the General's aforementioned interpellation by a radio

broadcast

broadcast to the following effect: Wenda referred to the aforementioned interpellation as having marked an occasion of great consequence in that it had been the first time that the Jewish problem had been taken up officially by Parliament. In contending that this move would cause the Government to seek arrangements for mass emigration of the Jews, Wenda emphasized that this could not be done at the cost of the racial Poles. He concluded by emphasizing that it must be done, however, in order that the Polish towns, villages, industry and trade might be properly Polonized.

Another significant event which took place on the heels of the parliamentary interpellation was the sticking of large posters on the walls in various quarters of Warsaw. These posters contain in effect what might be characterized as an "invitation" for the racial Poles to omit the Jewish shops in their lists of Christmas shopping. As reason therefor the posters point out that every złoty spent in Jewish shops is a crime against the nation and the country. This part of the "invitation" concludes by emphasizing that the money of the Polish people should go to the Polish merchants. In the second part of the poster it is pointed out that there are 4 million Jews in Poland (this, of course, is in excess of the actual number). Then follows a list of statistics showing the predominance of the Jews in the trades, industry, professions, etcetera, and calling for resistance to the dominant economic position of the Jews in Poland.

Another sign of the current trend is illustrated by the efforts of Sejm Deputy, Stoch, (non-partisan)

to

to obtain the necessary 14 signatures to enable him to present a bill aimed at the establishment of an anti-Semitic law along the following lines: (a) to classify Jews on a religious and not a racial basis; (b) all persons confessing to the Jewish Creed, or who were Jews until 1918, to be considered "temporary" citizens and to be deprived of all public rights. Exception in connection therewith to be granted in the case of those who have been recognized by the State for special merit; they and their families to be exempt. In further connection therewith, a limit of 50,000 families to be set as the maximum for those families who may be exempted from discrimination.

In connection with this projected bill, Deputy Stoch energetically endeavored for about 10 days to secure the number of signatures necessary to qualify his bill for presentation. Until yesterday afternoon he had succeeded in acquiring all but one. I understand that Deputies of the OZON Party are disinclined to support Stoch's proposal. Since OZON claims 159 out of the total of 208 seats in the Sejm, I look for OZON to wish to take a lead in the matter and to work out its own bills on the Jewish question.

In this connection I am inclined at the moment to look for the more liberal element in Government quarters, as well as the Church, to bring influence to bear on OZON circles to moderate the tone and substance of whatever bills OZON might eventually propose. In my various conversations I have gained the impression that the tendency is to model such bills after the Hungarian laws. In other words, at least the present

move

move of Government circles presages an attempt to mollify any and all legislative measures. While the Government may possibly support OZON to the extent of aiding OZON towards the enlistment of the nationalistic and anti-Semitic elements, the Government may be expected to exert vigorous efforts to avoid provoking scorn to the same degree as did Germany.

A factor which may possibly work in favor of the Jewish community is the prominence of the Socialist vote in the recent municipal elections, which should somewhat strengthen the hand of the liberal element in Government circles. On the other hand, however, the National Democrats (or ENDEK Party) likewise figured prominently in the results, a fact which might in some districts conceivably offset the Socialist gains. It is too early, however, to judge the full effect of these elections for the official figures will not be published until December 28th.

Meanwhile we may expect an intensification of pressure against the Jews. Moreover, as I anticipated a number of months ago, and so reported, I now discern that the present surge of anti-Semitism is motivated in most cases, except in the case of the inherently anti-Semitic ENDEK Party, more by a desire to force the Jewish problem here into the arena of international consideration than by an acute sense of religious hatred.

On the other hand, I am aware that while Government circles frankly ascribe the so-called Jewish problem to an overcrowded "economic room", there is a certain element in these circles who are inclined to play up the Jewish

question

question for reasons of internal political tactics - namely, to enlist the support of the anti-Semitic nationalistic element. I continue to be of the opinion that (a) repercussions of recent anti-Semitic outrages in Germany and (b) the earnest desire of leading political circles here to have the so-called Jewish problem treated globaly rather than limitedly by inter-governmental conferences seeking a solution, may be expected to work increasing hardships on the Jewish community of Poland.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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QUINTUPLICATE

No.858 Warsaw, December 22, 1938.

Subject: Supplementing despatch No. 844 of December 10, 1938; Polish Government's rejection of Ukrainian Minority's demand for autonomy on grounds of unconstitutionality; observations.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor (a) to supplement my despatch No. 844 of December 10, 1938, page 1, wherein I reported that the Ukrainian Deputies of the Sejm presented on the part of the Ukrainian minority in Poland a demand for autonomy; (b) to refer to my despatch No. 848 of December 15, 1938; and (c) to report the following developments in connection with the Ukrainian minority demands.

As anticipated, the Polish Government dealt with the legal aspect of the Ukrainian demands, and in such light turned them down as being unconstitutional.

Accordingly,

Accordingly, at yesterday's (December 21st) session of the Sejm, Speaker of the House, Makowski, replied to the spokesman of the Ukrainian Deputies in the form of a private letter which in substance read: that in view of regulations governing Sejm debates the Ukrainian motion could not become the object of discussion.

According to these regulations, the Speaker classified the motion as a proposal to amend the Constitution. Such proposal had to bear the signatures of at least one quarter of the House, or 52 signatures.

Since conditions prevailing in the House preclude the Ukrainian Deputies' hope of attaining no less than 52 signatures, the Speaker's action marks the death knell to the Ukrainian demands from a parliamentary standpoint. I now learn from one of the Ukrainian leaders that the Ukrainian Deputies of the Sejm plan to meet in Lwow on December 26, when they will discuss various aspects of the outcome of their parliamentary demands and will consider forward-looking action.

During yesterday's session there were current "Lobby rumors" to the effect that as a result of the recent trip of the Papal Nuncio (see despatch No. 853 of December 21, 1938) the Ukrainians had become more conciliatory and might be willing to "play ball" with the Government on terms more satisfactory to the Government standpoint.

In conversation with one of the Ukrainian leaders, however, he denied that there was any truth in these rumors, contending that his and his associates' demands represented more of an effort to find a common footing

for

for cooperation with the Poles than a move of anti-Polish character. The Government's answer to their efforts had been decidedly in the negative and he felt altogether that if Polish-Ukrainian relations were worse than they used to be, the fault was on the Polish side. He therefore felt that the first move should now come from the Poles.

While it is too early to forecast future developments, it is safe to assume that the Government will lose no time in taking conciliatory steps "behind the scenes" - and in these efforts, I look for the Vatican to take a hand through its intelligent and courageous and able Papal Nuncio here.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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TRIPLICATE

No. 854 Warsaw, December 22, 1938

Subject: (a) Reference my despatch No. 828 of November 30, 1938;
(b) Opinion of Turkish Ambassador and discussions with passing Nazi agents bearing on schemes envisaged by the war lords and political dreamers of the Nazi extremist element;
(c) Observations on various aspects of Poland's position.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 820 of November 26, 1938 and to report that my discreet inquiries in all available reliable quarters and careful examination of all aspects of recent post-Munich events, in the light of their potential bearing upon developments in-the-making, prompt the following observations.

Judging

Germany's aims; immediate and long-range.

Judging from my discussions with passing Nazi propaganda bureau agents, with the Turkish Ambassador, and other informed individuals here, it is steadily becoming clearer that Hitler's ultimate objective entails Germany's eventually becoming the dominating power on this side of the Atlantic, and that the course envisaged, at least by the Nazi extremists now in the "saddle", toward that end is somewhat along the following lines: While the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state, or a "Greater Ukraine", as the project is now labeled by the revolutionary organization now operating under Berlin influence in Prague, figures as Berlin's major objective, I do not look for Hitler to risk measuring his military strength with that of the Soviet until he might have accomplished the following envisaged program:

"Greater Ukraine"

Unlikelihood of Berlin's risking coming to grips with Soviet until Berlin gained ascendency over intervening states.

(a) Complete ascendency over the area between Germany's eastern and the Soviet's western frontier. In this connection, I understand he envisages the creation of a chain of small subjugated states (this corresponds with substance of information reported in my despatch No. 828 of November 30, 1938) to serve as a "buffer" between Germany and the Soviet until such time as Hitler is prepared for a thrust at the Soviet. (My informants added that when the time came to "go after" the Soviet Hitler would have organized an army of White Russians to go forward as the advance guard, and that Hitler would approach his object not only from the south, but also through a friendly Finland and an

Envisaged creation of chain of small buffer states.

envisagedly

envisagedly amenable Estonia. They added that Estonia had already shifted her arms purchases from Britain to Finland, which was acting as agent for sales of German equipment.)

Steps in envisaged dismemberment of Poland; internal.

In line with this scheme he plans to divide Poland into several parts through (1) annexation of the Corridor, Danzig and Upper Silesia to the Reich, (2) incitement of a rebellion in the Ukrainian minority with an aim to joining it up with Ruthenia, and (3) promise of delivery of Vilno to Lithuania as part compensation for Lithuania's envisaged adherence to a Berlin policy. (In this connection I understand that Berlin, well aware of the Slavs' historic recalcitrance and resistance vis-à-vis Germany and former Austria in their respective forward-looking programs, plans materially to disarm the Polish forces after Poland's envisaged dismemberment.)

I am aware that until recently Hitler has "soft-pedalled" the Danzig Nazis in their desire to "break out" beyond the limits set by Hitler (see my despatch No. 754 of October 20, 1938) into a bolder than hitherto offensive attitude. I believe, however, that the hour is fast approaching when Hitler might give them instructions to go on the "attack". Moreover, my afore-cited conversations prompt me to feel this may be timed with an even more vigorous agitation among the Ukrainian and German minorities.

Meanwhile

Berlin's envisaged pressure from external points.

Meanwhile the picture taking form on the northern and southern frontiers of Poland may be described by stating that what were previously two detached arms of the Soviet, namely, Lithuania and Czechoslovakia, are rapidly becoming the attached arms of Germany.

Prague becoming center of anti-Polish activities.

In Prague, falling in line with Berlin policy with surprising rapidity, we find already a going organization of revolutionary character boldly supporting the Polish Ukrainian minority's bid for autonomy, and playing a leading rôle in a vigorous campaign envisaging the setting up of a "Greater Ukraine". I understand, moreover, that the efforts of this organization are coordinated with the propaganda broadcasts of Vienna and Leipzig, as well as a secret broadcasting station on Czech soil close to the Czecho-Polish frontier in Trans-Olzan Silesia, disseminating anti-Polish propaganda. Furthermore, Ruthenia is rapidly being rigged up, under Berlin's direction, as a center for anti-Polish, anti-Rumanian and anti-Soviet activities.

Ruthenia being rigged up as center of anti-Polish, anti-Rumanian, anti-Soviet activities.

Berlin's plans vis-a-vis Kaunas.

I understand through usually reliable channels that in Kaunas there is evidence of a growing tendency to "play ball" with Berlin. Already large student bodies have demonstrated for the return of Valdemaras, for the adoption not only of a pro-German but an anti-Polish policy as well. These demonstrations, I understand, are attributable to Berlin influence.

According to the Turkish Ambassador and the aforementioned Nazi agents who passed through here, Hitler's attention

attention to Memel represents mainly a "play" to bring Lithuania into line - and eventually he aims either to buy off Smetona or support Valdemaras in a coup d'état with a view to setting up a Government in Kaunas which might definitely bring Lithuania into Berlin's orbit (see despatch No. 850 of December 17, 1938).

Berlin at last becomes identified in German press with Ukraine project through article in provincial press.

As regards Hitler's identification with machinations vis-à-vis the Ukraine, it is well to bear in mind that at the time Pilsudski and Hitler accomplished the Polish-German Non-Aggression Agreement, it was secretly agreed that Hitler should leave the Polish Ukrainian minority alone. Until recently, mention of the Ukraine project was notably absent in the Nazi press. It is significant, however, that on December 14 the Schlesische Zeitung of Breslau, a paper with conservative and military tradition dating from 1742, carried an article clearly disclosing Germany's interest in the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state, mainly at the expense of Poland and the Soviet. Besides, the article concluded by stating it was advisable that Europe follow events in this area, if it did not wish one day to be surprised. One thing was certain: "The Ukrainian race will live." This then marks a significant departure from Hitler's hitherto apparent desire to withhold Berlin's identification with a Ukrainian project, and a deliberate breach of his secret agreement with Pilsudski. As a matter of fact, Warsaw has on several occasions in the recent past discreetly complained to Berlin about

about the aforementioned Viennese and Leipzig broadcasts.

Increasing signs of Berlin's closing in on Warsaw through widespread pressure.

In other words, I discern increasing signs that Hitler is fast closing in on Poland, and I believe he means to press with intensified effort on all points, both internally and externally, to bring Warsaw to terms. It now appears he is deliberately "sicking" Czechoslovakia on Poland (such as he is now reportedly "sicking" Hungary on the Transylvanian area of Rumania). In fact it is even conceivable he might carry this to the point of provoking an open conflict with view to taking advantage of any pretext (such as protection of the German minority from possible harm in a disturbed area, etc.) to intervene actively.

Signs of Berlin's "sicking" Czechoslovakia on Poland.

Prospect of Hitler's stirring up internal disorders in Poland.

Meanwhile, unless the Polish Government comes to terms, or succeeds in stalling for time through diplomatic tactics, I look for Hitler to stir up in every way possible internal restiveness in Poland, especially amongst the German minority, even perhaps with view eventually to creating a pretext for an open row, for I believe Hitler and his "extremist" associates, provided they felt sufficiently confident France had been neutralized by the recent Paris-Berlin declaration and that neither France nor the Soviet were in the mood nor of the capacity to come to Poland's aid, would welcome an opportunity "to try out" their Army in an envisagedly victorious war of short duration, in order to build up confidence amongst their armed forces and to offset

Possibility of Hitler's seeking pretext for open row with Poland provided he were confident he could localize conflict.

what

what Hitler reportedly interprets as a lingering spirit of defeatism and pacifism amongst the German masses. Moreover, according to my aforementioned informants, the Turkish Ambassador and the Nazi agents, Hitler would like to accomplish this provided he thought he could "localize" it before France and Great Britain might have attained any further appreciable improvement in their respective armaments.

As regards the other links in Hitler's envisaged chain of smaller units between the German and Soviet areas, my aforementioned informants were of the opinion (a) Hitler counts upon Yugoslavia and Bulgaria as "friends" and counts upon their "sitting tight"; moreover, that Hungary will completely "board the band wagon" at an early date; (b) as regards Rumania, Hitler is already setting the scene for her amputation: Bukovina to line up with Ruthenia, and possibly even part or all of Bessarabia (The "extremist" element in Berlin figures on there being three million Ukrainians in Rumania. This, they hold, includes Bessarabia.); (c) Hitler aims that Bucharest should henceforth have its hands full with Berlin-inspired Hungarian pressure vis-à-vis Transylvania.

Hitler setting scene for Rumania's amputation.

In discussing King Carol, the Turkish Ambassador unhesitatingly and bluntly labeled him a voleur, adding that if anything in the form of financial benefits were to come Bucharest's way Carol was always sure to get his usually

important

important share of the "soap". The reason he had "bumped off" Codreanu and "Iron Guard" associates was not only to fortify his own political position, but also to clear the Rumanian arena of forces which might insist upon sharing the spoils with him. Carol had always had a price, took it from where he could get it, and the Berlin of today knew it. Carol, like his compatriots, suffered from sensitivity of the "pocket nerve" and would not be difficult to line up eventually when Berlin was prepared to assure itself of the Rumanian Government's alignment with Berlin policy.

Berlin's program to eliminate Poland as a potential resistant force, to prevent her jumping on Germany's back when Germany struck at France with a view to eliminating possibility of latter's in turn jumping on Germany's back when engaged in an envisaged campaign against the Soviet.

According to the further opinion of the Turkish Ambassador, ascendency over the area between Germany and the Soviet in general, and over Poland in particular, is of paramount importance in terms of the immediate aspect of Hitler's program. In connection therewith, Hitler feels he must eliminate Poland as a force of potential resistance from the picture as speedily as possible, in order to make a thrust at France before she will have effectively prepared to meet a combined German and Italian attack. Hitler, according to the Turkish Ambassador, does not dare risk coming to grips with France until Poland may have been put down, for Hitler is convinced that Poland would jump on his back the instant the French, and perhaps the British, forces might have engaged the German forces in the field. His plan envisages a joint German and Italian campaign vis-à-vis France, entailing the

immediate

Hitler's envisaged plan vis-à-vis France.

immediate closing of the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal to all British and French shipping. The attack would be one of lightning and destructive character.

Ribbentrop's advice to Hitler re Britain.

Ribbentrop, who is today in the "saddle", in terms of direction of foreign policy, continues to maintain that Britain is still in such a state of unpreparedness that she will have her hands full merely taking care of "home defense" and protection of her merchant fleet; that Germany may, in collaboration with Italy, consequently proceed against France without much worry of effective resistance from Britain.

Of pertinent bearing, I am reliably informed that Ribbentrop (still Britain's "Public Enemy No. 1") is now frequently referred to by Hitler in his informal conversation as "my man Ribbentrop".

In fact, reports reaching the British Ambassador here from Berlin concur with the substance of my recent conversation with an agent of the Press Bureau of the Nazi Party (who recently passed through Warsaw) to the effect that Hitler had remarked, in the presence of several of his Ministers, that if he had only listened to "his man Ribbentrop" (instead of Goering and Neurath) he could have launched a victorious attack of short duration against Prague without effective interference from abroad.

Hitler's envisaged "pay-off" to Mussolini, North Africa;

In this connection, the Turkish Ambassador stated that, through an envisaged victory over France, Hitler plans his "pay-off" to Mussolini by leaving him North Africa, retaining

the

European continent is for Hitler.

the right to exercise full sway over the European continent. The Ambassador, moreover, emphasized that upper Nazi circles are anxious to bring about their envisaged attack on France as soon as possible in order to strike before France and Britain will have become better prepared.

Explanation for Rome's outburst regarding Tunis, Corsica and Nice.

Of pertinent bearing, my inquiries during discussions with my aforementioned informants disclose that the fundamental explanation for Rome's outburst regarding Tunis, Corsica and Nice during Ribbentrop's visit in Paris was a tactical move previously agreed upon by Berlin and Rome. Ribbentrop was anxious to neutralize France during Berlin's period of "consolidation" in Eastern and Central Europe. Hence he had felt it would be tactically helpful, from a psychological standpoint, if Rome, the other axis partner, shouted for French possessions while Ribbentrop would be talking to Bonnet. Ribbentrop had felt that during the conversation Bonnet's mind might thus be divided between Ribbentrop's offer to sign a declaration along limited lines and the disturbing outburst of the other axis partner. Threatened by one end of the axis, and seeing the outstretched hand of the other end, Bonnet might thus the more readily be brought to grasp the outstretched hand, and to be content with Berlin's refusal to extend the scope of the declaration beyond the frontiers common to Germany and France. In other words, it might have been a preconceived "play", aimed primarily at bringing Bonnet to terms on

Berlin's

Berlin's conditions, and secondarily as an opportunity for Rome to acquire whatever profits might eventually accrue to Italy as a result.

Now it seems that Ribbentrop is satisfied that he obtained Paris' signature and Rome is gratified over the prospect of (a) France's raising the status of the Italian population in Tunis (possibly to the point of extending agricultural loans to the Italian as well as to the French inhabitants), (b)coming to terms on the Djibouti railway, and (c) both France's and Britain's coming to terms on the Suez Canal. These disclosures, in response to my inquiries, are to the following extent borne out by the fact that the Polish Ambassador to Rome was told several days ago by Foreign Minister Ciano that the latter did not expect the Tunis claims to give rise to serious consequences; the issue involved more a social than a territorial aspect and Ciano believed that in that light the matter would be settled satisfactorily. Moreover, Ciano expected France eventually to meet Rome's Djibouti claims satisfactorily and France and Britain to adjust the Suez issue.

Evaluation of (a) Turkish Ambassador's opinion, and (b) information imparted by passing Nazi secret agents.

In evaluating the substance (a) of the above-cited opinion of the Turkish Ambassador upon certain phases of Berlin's forward-looking program; and (b) the above-cited information imparted to me by Nazi secret agents who have recently passed through here in various guises, I do not lose sight of the fact that the Turkish Ambassador is an Italophobe almost to the point of fanaticism, and that

though

though generally exceptionally well informed, "a professional pessimist". Besides, I do not fail to take into consideration that if and when Germany might have gained complete ascendency over whatever states still represent resistance points, such as Poland and Rumania, it might spell the approach of an early show-down between the axis and Turkey. In line with this, I do not exclude the possibility that his expressed opinion might have been motivated by the tactical conception that by planting the thought that the "silencing" of Poland might presage a subsequent attack on France, he might serve to stir up more vigorous French interest in the Polish-French Alliance. After all Turkey, like all other countries in Eastern, Central and Southeastern Europe, is seeking to divert Berlin's drive from all their own necks.

In evaluating the information imparted to me by the aforementioned Nazi agents, while I am inclined to mark it down partly (a) to the scare- and confusion-inspiring technique of Nazidon's formula of gangster diplomacy, and (b) to the speculative dreams of the "extremist" element of Nazi inner circles, I am aware that at the moment the "extremist" element is in the saddle. Moreover, it is well to bear in mind that previous to the Anschluss, and again in the period leading up to the annexation of the Sudete, the Propaganda Bureau in Berlin characteristically made an "open secret" of Hitler's intentions <u>vis-à-vis</u> both projects; as these rumored intentions gained widespread attention, they were generally received as the fantastic

machinations

machinations of the war lords and radical political dreamers of Berlin. Therefore, in view of these recollections, the afore-cited opinion of the Turkish Ambassador and the Nazi agents' information, a large portion of which I am inclined to attribute to Nazi Propaganda Bureau inspiration, might conceivably serve in the light, at least from time to time, of watching the course of Berlin's diplomacy and other political maneuvers during the next few months.

Poland's position vis-à-vis Berlin pressure.

Insofar as Poland is concerned, Foreign Minister Beck is well aware (a) of Berlin's intensified pressure at all points above described, and (b) of the destructive designs of the Nazi "extremists". He is, moreover, alive to the necessity of coming to a decision at an early date as to what course to pursue henceforth vis-à-vis Berlin, and as he faces the problem I believe the two answers he awaits are: (a) M. Bonnet's reply to Polish Ambassador Lukasiewicz's soundings as to how far Poland might count on France in the event of a conflict with Germany (I am aware that until today, December 22, Paris has, to the disappointment of Warsaw, not made itself clear.); and (b) Polish Ambassador to Moscow Grzybowski's impression as to Moscow's mood and capacity to support Poland's continued resistance to German pressure. In my opinion, the answers to these questions may be expected to prove the determining factors in Beck's forward-looking program.

Poland's soundings in Paris.

Poland's attempt to ascertain Moscow's mood and capacity to support Warsaw's continued resistance vis-à-vis Berlin's pressure.

At

At this point it is pertinent to recall that I reported in my despatch No. 828 of November 30, 1938, pages 3-4, that some time ago I discovered there was a school of thought in official circles here which had long envisaged Poland's collaboration with Germany in an envisaged establishment of an independent Ukrainian state, wherein this group pictures Poland's receiving her proportionate rewards for "services rendered" and territory contributed. I am aware, however, that this school of thought received a shock when Hitler refused to permit the establishment of Poland's envisaged common frontier with Hungary. Indeed, their rude awakening to the realization that Berlin's "political engineers" were setting up Ruthenia as a "propaganda fortress", turned against Poland as well as the Soviet, dampened their enthusiasm for collaboration with Germany in connection with the Ukraine. Moreover, their pride was deeply offended - and for a Pole this is an almost unforgivable sin.

School of thought in official circles here which long envisaged collaboration with Germany vis-a-vis Soviet.

Germany's shock to this school of thought; refusal to permit "common frontier".

Moreover, my own observations of Nazi mentality convince me the aforementioned group's hope of Germany's willingness to collaborate with Poland in and after the establishment of any potentially fruitful scheme is nothing short of a "pipe dream". Indeed, to my mind, Berlin's idea of collaboration with a smaller state is decidedly foreign to the ideas of collaboration entertained by the aforementioned Polish group. Poland would do all the collaborating, and Germany all the profit-taking. Polandwould be like a vehicle

Observations on Nazi mentality.

Berlin's idea of collaboration: the other party does all the collaborating; Berlin does all the profit-taking.

vehicle used by a person to reach some place on an important mission - after reaching his destination he would strip the car of all detachable parts and cast the rest on the "dump heap".

In that I realize Beck possesses a keen insight into the German mentality, I feel he entertains no illusions as to Poland's potential benefits from collaboration with Germany. Hence it would seem that his best "out" is the possibility of a French- and/or Soviet-supported Polish resistance to German pressure - or perhaps even a lightning thrust at Czechoslovakia (a) in a hope of "silencing" Ruthenia, a thorn of increasing discomfort in Poland's side, without intervention of a third power, and (b) in a hope that Germany's potential intervention might bring other powers to Poland's side.

Poland's best "out".

As regards the likelihood of Paris' committing itself to forceful action in connection with the Polish-French Alliance, see Memorandum A attached hereto.

As regards Moscow's potential capacity and mood to support Warsaw's continued resistance to Berlin pressure, see Memorandum B attached hereto.

As regards the possibility of Poland's striking out suddenly against Czechoslovakia, see Memorandum C attached hereto.

In endeavoring to estimate Beck's future attitude vis-à-vis Berlin, it is pertinent to mention that at the conclusion of a conference of the inner Government circle

with

Inner Government circles instructs Beck to press Berlin for clarification of Berlin's intentions in Eastern Europe and vis-à-vis Poland in particular.

with the President on December 14 at the Zamek, Beck was requested to press Berlin for a clarification of its intentions in Eastern Europe in general and vis-à-vis Poland in particular.

Beck's subsequent talk with German Ambassador.

Beck later conferred with German Ambassador Von Moltke. In connection therewith, Under Secretary of State Count Szembek imparted that Beck had been forceful in his conversation, emphasizing that Poland, "one of the Great Powers", insisted upon Berlin's explanation of its recent actions vis-à-vis Poland and insisted upon a clarification as to what Berlin intended to do vis-à-vis Memel, where Poland had interests, and vis-à-vis the Soviet. Moltke had replied that Berlin intended no annexation of Memel and was merely interested in seeing that Memel enjoyed full rights under the Statute. As regards the Soviet, Moltke would leave the explanation of Berlin's interest for some official of the German Government to clarify.

German Ambassador's subsequent arrangements for Ribbentrop's visit here mid-January.

Moltke subsequently arranged for Ribbentrop to come here "on the Polish Government's invitation" about mid-January.

German Ambassador hopes Warsaw's wave of recalcitrance towards Berlin will diminish before Ribbentrop's visit.

Moltke yesterday imparted to the Rumanian Ambassador that he hoped Warsaw would alter its recently adopted recalcitrant attitude towards Berlin before Ribbentrop arrived, adding that Berlin was seriously annoyed over Beck's declaration with Moscow. Moltke considered Beck had made a great mistake.

Beck

Beck's December 21 departure for Monaco to consider his problems quietly.

Beck departed from Warsaw December 21 for Monaco. Before his departure he sent me a confidential message, requesting me to guard it with secrecy, that he intended to go to Monaco for about ten days in order to have time to think out his various problems and to gain a clear perspective before making certain important decisions. He facetiously added he had chosen Monaco, since it was the only country to which he might go without being suspected of negotiating for an alliance.

Rumanian Ambassador's opinion of Beck's future course as between Germany and Soviet.

It is pertinent to state that the Rumanian Ambassador, characterizing the opinion of several representatives of other nearby Central European states, has the impression that Poland would be willing to collaborate with Germany against the Soviet, provided she could be assured of generous compensation. He bases this impression (a) upon his belief that any positive action vis-à-vis Russia is of major interest to Poland - in fact, could not be carried out without Poland's collaboration, unless Germany were willing to fight both Poland and the Soviet; (b) upon the fact that the Ambassador's own Government circles cannot picture Poland's marching with the Soviet against Germany - rather it might be the other way round.

The Ambassador concurs in my opinion, however, that if Berlin at the outset refused to talk terms satisfactory to Warsaw, such as withdrawal of objections to a "common frontier" with Hungary, Berlin might force Poland over to the side of the Soviet.

In

In this connection, I do not exclude the possibility that if Berlin strikes recognizable resistance during the forthcoming Beck-Ribbentrop talks, which Berlin felt might lead to widespread complications, Berlin might adopt the rôle of the "spider and the web" - or empty promises.

Observations of the Rumanian Ambassador's opinion.

In considering the Rumanian Ambassador's impression, I am inclined to feel that his attitude borders on confusion and defeatism in view not only of the foregoing, but also because of his statement that he felt there was nothing for his country and Poland eventually to do but to collaborate with Germany in her Ukraine objective - in fact, he said that he and his Government circles felt London and Paris would welcome Germany's turning against the Soviet, that Germany could count upon their standing aside. Moreover, I recall having pointed out in a previous despatch that, while Beck might conceivably and eventually agree to collaborate with Germany in a venture vis-à-vis the Soviet, both his insight to the German mentality and his foresight might prompt him to regard such a venture as spelling a grim prospect for Poland in terms of the long-range outlook and, as such, to treat it in the light of a last alternative. Besides, in my opinion, Beck would not likely lose sight of the improbability of Hitler's attempting a military venture vis-à-vis the Soviet until he would have either sufficiently assured himself of Britain's and France's neutrality during such a campaign, or would have attempted to "silence" France through a

My previously expressed opinion Beck would assent to collaboration with Germany only as last resort, in event all hopes for an "out" had dwindled.

potential

potential campaign at the side of Italy. In connection with the latter, if Beck suspected that Hitler intended to strike at France, I am of the opinion that Beck would not commit himself to collaborate with Germany.

Beck to study all angles of developments in making and their potential bearing on Poland.

Hence I believe that Beck, during his visit to Monaco, will study all angles of events in the making in order to gain a clear perspective of the general trend and its potential bearing on Poland's position. He will, moreover, undoubtedly watch for signs indicating the possible outcome of Chamberlain's forthcoming meeting with Mussolini, for the outcome thereof will undoubtedly have an important bearing on Poland's forward-looking policy. I look for him meanwhile to continue a "wait-and-see" policy.

Beck to watch forthcoming Chamberlain-Mussolini conversations

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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(In quintuplicate)

MEMORANDUM A

As to the likelihood of Paris' committing itself positively to forceful action in connection with the Polish-French alliance, it is interesting to note that according to information through usually reliable channels, Berlin's "political engineers" estimate that about 60% of leading political circles in Paris would oppose any definite commitment at this time to military action in connection with Eastern and Central Europe, and that this element favors "putting to sleep" - if not altogether cutting loose from, France's alliances with Poland and the Soviet. This estimate corresponds with that of political experts of the Angora Government.

Moreover, I am aware that Poland's press in France hit a "new low" for all time in the early stage of the post-Munich period. In fact, there has been little if any improvement in French feeling towards Poland since the Warsaw-Prague "settlement" over the Teschen district. Besides, the Government here has adopted an antagonizing attitude toward France's economic interests in this city. As a matter of fact, French investors in the Warsaw Electric Company are now in the process of defending their interests against an attempt to sequester the property. Furthermore, for Poland's part, Warsaw has done little to improve relations with Paris by apparently going out of its way to lend moral support to Rome's recent outburst regarding Tunis, etcetera. Moreover, to make sure that

Paris

Paris did not miss these articles, the Warsaw Government-controlled press agency, PAT, deliberately distributed the substance thereof to their Paris subscribers. In view of Beck's earnest desire to gain a sympathetic ear in Paris, adoption of such an inconsistent attitude in the Polish press in inexplicable, unless it might be put down to a complete lack of coordination between Beck and his Press Bureau, and/or both acute pique over France's declaration with Germany and subsequent rumors published in the foreign press that Ribbentrop and Bonnet have discussed the Polish-French alliance and implications that France had "cooled off" on this alliance. In other words, with France's not having yet attained her desired standard of military preparedness and with an already recalcitrant French public opinion vis-à-vis Poland (which certainly could not have been ameliorated by the moral support recently given Rome's outburst by the Warsaw Government-controlled press), it seems hardly likely that Paris would either be in the mood or of the capacity to greet with outstretched arms, Beck's emissary when the latter seeks a definite commitment entailing French military action in the event Poland came to grips with Germany.

.....

12-22-38

MEMORANDUM B

As regards Moscow's potential mood and capacity to lend support to Warsaw's continued resistance to Berlin pressure, the only indications I have so far had on this score, are the following:

The Rumanian Ambassador informed me confidentially that his Government had received a report that Litvinov, in recent conversation with a foreign diplomat accredited to Moscow, had given the latter the impression that until he might have had more time to judge Warsaw's actions, he was not inclined to take too seriously Warsaw's sudden turn towards Moscow. However, the Rumanian Government's source of information had interpreted Litvinov's attitude as a willingness to "play ball" with Warsaw in the hope that improved relations might possibly serve Moscow profitably in the end.

Of pertinent bearing, Minister Beck's Chief of Cabinet, Count Lubienski, in discussing current negotiations between Warsaw and Moscow looking to a trade pact, stated: that while TAS had recently reported that Moscow was prepared to offer a deal on a basis whereby Moscow would purchase goods here in 1939 amounting to 80 million zlotys, he was disinclined to be hopeful that Moscow's purchases would exceed much more than about 20 to 25 million zlotys. Naturally he hoped for considerably more but due to past experiences in commerce

with

with the Soviet, figures cited in negotiations usually dwindled considerably in practice. On the other hand, experience had shown that in many cases Moscow directed its purchases along political tactical lines.

In this connection, Lubienski mentioned that Moscow had already evinced considerable interest in the possible purchase of Polish coal. Lubienski interpreted this more in the light of a political gesture than a commercial requirement.

He then stated signs now pointed to Moscow's continuance of steel orders formerly issued to the Trzynice foundries, formerly in Czecho-Slovakia, now in Poland.

.....

12-22-38

Memorandum C

As regards the possibility of a Polish-Czecho-Slovak conflict, it is well to bear in mind the following:

On December 14th, the inner Government conferred with the President at the Zamek. At the conclusion of the conference it was decided that Minister Beck should press Berlin for a clarification of its intentions in Eastern Europe in general, and vis-à-vis Poland in particular.

Marshal Śmigły-Rydz moreover, reportedly inferred that army circles had been disappointed by their impression that a "silencing" of Ruthenia as a center of anti-Polish activities was no longer a question. Moreover, military circles continued to feel that the only solution was a lightening thrust at Ruthenia, which they felt would not encounter resistance from Rumania, nor Hungary, nor Yugoslavia. Moreover, they felt that even in the case of Germany, they would not encounter German intervention, provided the job was accomplished speedily.

I am, moreover, aware that high military circles here have been pressing for action vis-à-vis Ruthenia until several days ago, when there was a noticeable quieting of anti-Polish activities arising in Ruthenia, on the heels of Warsaw's vigorous note to Prague (see my

ngble

cable No. 263 of December 19, 9 a.m.)

I now learn, however, that due to a recent incident wherein a group of Czechs reportedly caused disorder in the Teschen district by hurling bombs, grenades, etc., Warsaw is planning to send a fresh protest to Prague. What effect this will have on the military hotheads, is too early to forecast. It is safe to say, however, that their knowledge of this recent incident will not improve their mounting recalcitrance towards Czecho-Slovakia.

I N D E X

to

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from the

American Embassy

Warsaw

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***

PSF Poland

file

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Warsaw, January 14, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

In connection with my cables No. 256 of November 28, 1938 and No. 1 of January 3, 1939 to the Department, wherein I drew attention to a series of violently anti-American broadcasts emanating from "Deutschland Zenda", the Berlin radio station, I have been keeping track of subsequent broadcasts and take occasion to attach a memorandum hereto covering an outline thereon.

With every good wish, I am

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle.r

Enclosure:
Memorandum

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

PSF Poland

M E M O R A N D U M

January 12, 1939

Last three days' radio broadcasts from "Deutschland Zenda", Berlin, have taken definite form of an effort to go over the heads of our Government towards stirring up anti-Semitism amongst the people of our country. On Sunday, January 8, the broadcast played up in caustic tones an article which had recently appeared in the New York Daily News. This article had evidently struck out at a number of individuals of the Jewish religion occupying prominent positions in our Government. On January 9 this line was pursued further. On January 10 substance of a book entitled Judah Discovers America, by Krantz, was played up with a tone of viciousness. Great prominence was given certain quotations from this book. Then followed a number of quotations from a recent speech by Father Coughlin. The whole broadcast was characterized by sneering vindictiveness.

The broadcast of Wednesday, January 11, consisted mainly of a play-up of an article by Lawrence Dennis in the American Mercury deploring the anti-German wave.

PSF: Poland

File Personal & Confidential

Warsaw, January 18, 1939.

My dear Mr. President:

As of possible interest, I am attaching hereto a memorandum covering observations of Minister Beck and his associates and myself regarding French-"Axis" relations in the light of their bearing upon Polish-French relations.

With every good wish, I am,

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle Jr.

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House,

Washington, D. C.

PsF Poland

MEMORANDUM

Indications brought to light in Beck's reports from Paris, and my own observations, lead me to believe that until recently the French had not attached as serious concern to Rome's "shouts" as is the case now. All of a sudden, Rome's attitude appears to have taken on a serious light in terms of Paris' consideration. The French Government finds itself faced (a) with a formidable effort from the Left, led by M. Blum, in regard to opening the Spanish frontier, and (b) with an eventual necessity to clarify its position in respect of its alliances with Moscow and Warsaw.

Pressure on both points is accumulating. Realizing this, the Government will undoubtedly play for time - will permit discussion on foreign policy to extend over the time originally set for it in the hope (1) that freedom of expression from all quarters might serve to show public opinion that non-intervention is the wiser course, and (2) that time might work in the Government's favor.

As regards (a) above, the question of Spain, Polish officialdom is of the opinion that, if pressed for a showdown in Parliament, M. Daladier could maintain his position, if only by a narrow margin. At any rate, if Mr. Chamberlain succeeded in maintaining his position of insistence on non-intervention against the Opposition in London, his position will undoubtedly reflect itself in

strengthening

strengthening M. Daladier's hand. In fact, Polish official circles look for Chamberlain and Daladier to "come through" on this point.

Moreover, my informants point out that France "missed the boat" over two years ago in not having supported openly and generously Government Spain - now it is too late, unless Paris is willing to risk France's direct involvement in the Spanish conflict. Paris' effective help to Barcelona, which is fast "going under", could be nothing less than French troops at this juncture. To lend any other assistance would prove, under the circumstances, nothing short of a futile gesture and, from a standpoint of prestige, be marked down eventually as a French failure.

Hence, according to the opinion of my informants, it is too late now, unless they are willing to assign the French Army to the task.

As regards (b) above - the question of France's alliances with Moscow and Warsaw - as pointed out in previous writings, Beck has been seriously desirous of having a talk with Bonnet in order to clarify Polish-French relations, the status of the Polish-French alliance in the light of recent and current events.

Beck's associates were inclined to feel that Bonnet had deliberately turned down an opportunity to have a frank, possibly mutually helpful, tour d'horizon with

Beck

Beck when he was in Monaco. Beck is more philosophical than his associates, however, and says that that is water over the dam; the question now is the future. Accordingly, he believes the French themselves will sooner or later come to realize the desirability of a talk.

Meanwhile, Beck's reports indicate that while up to the first part of December Poland's rapport in Paris was "scraping bottom", since that time changed circumstances, and France's having gradually emerged from its feeling of shock and shame over having "sold the Czechs down the river", has worked in Poland's favor.

Recently the Communists and Socialists who have been pressing for reinvigoration of the Franco-Soviet alliance have been pulling also for the alliance with Poland.

Even certain elements among the Rightists have recently evinced interest in the French-Polish alliance.

Moreover, the French General Staff had significantly manifested more than common interest of late in the Franco-Polish alliance.

The foregoing elements had suddenly awakened to the possibility that, on the heels of a potential Franco victory, the Italians might wage a vigorous campaign of

chantages

chantages aimed at bringing about a "Mediterranean Munich". In line with this, Rome might conceivably press with renewed vigor for its already voiced claims vis-à-vis Djibuti and Tunis. (In the opinion of my informants in Polish official circles, the question of raising the status of the Italians beyond the terms laid down in the Laval agreement might open the way for a "self-determining" play a year or so hence - in other words, setting the scene for a Sudet of France's North African domain.) My informants, moreover, continued that with apprehension on the above score gaining ground, the French in general are becoming deeply concerned. They are looking around for friends. Who do they find?

The British - yes - but help in the form of troops could not be counted upon for perhaps three or four months after commencement of hostilities and then not trained up to the standard required for today's type of warfare. (It is pertinent to state that Polish official circles are of the opinion that unless and until Britain enacts compulsory military service, Berlin will continue to regard the French as the decisive factor in the West and Chamberlain's efforts at appeasement as a sign of weakness and a play for time.)

Hence, according to my informants, it is necessary for the French to look elsewhere as well - and who, in

final

final analysis, would they turn to - the Poles - because, in the first place, they have an outstanding army and air force. Moreover, though they would undoubtedly make soundings in Belgrade and Bucharest, Warsaw would be the main center of their soundings. Hence the Poles will wait and see.

Moreover, and according to my informants' opinion, the French - somewhat like the British - had let themselves be carried away by the press play-up of the Ukraine. Now they were commencing to have doubts as to whether that was the next Nazi move.

In my opinion, Warsaw looks for Paris to become more favorably inclined towards the Polish-French alliance with the development of events now apparently in the making. In other words, Warsaw believes that increased "Axis" pressure on France, aimed, from Berlin's standpoint, at precluding potentially offensive action by the French Army by throwing it on the defense of France's own various frontiers, might bring Paris to look to Warsaw with a more friendly eye.

At the same time, I am aware that Polish diplomacy would go far in efforts to prevent an Italo-French conflict, for Warsaw believes only one power would profit thereby, namely, Germany.

Warsaw, moreover, is inclined to look for Berlin further to burden the already confused situation in

Western

Western Europe by embarking at an early date on a vigorous campaign for colonial concessions.

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

PSF Poland

12-28-38

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to Eu

file Confidential

January 25, 1939

My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing copies of the following strictly confidential despatches from Ambassador Biddle which have been marked for the President:

No. 869, dated December 28, 1938, concerning Warsaw-Prague relations;

No. 872, dated December 28, 1938, concerning negotiations as to future status of Danzig;

No. 873, dated December 29, 1938, concerning Ukrainian minority's demand for autonomy;

No. 879, dated January 5, 1939, concerning Polish-German relations.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosures:

Copies of four despatches, as listed

The Honorable

Marvin H. McIntyre,

Secretary to the President,

The White House.

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 869 Warsaw, December 28, 1938

Subject: Supplementing despatch No. 854 of December 22, 1938 regarding increasing strain in Warsaw-Prague relations; reports from Prague; Polish officialdom's and other observations thereon.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 854 of December 22, 1938 (Memorandum C), wherein I pointed out that Warsaw-Prague relations were rapidly going from bad to worse and that Warsaw, On December 19 through its Minister in Prague, had protested against the existence of "certain" organizations engaged in anti-Polish activities on Czechoslovak soil, and to report that on the heels of this protest, in fact at six o'clock in the afternoon of December 22, a

squad

squad of Czech terrorists found its way into Dziećmorowice, Frysztat, and threw two grenades at two policemen leaving police headquarters, wounding one in the stomach, the other in the skull.

Moreover, at midnight on December 22 another squad of Czech terrorists arrived in the town of Łazy, throwing two grenades through the window of the house of a resident of the community, locally known as a pronounced Polish patriot. While the explosion caused damage to the house, no persons were injured. About the same time the house of a Polish peasant, known throughout the neighborhood for his Polish patriotic feelings, caught fire. It was suspected by the Polish community that this fire was started by Czech terrorists.

The following day, December 23, Polish Minister to Prague Papee made a vigorous démarche to Foreign Minister Chvalkovsky regarding the general situation existent on the Polish-Czech frontier in the Teschen area.

These incidents and publication of the two Polish official protests have contributed towards a rapid rise of anti-Czech feeling throughout Poland and are adding to the already heavy strain on Polish-Czech relations. Subsequent to the second protest Gazeta Polska, the Government mouthpiece, played up the Teschen incidents prominently in a rather lengthy article, which in effect concluded with a statement to the effect that "We shall have to put an end to that."

Again

Again on December 27 the Polish Minister in Prague made a vigorous protest as result of an incident which occurred in Morawska Ostrawa during the Christmas holiday. It seems that a band of Czech terrorists had removed the Polish eagle, an emblem which adorned the entrance to the Polish Consulate in that town.

Meanwhile, however, the local police have run down the culprits and punished them, found the eagle and replaced it, thus rendering sufficient satisfaction in Polish officialdom's eyes to prompt their soft-pedaling P. A. T.'s (Government news agency) playing up the incident.

As a matter of fact Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny was the only Polish paper to carry the story - and this was due to their having had their own correspondent in Morawska Ostrawa.

I now find that, in retaliation, the Polish authorities had issued orders that each incident would involve the expulsion of one hundred Czechs from Polish territory. Thus Czech raids have already cost several hundred expulsions.

It is worthy of note, moreover, that during the ten-day period previous to the Christmas holiday Kurjer Poranny, which frequently represents the trend of feeling in high Army circles, daily played up reported disorders in sub-Carpathian Ruthenia. Today, December 28, I note a recrudescence of this play-up - this time in Gazeta Polska (the Government mouthpiece).

In

In connection therewith and in reply to my direct question, Minister Beck's Chief of Cabinet, Count Zubieński, in the absence of the Minister, admitted his Government considered that the Ruthenian question was not yet closed.

Of pertinent bearing, Mr. Burke Elbrick of this Embassy, who has been temporarily assigned to Prague, and who came to Warsaw for Christmas, informed me of the following: En route to Warsaw he was accompanied by a well informed Czech, formerly of the Czech diplomatic corps, widely conversant with Czech affairs, and enjoying intimate contacts with various categories of official circles in Prague. This individual, who is married to a Pole, does not entirely share the bitterness generally felt by his compatriots towards Poland. He informed Mr. Elbrick, in confidence, that one of his friends on the Czech General Staff had imparted that Berlin had instructed the Czech General Staff to be prepared to call upon the Czech Army to fight the Poles, perhaps in March. The General Staff officer had said such a campaign would necessitate a mobilization of about one million men.

On the one hand this information would seem to bear out my previously reported impression that Berlin was "sicking" Czechoslovakia onto Poland, perhaps even to the point of an open conflict.

On the other hand, in an effort to evaluate fully this information, it is well to bear in mind the Polish Government's point of view. In this connection, I am aware that the latter is cognizant that the Czech General Staff has received word along the foregoing lines from Berlin.

Moreover,

Moreover, my informants in official circles here, in appraising the possibilities of the Czechs' adoption of an offensive military rôle, are inclined to regard the situation along the following lines: They considered Prague was now in a process of complete upheaval, economically, politically and spiritually. As a result, the Army has had to be demobilized, and the chances were that it would not only have to be considerably diminished, but also must experience somewhat of an overhauling. The Czech state, as presently set up, would naturally call for alterations in the military structure - and current circumstances presaged Prague's adoption of more of a neutral than an offensive policy. Meanwhile, however, Berlin was trying in every way possible to weaken Poland preparatory to Warsaw-Berlin negotiations along various lines - primarily on the Danzig issue. Hence, part of Berlin's weakening technique was to stir up the Czechs to the prospect of a combat with the Poles, probably baiting them with the recovery of Teschen, among other factors. It was therefore pertinent to take into consideration that Berlin's propaganda along the above lines might naturally find fertile ground amongst the Czech officers, who were now apprehensive lest they might soon be out of a job through a potential diminution of their military establishment. Hence, in view of their resultant concern they might readily seize upon a potential Polish danger to the Czech state as a pretext to keep the Czech Army intact.

I

I am aware that, while my informants are inclined at the moment to regard the situation in the above light, they do not shut their eyes to the possibility that Berlin might conceivably employ the Czech Army in the end as a tool against Poland.

Of connected bearing, my interest was engaged by my informant's remark that his current reports indicated that while Government circles in Rumania and even in Hungary were dealing with the Nazi Government with apparent grace, there was a mounting apprehension and resentment at heart amongst these same circles. My informant thought even the Czechs might eventually experience a like change of heart. If such a turn took place, and Berlin ordered a Czech Army to make war on Poland, it was not inconceivable that either a rebellion amongst the Czech troops might take place or that an important section of the Czech Army might prefer to join the Poles in a potential conflict with the Germans.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

710
AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

OF THE ORIGINAL
A TRUE COPY

No. 872 Warsaw, December 28, 1938

Subject: Supplementing despatch No. 860 of December 23, 1938; British Ambassador's further disclosures regarding his conversations (a) with Minister Beck, and (b) with German Ambassador von Moltke on various phases of current Danzig negotiations.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 860 of December 23, 1938, regarding pending Warsaw-Berlin negotiations over Danzig, and to report that my subsequent conversation with the British Ambassador brought to light the following additional points in his recent conversations with Minister Beck and later with the German Ambassador to Poland, von Moltke.

In

In the British Ambassador's attempt to draw out Minister Beck as to what terms constituted the basis of present negotiations, the Minister was reluctant to shed any light thereon. The Minister had emphasized, however, that by the fifteenth or sixteenth of January he should have gained a fairly clear picture as to the course of negotiations, and as to whether they presaged a proposition which Poland could accept. He added that one of the main reasons for his inability to accelerate the Warsaw-Berlin discussions was because Ribbentrop was not scheduled to return to Berlin from his "vacation" until January 10.

Ambassador Kennard was impressed with Beck's sincerity on this point, and had therefore assured him that he would recommend to the British Government that it grant Beck as much latitude as possible in terms of time. Meanwhile, the British Government would consult the "Committee of Three" regarding League High Commissioner Burckhardt's report on recent violations of the Danzig Constitution, and would simultaneously keep the Polish Government advised. In turn, Minister Beck had assured the Ambassador that he would keep the latter informed as to progress of his own Government's negotiations with Berlin. At the conclusion of his discussion with Minister Beck, the Ambassador had asked the latter whether he thought Berlin might bring up the question of a right of way across the Corridor. The Minister replied calmly and without any apparent attempt at heroics that the question of the Corridor was for Poland a fighting point.

Ambassador

Ambassador Kennard had subsequently taken lunch with German Ambassador von Moltke. His discreet mention of his knowledge that negotiations were in progress between Warsaw and Berlin over Danzig had thrown von Moltke completely off balance, leaving him apparently embarrassed. After Kennard's assurances, however, that he was speaking strictly man to man and in utmost confidence, von Moltke relaxed somewhat and admitted that the negotiations were actually in progress. He then emphasized the importance of Kennard's guarding this disclosure in strictest secrecy. Kennard had then succeeded in extracting von Moltke's admission that one of the conditions proposed in present negotiations was Poland's renunciation of her control over Danzig's foreign affairs.

In response to Kennard's statement that he hoped Polish public opinion would stand for such a revision, von Moltke evinced what Kennard interpreted as sincere concern, adding that he could not be sure on this point, for he was well aware that any such revision might provoke a potentially dangerous reaction amongst the Polish masses and opposition leaders.

Kennard then asked him whether he thought the German Government might demand a permanent right of way over the Corridor. Von Moltke admitted the possibility of such a "proposal", adding his own opinion that while the Polish public might be brought to accept an alteration in the

matter

matter of representing Danzig in foreign affairs, he had grave doubts as to whether they would stand for any move in regard to the Corridor. Kennard then assured von Moltke he felt the Corridor was a fighting point with the Poles, pointing out that, aside from possible improvements in customs and visa arrangements, he saw no grounds for strong objection on Germany's part to the present arrangement, which was apparently serving the interested parties satisfactorily. Kennard had added that, rather than to press the question in the face of potential trouble, it might be better to propose, for instance, even a barbed-wire fence to run the length of the present way and on either side thereof policed by Polish guards. Insistence upon a permanent right of way might easily be interpreted in Polish minds as a potential infringement on Poland's sovereignty.

Kennard had gained the impression that, while von Moltke (who understands the Polish mentality) was inclined to agree with him, von Moltke doubted whether his Government, under the whip of the extremist element, now in the saddle, might regard the matter in that light.

In conclusion, Ambassador Kennard cautioned me to guard the foregoing, as well as the contents of my former despatch, in strictest secrecy, for the sake of the negotiations, all parties concerned, and the sources of his information.

Respectfully yours,

OF THE SIGNED ORIGINAL A TRUE COPY

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AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 873 Warsaw, December 29, 1938

Subject: Referring to despatches 844 and 859 of December 10 and 22 respectively; observations on effect of anti-Semitic wave and Ukrainian minority's demand for autonomy coming to fore simultaneously; conversation with Minister Beck on this aspect; his envisaged separate treatment of these two problems; reinforced frontier guard (KOP) in southeastern Poland "to meet any emergency"; observations on Government's probable course regarding Ukrainian minority.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my despatches Nos. 844 and 859 of December 10 and 22 respectively, wherein I pointed out (a) that, although Parliament rejected the Ukrainian minority's demand for autonomy, I looked for early re-doubled German efforts at agitation, and (b) that a concurrent surging wave of anti-Semitism presaged

added

added confusion to an already tense internal situation here, and to report the following observations in connection with the foregoing.

Before Minister Beck departed for his visit to Monaco, I had occasion to discuss with him the broader aspects of the aforementioned problems. I observed that intensification of parliamentary pressure for a solution of the so-called Jewish question of Poland, coming as it had simultaneously with the Ukrainian minority's demand for autonomy, presented the Government with a double-barreled problem; one question would appear to have added confusion to difficulty already caused by the other.

Minister Beck admitted that, in general, my observations were correct, adding that, due to their importance, these two problems required well considered and separate treatment - one at a time. He moreover admitted that simultaneous maturity of these two major issues was conducive to confusion. Hence, they would have to be segregated one from the other and dealt with separately.

Meanwhile, the Government had considerably increased its frontier guard (KOP) in southeastern Poland "to meet any emergency". I therefore gain the impression that the Government may be expected to treat with the Jewish problem first and hold the Ukrainian demands in abeyance for later treatment.

In an attempt to estimate the Government's course vis-à-vis the Ukrainian minority during the next few

months,

months, I am inclined to look for the following:

Anticipating re-doubled, Berlin-inspired agitation amongst the Ukrainians, among other measures aimed to weaken Poland during the forthcoming period of intensified German pressure at all points, while Berlin tries to force Poland to come to German terms, the Polish Government will undoubtedly treat with Eastern Galicia with a strong hand. In the event the authorities adopted this course, they would probably do so on grounds it was their only alternative in face of a Berlin-inspired menace to the security of the state. Accordingly, I look for the Polish Government to come down hard on all suspected foreign agents and to brook no demonstrations of Ukrainian nationalism. Moreover, the Government will undoubtedly draw a tight military police cordon around the Ukrainian area in the southeast in an effort to prevent the infiltration of Berlin-inspired and payed agitators. On the other hand, I look for the Polish Government forces to bend strenuous efforts towards dividing the Ukrainian leaders amongst themselves, playing one group against the other. As the Poles, who have not forgotten their lessons on these tactics learned under Hapsburg domination, are experts on "divide-and-rule" technique, I am inclined to look for fairly effective results. They will probably try to divert the Ukrainian minority's focal attention from the main issue, autonomy, by stirring up a row among the leaders.

I

I understand, moreover, from reports reaching me through various usually reliable channels that at the present moment the Ukrainian population in Eastern Galicia has been psychologically whipped up to believe that "the hour of their liberation is at hand". Among the masses, wherein there exists, generally speaking, a low standard of intelligence, there is reportedly a belief that Hitler is practically standing at the threshold, prepared to liberate them. The Nazi agents, of course, have resorted to exaggerations in order to gain local interest. Little thought is reportedly given by the Ukrainian masses as to the means or length of time it might take for Hitler to accomplish his envisaged objective of setting up an independent Ukrainian state.

It is therefore conceivable that the Polish authorities might adopt a line aimed at psychologically circumventing Hitler's influence. Hence, adoption of strong-arm measures within limits (for the Polish Government may reasonably be expected to be careful to keep to the minimum the risk of provoking scorn and possible intervention from abroad) with a view to inspiring confusion amongst the Ukrainians and, more importantly, their acute disappointment in Hitler at not finding him at hand to lead them out of their predicament.

In considering the potential effectiveness of strong-arm measures of comparatively limited character to tranquilize the

the current revolutionary tendency amongst the Ukrainians, it is well to bear in mind that the Ukrainian minority here is, comparatively speaking, unarmed and that rakes, picks and blunderbusses of the previous century would count little against a threat of the KOP's highly modernized equipment.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

A TRUE COPY
of the U.S.
signed original

No.879 Warsaw, January 5, 1939.

Subject: Supplementing despatch No. 860, December 23, 1938; substance of conversations with League High Commissioner Burckhardt during his New Year's visit to Warsaw; observations on various aspects of Polish-German relations.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 860 of December 23, 1938, to report herein the substance of my recent conversations with League High Commissioner Burckhardt, and to convey my observations on various aspects of Polish-German relations.

New Year reception at Am. Embassy serves Com. Burckhardt pretext for mutually desired talks with diplomats and Polish officials.

High Commissioner Burckhardt, who admittedly dislikes the suspicion, in German as well as Polish quarters, which usually attends his visits to Warsaw, resorted to our New Year's reception as a pretext to spend several days here. The reception afforded him an excellent opportunity to confer with the British

and

and French Ambassadors, the Swedish Chargé d'Affaires, an officer of the German Embassy, and officials of the Polish Government without arousing undue suspicion or publicity.

My conversation with Burckhardt

The following day Burckhardt and I had a lengthy conversation covering not only his impressions gained in his discussions with the aforementioned officials here, but also various aspects of Polish-German general relations.

Recalls former talk wherein he disclosed intention to prevail on Ribbentrop to withdraw Foerster.

At the outset of our conversation, Burckhardt recalled our former talks in Danzig wherein he had pointed out that he expected to confer with Ribbentrop and associates in Berlin with a view to persuading the former to "soft-pedal" Nazi boisterousness in Danzig (though at that time he had even entertained the hope of persuading Ribbentrop to withdraw Gauleiter Foerster, he failed in attaining that end). He was gratified that his recent visit to Berlin had resulted in Danzig Senate President Greiser's and Gauleiter Foerster's respectively promising to forward a letter to the "Committee of Three", acknowledging the unconstitutionality of the four recent decrees (see my cable No. 260, December 6, 11 a.m.). They had promised, moreover, to state in this letter their intention to withhold putting these decrees into force until they could be acted upon properly by a new Volkstag to be elected in April. While admitting this letter represented little more than a gesture in view of the damage already done by the declaration of the four decrees, Burckhardt felt that such a letter might conceivably serve in the nature of a face-saver for the Committee of Three in any event.

While he failed to attain this end, his recent Berlin talks result in Greiser's and Foerster's promise to address letter to Com. of 3".

~~better to acknowledge unconstitutionality of 4 decrees and to state intention to withhold enforcement until after election of new Polish Sejm (to be elected in April)~~

In

My interpretation: gesture reflects (a) Berlin's present desire to retain Burckhardt in Danzig until April (b) continued state of uncertainty in high Nazi circles re line of policy vis-a-vis Poland.

In such light, I am inclined to interpret this gesture as a reflection of Berlin's present desire to retain Burckhardt in Danzig until the April elections at least. Moreover, I am inclined to concur with Burckhardt's expressed reaction to the effect that it reflected a hitherto state of uncertainty in Nazi high circles as to what definite line of action to adopt vis-à-vis Poland on the Danzig question.

Commenting upon Berlin's attitude vis-a-vis Warsaw, Burckhardt said that during his last Berlin visit he had gained the distinct impression that there were two schools of thought in upper Nazi circles as to what line of policy to pursue relative to Poland. There were the "extremists" who advocated weakening Poland through ruthless pressure; they aimed thus to bring her to Berlin's terms, envisaging no doubt Poland's collaboration in Berlin's forward-looking expansion program.

"Extremists" advocate weakening Poland by ruthless pressure thus bringing Poland to Berlin's terms and eventual rapprochement with Moscow.

To the extent that the "extremists" advocated weakening Poland, the "extremists" now enjoyed the support of the "old-line" Prussian diplomats and politicians - for the latter envisaged the weakening of Poland as a preliminary step towards an eventual rapprochement with Moscow, in pursuance of the Prussian policy of former days. This was a new feature and had to be taken into consideration when gauging Berlin's potential near future attitude.

Moderates" advocate going easy on Poland.

On the other hand, the so-called "moderates", headed by Goering, advocated "going easy" with Poland, perhaps with a view to coaxing Poland, through stages, into Berlin's orbit with a view to Poland's proving a potentially

potentially helpful factor in Berlin's eastward-looking expansion program.

Of pertinent bearing Gestapo Chief Himmler's message (see my cable No. 258, December 5, 12 noon) to Burckhardt - to the effect that Himmler expected early important political changes in high Nazi circles - during his previous visit to Germany, had evidently left a deep impression in Burckhardt's mind. Indeed, Burckhardt, in referring again to this message, said that during his recent visit to Berlin he himself had gained the impression that important changes were in the offing. He wondered what form of government might take the place of the present régime, in the event it failed as a result of internal "dog eat dog" conflicts. (My reports through other reliable channels indicate that while tension exists among upper Nazi circles, there is no likelihood of an early fall of the Nazi régime.)

Burckhardt still impressed by Himmler's message that important internal political changes were in the offing.

Burckhardt gained like impression on recent visit to Berlin.

Conjecture as to what might replace Nazi-ism.

In response to his conjecture that Communism might seep in and take the place of Nazi-ism, I observed that, in terms of their relationship to the capitalist system and doctrine of democracy, there was fundamentally little difference, in my private opinion, between the two "isms" - they were both of the same litter only differently striped, but headed in the same direction. He could hardly gainsay this and concurred with my feeling that a military dictatorship would probably "take over" in event of a fall of the present régime in Berlin. This might hold out until some other form of dictatorial government were conceived. Indeed, I thought there was little hope the doctrines of democracy might

Observations on the "isms" in terms of their relationship to capitalist system and doctrine of democracy.

Observations on mentality of Nazi youth and older generation in Germany.

might be applied with any degree of effectiveness to present-day German mentality. The older generations had apparently already submitted and attuned themselves to the Nazi politico-economic formula: the "man-hours-based" economic aspect, so inseparably interlocked with that of the political. There were undoubtedly great numbers who preferred a more normal form of life under a more liberal form of government. There were undoubtedly many who distrusted its capacity to endure the test of time and who at heart were opposed to it. However, even these had shown a lack of capacity to resist the Nazi revolution at the outset, and had fallen in line with others, who had manifested a willingness to submit to the strong-arm dictum of the Nazi minority. On the other hand, Nazi youth had been raised on a Spartan formula to the exclusion of scarcely a trace of Athenian culture. In other words, German mass-mentality of today, as in the case of that in former days, showed signs of being more attuned to forceful direction than capable of understanding and enjoying the full benefits of democracy. The difference between the German-American population of the United States and the Germans in the Reich was largely attributable to the former's having lived under a liberal form of Government in an atmosphere of liberalism and having gradually acquired enlightenment as to its advantages. To bring today's German mass-mentality up to a point of understanding and enjoying the full value of democracy would require time, patience, and education.

Burckhardt was inclined to concur with the substance of my observations; he remarked that as far as

Hitler

Burckhardt's observation: Hitler a "Jehovah"; his position reasonably safe.

Hitler was concerned, the latter was regarded by the masses as a "Jehovah", and in such light his position was reasonably safe; it was merely his associates who were at sword's points with each other, an erruptive condition which might easily come to the exploding point. I remarked at this point that how much was conflict within certain limits, and how much was taken advantage of by Hitler for tactical purposes, remained to be seen. Burckhardt then stated Hitler kept abreast of internal and external affairs through daily reports presented to him by his closest associates. As regards foreign affairs, the first thing each morning he read the German-Swiss newspapers, subsequently receiving reports from other sections of the foreign press. He searched the democratic press abroad for political weaknesses which frequently gave rise to fresh ideas in carrying forward his "pin-pricking" technique.

However, conflict between his associates a danger for regime.

Hitler's method of keeping posted on foreign press; search of democratic press for political weaknesses abroad a frequent source of "new ideas".

In this connection, Burckhardt's discussions with a competent officer of the German Embassy here disdosed that the latter was apprehensive lest German Ambassador von Moltke, now in Berlin, might soon return with instructions of disturbing character. He had been led to believe, confidentially, that Ribbentrop had given von Moltke orders which might prove condusive to added tension between Warsaw and Berlin. Burckhardt expressed surprise at this disclosure for during his last visit to Berlin he had gained the distinct impression that Goering's policy was gaining ground and reflecting itself favorably in the Berlin Foreign Office's attitude vis-à-vis Warsaw. In response, the officer of the German Embassy had pointed out

Disclosure by officer of German Embassy.

Apprehension lest Amb. receive instructions in Berlin condusive to disturbance of Polish-German relations.

Burckhardt surprised by this disclosure.

that

that at the time of Burckhardt's last Berlin visit Goebbels, Goering's bête noir, had been taken ill. This probably accounted for the temporary ascendency of Goering's less drastic policy. Goebbels' recent recovery, however, might conceivably account for any potential change in the Foreign Office's attitude.

Officer of German Embassy discloses own impression of conditions prevailing in upper Nazi circles, confirming Burckhardt's impression.

He then added his own impression that Berlin at this time was suffering from increasing strife within upper Nazi circles. Berlin was consequently not pursuing a set line of policy - rather, acting from day to day on impulse which found its roots either in the "pet aversions" or "fancies" of the individuals who at a given moment happened to be "in the saddle". Burckhardt admitted that his aforementioned informant had given a clear picture of conditions presently prevailing in Berlin high circles. Burckhardt hoped, however, that Goering's influence would rule, at least in the matter of Danzig.

Burckhardt's impression Hitler annoyed with Poland.

As regards Polish-German relations in general, Burckhardt said Hitler was seriously annoyed with Poland, among other reasons, over Poland's having "swiped" Bogumin from under Hitler's nose, Poland's efforts to gain Italy's support towards accomplishing a common frontier with Hungary, and Poland's recent declaration with the Soviet.

No lost love for Poland in Geneva or in Quai D'Orsay.

Burckhardt went on to say that in Geneva, moreover, there was no lost love for Poland, nor could the Quai d'Orsay be expected to feel any degree of deep sympathy for Beck in his pending difficulties - Paris had usually

manifested

manifested an unfortunate lack of objectivity in its regard for and dealings with the affairs of its Eastern and Central European allies. Characteristic of this cramped point of view, Ambassador to Poland, Noel, in his recent conversation with Burckhardt had failed to conceal an obvious secret sense of pleasure when he observed that Beck faced troubled waters both internally and externally. Burckhardt had both esteem and liking for Noel, but felt he typified French mentality on affairs beyond the frontiers of France.

Burckhardt's observations on Beck and his policy of "balance-diplomacy".

While admitting that Beck's suppleness in the direction of Poland's foreign policy was exasperating in many cases for foreign observers, including at times himself, he felt Beck had proven himself masterful, at least up to this point, in his "balance-diplomacy" against great odds, inherent to Poland's delicate geo-political position. It was a tough job at best, and was eventually bound to let Beck in for "digs" from all sides.

Were Beck replaced today, however, it might be either by someone less adept at "balance-diplomacy" and who might consequently fumble the ball, in trying to carry on the delicate game, or by someone who might pursue a radically anti-German policy. With this observation I concurred, and asked Burckhardt whether (a) Berlin was aware that the recent municipal elections in Poland had resulted in an important showing by the anti-German parties: ENDEK, the Socialists, and the Jews, and (b) whether Berlin perceived that this might tend to cramp Beck's latitude in his dealings with Berlin. Unless Berlin was looking for trouble, it might

Possible effect of important showing of anti-German parties in municipal elections on foreign policy.

might discern the advisibility of "going easy" - otherwise, it might conceivably "torpedo" Beck's efforts to maintain friendly relations between Berlin and Warsaw. Burckhardt replied that due to confusion in upper Nazi circles and the fact that Ribbentrop was in the "saddle" he did not look for Berlin to appraise these aspects with any degree of astuteness. Ribbentrop was a "fool", drunk with power, not only wanted, but felt home conditions required Germany to "go places" at top speed. Anyway Ribbentrop did not believe the Poles would offer any more resistance than the Czechs in the event of a show-down. Upon Ribbentrop's questioning him as to the mood and capacity of the Poles to fight, Burckhardt had told Ribbentrop that one could not compare the Poles with the Czechs on this score. The Poles were romantic, inflammable, proud, and entertained fighting proclivities. Moreover, they had less to lose and more to gain economically speaking than had the Czechs before their early October amputation. The Czechs were more docile and through their former comparatively comfortable economic status had over a period of years become more economic- than fight-minded; they preferred to trade out a situation than to fight it out, hoping to hold on to whatever they could. Moreover, one had to take into consideration that Poland had served as a battle-field at frequent intervals not only during her period of partition, but even as recently as 1920. The men who had fought then were still comparatively young, fit, and better trained and equipped. It would be dangerous to push them too far.

Burckhardt's impression that confusion in Nazi circles might lead extremists to overlook potential effect of those elections.

Burckhardt's observations on Ribbentrop.

Burckhardt's response to Ribbentrop's question on mood and capacity of Poles to fight, if pushed far.

Reverting

Burckhardt reverts to Danzig question:

Britain and France while preferring Burckhardt's withdrawal, disinclined to embarrass Beck during negotiations.

Reverting to the Danzig question, Burckhardt was aware that while Britain and France preferred his withdrawal they did not want to weaken or embarrass Poland's trading position during continued negotiations with Berlin and were, therefore, inclined to grant Beck a reasonable amount of latitude in terms of time, provided he kept them informed as to progress. On the other hand, Burckhardt was aware that Berlin, Warsaw, and now Danzig Senator-President Greiser, and even Gauleiter Foerster (perhaps for different reasons - Greiser because he feared his position might be liquidated in event of Danzig's annexation to Reich, and Foerster perhaps reflecting Goering's "soft-pedalling" influence) favored Burckhardt's retention in Danzig at least until April. Moreover, Swedish Foreign Minister, Sandler, a member of the "Committee of Three" might be inclined to favor particularly Berlin's desire in that he would like to find a means of relieving the strain recently placed on Stockholm's relations with Berlin.

Burckhardt's impression: Berlin, Warsaw, Greiser, and Foerster favored his retention in Danzig until April at least.

Swedish F. M. Sandler, might incline to support Berlin's desire, as means of relieving strain on Stockholm-Berlin relations.

I am aware that, while Burckhardt believes his rôle in Danzig, though cramped by recent events, in terms of potential effectiveness, serves the interests of peace, he has also his personal interests at stake. He gave up a professorship to take on the Danzig job, and the fact he is devoting part-time to writing a book, in addition to the fact that his salary is a matter not to be overlooked, may reasonably be expected to figure in his considerations. I should not be surprised, therefore, if for the above combination of reasons he welcomed the possibility of Sandler's support of Warsaw's and Berlin's desire to retain him in

Observations on Burckhardt's rôle, and his possible private considerations.

in Danzig at least until April.

Observations on course of negotiations regarding Danzig.

As regards Warsaw-Berlin negotiations on Danzig, what, in the early stage might have been considered merely conversations, suffered a lapse due to Polish objections to the size of Berlin's appetite and were subsequently renewed on the basis of negotiations.

With reference thereto Burckhardt said that while Warsaw had hinted it might possibly consider a somewhat independent status for Danzig, Berlin had evinced an inclination to oppose any arrangement bearing the semblance of a definite and final settlement. Indeed, Berlin appeared to want an arrangement of more or less temporary character - to leave the question open for further treatment later. The negotiations rested thus for the time being.

Ribbentrop's tentative plan to visit Warsaw.

Burckhardt added that Ribbentrop was now tentatively planning coming to Warsaw to confer with Beck. Though the date was still unsettled, some rumors indicated he would arrive here in mid-January. Both Berlin and Danzig Nazi circles, however, looked for Ribbentrop to come to Warsaw at the termination of the Danzig negotiations in time to sign a potential agreement - probably about April.

Burckhardt concurs my impression Beck would prefer to see Hitler than Ribbentrop.

At this point I recalled to Burckhardt's mind our former conversation in Danzig wherein our expressed impressions had concurred to effect Beck would prefer to talk directly to Hitler. I still thought so and believed that if he felt it essential to talk to anyone in Berlin, he would manage to see Hitler despite likely

attempts

Circles close to Beck anxious he see Hitler.

attempts of Ribbentrop to prevent it - probably he would arrange it through the offices of Ciano. (I am aware circles here close to Beck are anxious that he talk directly with Hitler contending that such a conference would stand better chances of a favorable outcome for Poland than a conference with Ribbentrop whom they dislike and distrust. Moreover, while in the event Beck found his way to Berchtesgaden, his move would undoubtedly be widely interpreted as spelling Poland's allignment with the Axis, I should be inclined to put it down, preliminarily at least, to more of a game than an intention to tie-in to the Axis.- after all, Beck would prefer putting a number of essential questions directly to Hitler than to his Foreign Minister, Ribbentrop, who, I am aware Beck neither likes nor trusts, and whom he suspects of desiring to present Hitler with a series of ruthlessly conceived schemes at frequent intervals for his own aggrandisement. Accordingly, Beck would want to sound out Hitler as to the potential limits whereto he might be willing to trade on Danzig. Moreover, Beck would want to put the following questions: (a) does he intend to leave Poland in peace; (b) what are his intentions 1/ vis-à-vis the Ukraine question, 2/ vis-à-vis Soviet, 3/ vis-à-vis Eastern Europe in general. In brief, a talk with Hitler would not necessarily require an immediate reply and might enlighten Poland as to what to expect.

Envisaged purpose of such a conference.

On the one hand, a meeting between Beck and Hitler would serve Beck as a means of making soundings as to what Poland faced in terms of continued pressure from Berlin, and it would serve Hitler as an opportunity to appraise

appraise Poland's mood and capacity to resist Germany, and thereby tend to guide him in his immediate course vis-à-vis Poland: whether to increase pressure to a ruthless degree, or whether to adopt tactics of cajolery and bribery to win over Poland's collaboration through stages. It should be borne in mind, however, that with a steadily mounting anti-German sentiment among the masses here, Beck would not be in a position to come to terms with Hitler on the spot. The best he could do would be to put his questions, to listen, and subsequently consult his associates of government circles here.)

I was therefore interested to hear Burckhardt's remark that Hitler had a certain liking and esteem for Beck, and might give Poland a better break in direct conversations with Beck, than Ribbentrop would be likely to give.

Burckhardt's program.

Burckhardt is now going on a shooting trip in northern Poland, returning to Danzig for the New Year diplomatic ceremonies on January 8. Shortly thereafter he intends to leave for Switzerland where he will remain at his home nearby Geneva pending the forthcoming meeting of the Council and of the "Committee of Three". He believes that shortly thereafter the "Committee of Three" will meet for further discussions either in London or Paris. In this connection I am aware that a meeting in London would particularly suit Minister Beck's book for he would thus be afforded a

much-

much-desired pretext for conferring with British statesmen.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

710

AJDB/ip

(In quintuplicate)

OF THE SIGNED ORIGINAL
A TRUE COPY

I N D E X

to

Despatch No.879 of January 5, 1939, from the American Embassy, Warsaw.

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PSF Poland

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

file

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to
Eu 860M.01 Memel/548

February 1, 1939

12-17-38

My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing a copy of Ambassador Biddle's strictly confidential despatch no. 850 of December 17, 1938 concerning Danzig and Lithuania, which has been marked for the President.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosure:

No. 850, from Warsaw,
December 17, 1938

The Honorable

Marvin H. McIntyre,

Secretary to the President,

The White House.

Department of State

BUREAU / DIVISION: Eu

ENCLOSURE

TO

Letter drafted: 1-30-39

ADDRESSED TO

Marvin H. McIntyre

QUADRUPLICATE

No.850 Warsaw, December 17, 1938.

Subject: Danzig and Lithuania.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my cable No. 260, of December 6, 11 a.m., and my despatch No. 837, December 6, 1938, and to report the following observations upon developments in connection with Lithuania and Danzig and the bearing on one or the other in relation to Poland.

On the heels of the Memel elections reports reached here indicating that the appetite of the Memel German community for joining up with the Reich had been stimulated. While news of the election results and even news reports came as no great surprise to Polish officialdom, nevertheless I am aware of their concern lest German activities

in

in Memel produce unfavorable repercussions in Danzig.

In my recent conversation with Mr. Jan Wszelaki, Economic Counselor of the Foreign Office, who has just returned from trade negotiations in Kaunas, he disclosed that on the night of the elections in Memel numerous street manifestations largely consisting of students took place in Kaunas. The students had loudly demanded the return of former Foreign Minister Voldamaris, a pro-German policy, and an anti-Polish policy. Wszelaki felt that these demands were motivated mainly by a desire to keep Memel in the Lithuanian orbit. He had noted, however, that Lithuanian mass hatred for the Poles had subsided. He had learned with regret however, that former Lithuanian Minister to Poland Skirpa (see my despatch No. 837, December 6, 1938) who recently left Warsaw, had given his Government in Kaunas an extremely unfavorable report of affairs in Poland. In brief, he had given his Government the impression that Poland was on the verge of breaking up under German pressure. Wszelaki, a patriotic Pole, and entertaining a discreet but positive antipathy for Germany, was deeply offended by this report and ascribed it to Skirpa's decided German leanings. In fact, he was of the opinion that there were increasing signs in Lithuania of giving way under German pressure.

As German pressure vis-à-vis the Danzig and the Corridor question increases, I discern growing concern in Government quarters here. Obviously Nazi-inspired articles recently appearing in Goering's National Zeitung and in the Berliner Tageblatt pressing for a projected

bridged

bridged road and railway over a permanent German right of way across the Corridor are perceptibly proving to be a source of increasing irritation here. As a matter of fact, I now look for a Warsaw-Berlin show-down on the Danzig-Corridor issue to take place in about mid -January.

Meanwhile, my interest is engaged by the substance of my conversation with the British Ambassador here to the effect that unless the League withdraw entirely from Danzig he considered that the only practical formula of face-saving character to all parties concerned applicable to the Danzig question would be the establishment of Danzig as a Free City along Hanseatic lines: Poland to relinquish representation of Danzig in foreign affairs but to retain a customs union with Danzig. In my opinion this suggestion is interesting in that I have the impression it reflects British Foreign Office opinion and probably will figure in the attitude of Britain, as a member of the Committee of Three, when the issue comes to a head.

As pointed out in recent writings, Warsaw-Berlin relations are rapidly becoming strained. It is obvious that Berlin in its attempt to bring Warsaw to terms is speedily closing in on almost all sides. It is pertinent to mention in this connection that Cardinal Hlond imparted that he expected continued, in fact intensified, German pressure vis-à-vis Warsaw but according to information from the German clergy Berlin intended to confine its pressure along diplomatic rather than military lines. Moreover, I am of the distinct impression that Warsaw is inclined to press for a show-down, particularly on Danzig and the Corridor within the next four weeks.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

710
AJDB/is/ip
(in quintuplicate)

A TRUE COPY of the signed original

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

February 9, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Thanks very much for letting me see this.

C H

file
personal-
confidential

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 4, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE and
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE:

This is interesting but I do not put any credence in it. Please return when you have read it.

F.D.R.



PSF Poland

Warsaw, January 12, 1939

[redacted]

My dear Mr. President:

In that I am aware that the substance of the following report, imparted to me by official circles here, is potentially "dynamite" in character, I am transmitting it to you in strictest confidence. According to my informants, their reports in effect indicated that behind the scenes Hitler and Chamberlain were playing a game so deep that all side plays meant little, if anything at all. Accordingly, Hitler and Chamberlain were at frequent intervals in touch with each other, sometimes even through telephonic conversation through confidential interpreters.

While I realize, as do my informants, that such a report is full of "dynamite", still I feel it is something

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

something which bears watching from time to time, in case at any given moment we may lack a logical explanation for events in passing.

I should have conveyed the substance thereof to you several weeks ago, when official circles here first imparted it to me, had they not taken pains to point out frankly that their reports had thus far lacked a sufficient degree of confirmation, and that they would await further substantiation before basing any conclusions upon the implied bearing thereof. My same informants, however, now impart in strict confidence they have received what they consider adequate substantiation of the substance of the aforementioned report.

With every good wish, I am

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle

Enclosure:

Memorandum

M E M O R A N D U M

January 10, 1939

In reviewing realistically events which led to Munich, there still stands out in relief, to my mind, the fact that through what appeared to be a fog of confusion two men, Chamberlain and Hitler, came together in the end. No matter from what angle one looks at it, an aftermath examination seems to bring out that both men understood each other from the outset - that, moreover, this understanding appears to have entailed, among other factors, an essential education of various peoples to the imminence of war and the necessity of sacrifice.

Examination of the course of British pre- and hitherto post-Munich policy discloses that running through various major moves is the thread of determined effort to divert the "Nazi cyclone" eastward. Coupled with this apparent determination, there are signs of vigorous effort to anticipate eventualities - to create circumstances in connection with a given "sore spot" which might serve eventually as a face-saver for London's potential withdrawal from the scene.

Moreover, facing stark realities, the European appeasement policy pursued both by the British and French Governments

over

over the past year, due mainly in my opinion to lack of capacity to do otherwise, boils down, in plain language, to little more than having "sat in" as silent partners in the dismemberment and/or subjugation of other states. This has certainly proven true in the cases of Austria and Czechoslovakia, in terms of recent history. Indeed, during the pre-Munich period the policy both of Britain and France appeared to be one of feeding the boa with anything other than their own respective properties to keep the boa quiet.

Current reports indicate that London even now inclines toward a continuance of that policy.

Moreover, Britain's policy shows signs of envisaging a complete "evacuation" of Eastern and Central Europe, a process which tends to grease the path for Germany's eastward drive. (In this connection, it is pertinent to state that Beck remarked his opinion that, while London might conceivably continue to influence French foreign policy, it would be only up to a certain point - the point whereat an ultimatum were in the offing - for a decision to make war could today be made only in Paris. Unless and until London instituted compulsory military service, and built up an army, London would continue to be in no position to adopt a forceful role in continental affairs.)

The apparent grim determination on part of primarily "City"-minded Mr. Chamberlain to hang on for dear life to this

this policy of appeasement is, in my opinion, attributable in part to apprehension lest Germany repudiate outstanding short-term loans owed by the Germans to four or five important private banking firms in the "City" - debts serviced under the "standstill agreement". Denouncement of these loans would, it is reasonable to suppose, not only make tough going for the four or five banks involved, but also would reflect itself depressingly throughout the "City" in general.

This is an underlying consideration which has long constituted a worry in back of "City" circles' minds, and of which I have been aware for some time; it was recently brought to light by labor circles of Britain.

The question then arises as to how far this policy of appeasement might go, and, if it is finally applied to Soviet Russia, what effect it might have upon China, as well as Western Europe, eventually in terms of balance.

In this connection, my observations of several years ago in Oslo prompted me to look for the fall of 1938 and the greater part of 1939 as acute test periods for the Western European democracies. This in turn led me to feel that, while neither London nor Paris would want to patronize Bolshevism any more than any other "ism", they might conceivably find it useful and, in such light, at least refrain from adopting measures tending to facilitate the Soviet's potential crack-up.

I am aware that, when pressed, exponents of British current-day

current-day policy are quick to defend the idea of "sicking" Germany onto the Soviet by pointing out, among others, their belief that of the two "isms" Communism would outlive Nazism - that if German expansion were diverted Sovietwards, Nazism would "peter out" as Germany gradually emerged from the "have not" to the "have" category. Moreover, if Nazism came to grips with Communism in the Soviet, the resultant conflict might prove the extermination of both evils. These same exponents appear, however, to have no effective reply to the question as to what might be the outcome for British, let along other interests, in the East and, indeed, eventually in Western Europe, if the Nazis, supported to varying degrees possibly by Japan, Italy, Turkey, and even Poland, succeeded in "getting away" with a breakdown of the Soviet. Nor is there a ready response to the question as to whether a German-Soviet conflict could be localized - whether Germany's potential involvement in the East might not signal the moment for the Western forces to jump on Germany's back.

[1-10-39]

MEMORANDUM B.

In connection with the attached memorandum, it is pertinent to mention that Minister Beck read me the substance of his recent cable from the Polish Ambassador in Tokyo, who imparted his impression that the new Japanese Government might go "to great lengths" to bring about a "settlement" of their dispute with the Chinese in order, among other factors, to gain a freer hand to deal with other eventualities. Hence, they might conceivably offer the Chinese considerably broader terms than the previous Government, at the same time playing one Chinese political element against the other in an aim to cause a definite cleavage. This, in effect, corresponds to the opinion of the newly-arrived Chinese Minister to Poland.

PSF Poland

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

File
Confidential file

February 18, 1939

1-18-39

My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing a copy of Ambassador Biddle's strictly confidential despatch no. 896 of January 13, 1939 concerning Colonel Beck's recent conversations with Chancellor Hitler and Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop. The despatch has been marked for the President.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosure:

No. 896 from Warsaw,
January 13, 1939

The Honorable

Marvin H. McIntyre,

Secretary to the President,

The White House.

Department of State

BUREAU / DIVISION | Eu

ENCLOSURE

TO

Letter drafted 2-16-39

ADDRESSED TO

Marvin H. McIntyre

PSF Poland

TRIPLICATE

No. 896 Warsaw, January 13, 1939

Subject: Supplementing cables Nos. 2 and 4 of January 10 and 11 respectively; Substance of my several conversations with Minister Beck upon his return from conversations with Hitler in Berchtesgaden and Ribbentrop in Munich.

[redacted]AL

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my cables Nos. 2 and 4 of January 10 and 11, 1939 respectively, and to report in greater detail the following substance of my several conversations (therein referred to) with Minister Beck upon his return from Berchtesgaden.

At 9:30 p.m. Saturday, January 7, shortly after Beck and his Chief of Cabinet, Count Łubieński, had reached

their

their office from the train they together telephoned me. Beck stated he had been profoundly impressed by the contents of President Roosevelt's address. Moreover, he could assure me that it caused mental and moral "jitters" both in Berlin and Berchtesgaden. In fact, he was aware that Hitler was not only furious but also extremely worried. He then stated he wanted to see me at the earliest possible moment. While en route from Munich to Warsaw he had remarked to Łubieński that there were a number of things he wanted to talk to me about.

I saw Beck at the New Year's diplomatic reception at the Zamek when he made a point of repeating he wanted to see me at the first moment he found himself free.

The following morning Beck was in a great rush when I saw him during a short encounter. It was during my conversation with his Chief of Cabinet, Count Łubieński. He knew I was there and came in between his conferences with Government officials. He explained he had wanted to see me at length that morning but had been up to his neck in conferences with his own Government associates. He then hurriedly outlined his talk with Hitler, substance whereof I transmitted to the Department in my cable No. 2 of January 10, 3 p.m. At the conclusion of this conversation, Minister Beck invited me to join him informally for dinner at his house on Tuesday evening, adding we could talk more at length at that time.

Subsequently

Subsequently at dinner, attended by the Minister and family, Count Józef Potocki, head of the Anglo-Saxon Division of the Foreign Office, and later joined by the Chief of Staff, the Minister and I had ample time to discuss various aspects of his conversations in Germany.

The following morning I again had a brief talk with the Minister by way of clarifying certain points discussed during the preceding evening.

The following is a digest of my aforementioned three talks with Minister Beck:

Beck deemed it advisable talk with Hitler before Ribbentrop.

In view of all circumstances, of which I was aware, he had deemed it advisable to talk directly to Hitler. Indeed, as he had previously told me, he had wanted to talk to Hitler before Ribbentrop. In general the conversations with both had proven fairly satisfactory in

Beck's general reaction.

that Hitler had given him the definite impression that Poland might expect no "surprises" - that all matters bearing on Polish-German relations were negotiable - and that Poland might take these negotiations in her stride.

Observations on Beck's attitude.

I am aware that in his own evaluation of the foregoing Beck regards the potential course of such negotiations with cautious optimism. By nature, not credulous, he is ever on guard, particularly as concerns Germany. He will accordingly no doubt endeavor to insure against eventualities.

Beck

Ukraine Issue.

Beck had for some time gone on hypothesis that the recent Ukrainian "play-up" was not so much the work of Hitler - it had not borne the traces of Hitler's hand - rather it had smacked more of the machinations of his "extremist" subordinates - all the more reason for his desire to talk with Hitler directly, not with Ribbentrop first.

Without his (Beck's) having broached the subject, Hitler brought up the Ukraine and Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia and bore out Beck's hypothesis by disclaiming an immediate interest to any measurable degree in the Ukrainian question. Moreover, he gave Beck an impression that whatever interest he did have in the Ukrainian situation was mainly a question of distant consideration and involved the Soviet in general.

Indeed, Hitler made it clear he was distinctly anti-Russian, not merely anti-Soviet and anti-Communist, and that the Ukraine figured merely as a part of Hitler's envisaged future treatment of Russia as a whole. Moreover, his interest in the Ukraine was more economic than political. Beck told me he now believed, as he had felt before his talk with Hitler, that while the latter had a long-range interest in the Ukraine, it had thus far been greatly exaggerated.

Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia.

Even von Moltke and Ribbentrop had been obviously taken aback when Hitler disclaimed categorically an

immediate

immediate interest in the Ukraine in general and in Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia in particular.

In response to my inquiry as to how Hitler could reconcile his denial with the fact that his representative, Ribbentrop, at the Vienna Conference had gone so far as to prevent Hungary's annexing Ruthenia, Beck amusedly stated that Hitler had gone to considerable lengths to allay Beck's suspicions and misgivings on this score. Hitler had accordingly pointed out that when Budapest had demanded the right of a plebiscite in Ruthenia, Hitler and his associates had assumed the position that the entire matter should be settled along ethnographical lines. Subsequently, when he had learned Budapest planned attacking Czecho-Slovakia, about November 21, he had sent word he did not want an open conflict to further complicate the situation in Central Europe. At this point Beck had to admit to me he was aware that the Nazis had evinced more than common interest in "rigging up" the mechanics in Ruthenia, reiterating that Hitler went to considerable pains to allay Beck's suspicions that Hitler's immediate plans envisaged Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia as a strategic base of activities. Moreover, Beck had been led to look for Hitler henceforth to "lay off" Poland's Ukrainian minority in the course of his forward-aimed program.

Beck added Hitler had obviously been down at his mountain haunt alone for some time, with a few exceptions

uninterrupted

uninterrupted by his "group", resting after the fatigue of his Austrian and Czechoslovak coups - and examining the trend in an effort to gain a perspective as to the future turn of events. Of this Beck had gained a distinct impression.

Hitler's mood.

When Hitler had greeted him, he was philosophical and pensive in demeanor - and only during his oration wherein he reviewed his accomplishments over the past year did he evince a spirit of boastfulness.

At this point Beck reiterated his impression that as far as Hitler was concerned - and he was the deciding factor - Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia did not figure in his immediate considerations. In fact, Beck believed Hitler's interest in the Ukraine up to this point had been exaggerated. Though the "stories" regarding it were not devoid of foundation, they had been exaggerated.

Beck re Poland's position vis-à-vis Ruthenia.

Beck then added with emphasis that if that region continued to prove a menace for Poland, Poland would liquidate the situation in short order.

Of pertinent bearing, Beck stated that in recent representations to Prague, Beck had asked whether Prague had complete control over Ruthenia or not; or whether Ruthenia had become a disorderly center subject to the influence of a third party with designs opposed to Poland's interests. In response, Prague, through its Minister Slavik here and even the Prime Minister of Ruthenia, had gone to great lengths to apologize and to assure Beck that

no

no third-party influence prevailed in that region.

Beck would wait and see. Moreover, Poland was prepared to deal in Poland's own way with the situation, should it require action.

My observations.

As I have previously pointed out in connection with Ruthenia, both high military and Government circles here have not considered the projected common frontier with Hungary a closed question. However, Hungary's having backed off when she had a pretext to come to grips with the Czechs at Munkacs recently has given rise to considerable discernible but not generally expressed skepticism here as to the mood and capacity of the Hungarians to come through. Hence I feel the Poles are in a mood that, in event potential anti-Polish activities in Ruthenia reached an acute stage, the Poles might conceivably move in and clean up the disorder without waiting on the Hungarians.

Whether the Germans, in the final analysis, would tolerate this is still doubtful in my mind. Besides, insufficient time has passed for me to judge as to how far to ascribe Beck's statement on this score to talk for "home consumption" or full intention to act forcefully in event of further disorders. At the moment I am inclined to believe he means to act.

Rumanian Ambassador's surprise over Beck's remarks re Ruthenia.

Moreover, the Rumanian Ambassador imparted his surprise, if not concern, over his impression gained in conversation with Beck - Beck had spoken to him along lines similar to

those

those he adopted with me regarding Ruthenia. The Ambassador remarked that the more he saw of the Poles, the more he realized they were a "determined lot".

Danzig

In summing up his impression of Hitler's attitude both as to the Danzig and the Ukrainian issues, Beck stated Hitler was more conciliatory than aggressive. It was apparent that he desired Poland's friendship. As to the negotiations now going forward regarding Danzig, while Hitler had discussed the subject, his remarks had been more general than specific. Moreover, the negotiations were still in a formative stage. Beck was vague and guarded with me in discussing them, stating that Hitler had not clearly defined his position with respect thereto.

Beck's impression of Hitler's attitude towards Danzig issue.

British Ambassador's remarks re Danzig after talks with Beck.

The British Ambassador subsequently imparted that during his conversation with Beck the latter had adopted a similar line regarding Danzig. In response to the Ambassador's reminder that Beck had promised to keep him advised as to progress and that he was under instructions from his Government to keep them posted, Beck said he was fully aware thereof and would not fail to let the Ambassador know as soon as the negotiations assumed sufficiently definite character to permit a clearer than hitherto appraisal as to their outcome. I discern that the Ambassador is nettled over a lack of more information to transmit at this point to the "Committee of Three" shortly sheduled to meet.

Pending

My observations.

Pending more definite clarification of Danzig negotiations, I am still disinclined to exclude the possibility of the Germans' pressing for the inclusion of a right of way across the Corridor as part of a Danzig settlement - the right of way to assume somewhat the following form: combined rail and motor way within a mutually recognized neutral zone; elimination of customs and passport control.

Reverting to my conversation with Beck, while he felt that Hitler's quick successes over Austria and Czechoslovakia complicated matters for Europe, Beck believed that these successes had not diminished Hitler's respect for Poland; Beck was of the opinion that this was extremely important.

Two questions now engaging Hitler's interest: Jews and colonies.

The two questions which were now engaging Hitler's immediate attention were the Jews and colonies. On every topic other than the Jews, Hitler had evinced a calm attitude but when he spoke of the Jews he manifested rage, pounded the table and breathed hard. He shouted that he was absolutely determined to rid Germany of every single Jew within the current year. Beck said the subject was positively an obsession with Hitler, adding his own opinion that Hitler, realizing that internally all matters were not running smoothly and that a conflict of personalities within his regime was in course, undoubtedly made the Jews bear the brunt, laying the fault for everything at their door. As for colonies, Beck looked for this question to become

Hitler's

Hitler's paramount interest in near future.

The Axis. Regarding the axis, Hitler was obvious in his efforts to give the impression that the axis was more secure than ever and that he and Mussolini were pals. In response to my question as to what effect on this "paldom" Hitler's potential insistence upon assuming Austria's rights in Trieste might eventually have, Beck admitted that if proved an eventuality, it probably would not sit so well with the Italian public.

As regards Italo-French friction, Rome was using Tunis (more of a social than a territorial issue) and Corsica and Nice as a "smoke screen" for the serious questions of Djibouti and Suez.

Whether the Italo-French controversy would break into an open conflict was not yet clear. Ciano had told the Polish Ambassador in Rome about a month ago he did not expect the dispute to come to an open conflict (as reported in a previous despatch). However, Ciano, realizing Poland was France's ally, might conceivably have made this remark for tactical reasons. Hitler, during the talk, had spoken rather sympathetically of France.

The waiters in the hotels at Menton, all Italian, were boasting that it would not be long now before their brethren took the place over. Beck admitted in response to my conjecture that it was perhaps mainly for the Italians' part a confusion- and fear-inspiring campaign.

Nevertheless,

Nevertheless, the French in that region were convinced that they were in for a fight. Moreover, the French people along the Riviera were convinced there would be a war between France and Italy, were accordingly living in their valises prepared to evacuate the area, and were fully confident of a victorious conflict of short duration. How far, in final analysis, the French politicians might go, was another matter and had not yet crystallized. The only nation to profit by an Italo-French conflict would be Germany, who would undoubtedly swoop down on the Danube area, taking advantage of Italy's being tied up at the front. Poland would continue to devote efforts as a peace broker between the French and the Italians, for such a conflict would do neither any good.

Hitler would like to have given the impression that he was prepared to go "all out" in support of the Italians. When I ventured the conjecture that the Germans might avoid going beyond the point of diplomatic support, Beck said that it was so difficult to gauge that point and so easy to ride beyond it into an explosion that it would be a delicate game at best, and was pregnant with danger in a jittery Continent - a diplomatic offensive of severity was risky business nowadays. Moreover, it was well to bear in mind that the axis was still in vigor. However, I do not think Beck believes Germany would deliberately risk war with the West and thus weaken herself in advance of an eastern venture, her major strategic objective.

Beck

Polish-French relations.

Beck then emphasized there must be a meeting between France and Poland. They must face the realities and understand them. Their respective positions vis-à-vis Germany today, more than ever before, were similar in character.

Appraising their respective positions, it would seem today that Poland enjoyed friendship of closer character than France with Germany, while on the other hand France's being involved with Italy offered little chance of France's offering effective assistance to Poland. Yes, they must sit down at an early date and clarify their positions vis-à-vis one another and vis-à-vis Germany.

Italo-French friction continued.

At the outset of Italo-French friction, Polish official circles' reports from London had indicated the British Government were assuming the attitude that the course of European events depended mainly on Chamberlain and Hitler; that while Hitler had the bark of a wolf, Mussolini had the bark of a fox; and that at most current Italo-French friction might be put down to a diversion to keep France busy.

Subsequently French Ambassador Noel remarked to me the other night that France had no worry as to whether she might enjoy Britain's active support if she required it in the event of a conflict over Tunis, for the fact that the Tunis issue brought Bizerta into the picture made it more of a British than a French problem. Evidently Noel had made a similar remark to Beck, for the latter gave me

the

the impression that the French entertained ideas along somewhat similar lines.

My observations.

Personally I am of the opinion that, if France and Italy came to grips, and if Paris and London felt Britain's potential neutrality might mean Germany's neutrality, both Paris and particularly London might favor this course - provided, of course, France felt capable of handling Italy alone, and provided France could be reasonably sure Germany would not suddenly jump in against her.

Beck's remarks re position of Paris and London vis-a-vis Continental affairs.

Beck went on to say that up to the point of a potential ultimatum London might conceivably continue to influence French foreign policy - but a decision for a war could be made only in Paris today.

Britain was augmenting her air and naval strengths but not her army to any effective degree. This meant she could not take a lead in determining the issues of the Continent.

While France had hitherto appeared to be turning more towards her colonial domain than maintaining her interest in the Continent, this move had served the politicians more than it represented the characteristic interest of the Frenchman. Beck now felt that the Frenchman's natural interest in the Continent would re-express itself.

Chamberlain's Rome visit.

Commenting upon Chamberlain's and Halifax's approaching visit to Rome, Beck did not look for the British statesmen

to

to accomplish much. The latter, due to public opinion both at home and in France, would be limited in terms of potential "hand-outs", and would have to "tread easy" during the talks. Mussolini, who had already assumed a position of positive character vis-à-vis particularly belligerent rights in Spain, Djibouti and the Suez, might not be expected, in view of his own public opinion, to give much ground.

Moreover, Beck doubted whether the Rome meeting would go far towards immediately bringing about new four-power talks - anyway, the latter would only prove costly to other powers in terms of "peaceful settlements".

Beck's remarks on events in offing.

Up until about three or four days after the New Year discussions on the European political arena could have covered little beyond a review of past events, events which could be left to the historians. Only shortly after the turn of the year did there appear any indications of what might be in the offing.

After all, since the Czechoslovak event, statesmen and diplomatists had been suffering from shock - dismay. Then came the Christmas holidays, affording much needed relaxation, then New Year's, then fresh thought and now we begin to discern signs of what we may expect.

Ribbentrop to come to Warsaw January 26.

Beck added in conclusion that Ribbentrop would come here January 26, and that Hitler had remarked during the conversation that he regretted that his progress on his

architectural

architectural projects had been retarded by the necessity of sending so many men to the Siegfried Line. However, in case he were not able to finish it during his own lifetime, Goering was well versed in his objectives and could carry on readily. Beck added this had been the first time Hitler had ever frankly intimated he expected Goering eventually to succeed him.

Hitler's remarks re Goering.

My impression of the Beck-Hitler conversation was that Hitler made a tour d'horizon of about three hours, thinking out loud in a conciliatory rather than aggressive tone. Beck seemed fairly well satisfied and under no apparent tension as a result of Hitler and Ribbentrop conversations. Beck has so far avoided receiving the British and French Ambassadors, who evidently under instructions from their Governments, are making constant efforts to see him.

My impression re Beck's talk with Hitler.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

710
AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

FILE SIGNED ORIGINAL A TRUE COPY

PSF Poland

file
confidential

Warsaw, February 18, 1939

[redacted] confidential

My dear Mr. President:

As of possible interest to you, I am attaching hereto a memorandum covering confidential information which official circles here transmitted to me for what it was worth. While my informants are admittedly interested in the substance thereof, they stated they had not yet had time in which to verify their reports.

Personally, I am inclined to give a considerable amount of credence to the substance of Berlin's reportedly stated position on the colonial and naval aspects, in view of the impression Beck gained in his talks with Hitler at

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

at Berchtesgaden to the effect that Hitler intended to intensify his colonial campaign and that neither Hitler nor his "extremist" associates seemed in the mood to accept the imposition of conditions on potential colonial concessions.

With every good wish, I am

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle, Jr.

Enclosure:

Memorandum
(Copy of memorandum
also transmitted to
the Secretary of State)

M E M O R A N D U M

Confidential reports in the hands of official circles here indicate the following:

After Hitler's speech, the British Foreign Office asked the German Foreign Office for some statement, informal or formal, on the question of colonies. The response, in the form of a verbal reply to the British Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, had been to the effect that Germany's demands were for progressive colonial development in proportion to her population and industrial demands, as well as normal colonial necessity. Germany was not prepared at the moment to state categorically what territories should be ceded to Germany, either as minimum or maximum demands, or what should be the limit to Germany's colonial objectives. Furthermore, Germany reserved the right to determine her own future colonial security and to develop whatever naval power would be necessary and consistent with German aspirations.

According to my informants' reports, this reported reply from the German Foreign Office had produced a very pessimistic atmosphere in the British Foreign Office because: (a) it had been the first reference to further

and

and greater naval demands; and (b) the Germans no longer talked about the return of their "old" colonies but referred to Germany's right to colonial acquisition consistent with Germany's industrial position and power in Germany.

My informants' report further indicated that Chamberlain intended to reply through the British Foreign Office in continuation of this discussion, stating he regarded the German colonial question to be based upon Hitler's discussion in Munich; in other words, "old" colonies. Moreover, while Chamberlain appreciated the right of any nation to outline its aspirations and suggestions, the German Foreign Office's suggestion did not represent a basis for European agreement as a necessary prelude to confidence and security. Chamberlain would moreover suggest that Germany begin formal discussions through diplomatic channels in an attempt to find some reasonable basis to take up Germany's colonial demands - reasonable enough to fit in with a general European agreement.

My informants are led to believe that Chamberlain regarded this present demand as an attempt to shift the colonial problem from a question of grievances to be

settled

settled to one of power politics - one which Chamberlain thought was involved with Germany's aspirations on trade expansion and Germany's penetration to the East.

In commenting upon the substance of the foregoing German Foreign Office's reply, both Beck and his Chief of Cabinet, Count Łubieński, admitted surprise, in view of their joint impression gained during their conversation with Hitler at Berchtesgaden that Hitler intended to press for the return only of Germany's "old" colonies.

It is moreover pertinent to report that my informants stated their further reports indicated that Chamberlain believed that, if Hitler were granted: (a) colonial freedom; (b) right to develop trade in approximate areas; and (c) freedom to push to the East, Hitler might have no demands in the West, and that Hitler would aid towards a reasonable solution of the Mediterranean question.

While my informants were admittedly interested in the substance of the foregoing reports, they frankly stated they had not yet had time to verify them, and had therefore passed the information on to me for what it was worth.

a.g. DB

AJDB/is

PSF Poland

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to Eu

March 10, 1939

2-13-39

My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing copies of the following strictly confidential despatches from Ambassador Biddle which have been marked for the President:

No. 943, dated February 13, 1939, reporting Minister Beck's comments on the papal conclave;

No. 948, dated February 15, 1939, concerning von Ribbentrop's visit to Warsaw;

No. 951, dated February 17, 1939, reporting Minister Beck's observations on current French public and official opinion;

No. 952, dated February 16, 1939, reporting Minister Beck's observations on Czechoslovakia;

No. 957, dated February 17, 1939, concerning Polish Government's reports on developments in Spain.

Sincerely yours,

Acting Secretary

Enclosures:

Copies of five despatches, as listed

The Honorable

Marvin H. McIntyre,

Secretary to the President,

The White House.

PSF Poland

DUPLICATE

No. 943 Warsaw, February 13, 1939

Subject: Minister Beck's commentaries on the forthcoming papal conclave.

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that, during a conversation with Minister Beck shortly after my return to Warsaw, he discussed various aspects of the forthcoming conclave looking to the election of a successor of His Holiness, the late Pope.

Minister Beck said he looked for these elections to entail a vigorous contest. The thirty-five Italian Cardinals were divided in opinion. The group headed by Pacelli and

Pizardo

Pizardo advocated the election of a Cardinal whose paramount qualification would be capacity to administer the affairs of the bishopric, and whose interests would be devoted primarily to the affairs of the Church. This group held that, in view of the confusion prevailing in the international political arena, the Pope should be a man disinterested in political ramifications and one who would remain aloof therefrom. This group would undoubtedly enjoy the blessings of the Nazis, as well as the Fascists.

A second group held that the next Pope should be chosen from the Nuncios experienced and well versed in international politics, and that he should play an important rôle in the international political arena. This group was inclined to turn to such an individual as Maglione, former Nuncio in Paris, and to continue the policy pursued by the late Pope.

Moreover, it was well to bear in mind that, while the late Pope's influence was directed towards playing closely to the democracies, and in this policy His Holiness enjoyed a strong following, there was an important element amongst the Italian Cardinals who had Fascist leanings; the difference of opinion between these two groups might be expected to reflect itself in the forthcoming contest.

Beck then went on to the effect that Polish Cardinal Hlond would undoubtedly play an important rôle during the elections, in that he and his particular following might conceivably swing the balance of power. While Beck did

not

not believe that Cardinal Hlond's candidacy was probable, he felt that the latter, together with Cardinal Baudrillart, would play a major rôle in the election of the next Pope, for they and their group maintained a position between the Italian Cardinals, who advocated a non-politically-minded Pope, and the former Nuncios, who advocated a politically-minded Pope.

It is pertinent to state that on the night of February 11 Cardinal Hlond delivered a radio broadcast wherein he quoted excerpts from several recent conversations with his close friend, the late Pope. Among the more important items of interest brought to light was the fact that the Pope had up to the last said that he sincerely hoped Poland would be strong, Catholic, and armed. Hlond added that the Pope had always been a true friend of Poland. In conclusion, the Cardinal, in lauding His Holiness, stated his opinion that the Pope had defended the dignity of the individual against the perils of totalitarianism during a period wherein the democracies were passing through a state of decay.

The fact that the Cardinal took occasion to add his own opinion in this light would seem to indicate that he might be expected to throw his weight on the side of the Cardinals with anti-totalitarian leanings during the forthcoming elections, a prospect which augurs well for those forces in the hierarchy determined to carry on the cause so courageously defended by the late Pope.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

840.4
AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

A TRUE COPY OF THE SIGNED ORIGINAL

TRIPLICATE

No.951 Warsaw, February 17, 1939.

Subject: Minister Beck's observations on current French mass and official attitude; his comments on Bonnet's recent declaration regarding the French-Polish alliance.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that in recent conversation with Minister Beck, he stated that his reports tallied with my expressed impression that France was consolidated to a greater degree than it had been for some time, and that Daladier's forceful declaration of recent date enjoyed the support of the country at large.

Commenting then upon the attitude of the French Government as a whole, Beck intimated his doubts as to whether Daladier and Bonnet saw eye to eye on all

issues

issues at stake. Beck considered Bonnet likeable, but felt he lacked a comprehensive grasp of his present job. He then repeated what he had stated to me on a previous occasion - that Bonnet was given to an unfortunate weakness of occasionally divulging indiscretions which some times proved embarrassing to capitals whose affairs were entailed in his disclosures. Beck still believed, however, that such indiscretions were due to a weakness in terms of desire to please the press during comparatively dull periods, rather than to a deliberate intention to embarrass anyone.

Commenting then upon Bonnet's recent declaration before the Chamber of Deputies regarding the Polish-French Alliance, Beck stated that, while on the face of it the declaration appeared to be satisfactory, still a careful examination of the text of Bonnet's reference to Poland had led official circles here to greet it with less enthusiasm than if it had been otherwise worded. Instead of having treated the French Alliances with Poland and the Soviet separately, Bonnet had covered them both in the same statement. Warsaw could hardly be expected to evince any great degree of satisfaction over Paris' having put the French-Polish and French-Soviet Alliances in the same "casserole", since the Polish Government was well aware that Paris placed little, if any, confidence in the Soviet Alliance. In other words, this treatment had not proven very convincing for the Poles.

In

In response to my suggestion that perhaps Bonnet had not deliberately meant to give that impression, and that his having so coupled the two Alliances in the same statement might have been an oversight, Beck said he believed my observation was correct on this score, but that such an oversight was all the more lamentable, for it showed a distinct lack of grasp of the situation on either Bonnet's or Quai d'Orsay's part, or both.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

710

AJDB/is/ip

(In quintuplicate)

A TRUE COPY of the signed original

PSF: Poland
DUPLICATE

No. 952 Warsaw, February 16, 1939

Subject: Minister Beck's observations regarding Czechoslovakia; still far from a settled question, in terms of Berlin's considerations; my own observations.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 948 of February 15, 1939, and to report that, during my recent conversations with Minister Beck, he stated with considerable emphasis he had gained the distinct impression, first during his conversation with Hitler, and subsequently with Ribbentrop, that in terms of Berlin's consideration Czechoslovakia was still far from being a settled question.

Beck

Beck then remarked that, although there existed an undercurrent of friction between Slovakia and Prague, a definite cleavage was not imminent. Moreover, while the attitude of Slovakia towards Berlin was not all Berlin would like it to be, Berlin was inclined, for the moment at least, to consider that Slovakia's position vis-à-vis Germany was sufficiently geographically remote and politically unimportant in terms of Berlin's forward-looking program not to bother Berlin seriously. As a matter of fact, Beck had the impression that, for the moment, Berlin would concentrate upon establishing its influence over Bohemia and the Moravian region.

As regards Warsaw-Prague relations, Beck remarked that Prague's attitude vis-à-vis Warsaw had recently taken a turn for the better. To illustrate his point, he referred to a recent declaration given to the Prague press by General Krabczik. Beck stated that the contents of this declaration were interpreted here in the nature of a friendly gesture towards Warsaw.

Of pertinent interest, a usually reliable and objective observer here informs me that he had learned that official circles in London had received a report similar to the one which he had himself received during his recent visit to Berlin, to the effect that in the Czech Foreign Minister's conversation with Hitler during the former's recent visit to the latter, the Czech Minister had stated in effect that he had come to tell Hitler that Prague's

foreign

foreign policy would be directed along lines friendly to Berlin. Hitler had replied in effect: "We will be watching you, and at the first discernible move against us, I will have my troops in Czechoslovakia within twenty-four hours." Then, after a moment's thought Hitler had added with emphasis: "No, within eight hours." As I have no means of verifying this report at the moment, I pass it on for what it is worth.

At any rate, the current trend of events in connection with Berlin-Prague relations, together with my own observations and Beck's afore-described expressed impression, prompt me to feel that vis-à-vis Berlin's potential machinations Prague is in for an unhappy period. This recalls to my mind an observation I made in my despatch No. 822 of November 29, 1938 on the then reported discussion in British official circles as to the advisability of Britain's guaranteeing the frontiers of the new Czechoslovak state. I then felt that, in view of developments in Czechoslovakia then in the making, to grant a guarantee to Czechoslovakia's frontiers would be somewhat like a doctor offering to guarantee a chronic case of appendicitis against an eventual operation. I am still of the same opinion.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

710
AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

A TRUE COPY OF THE SIGNED ORIGINAL

DUPLICATE

No. 957 Warsaw, February 17, 1939

Subject: Polish Government's recent reports on developments current and those in the making in Spain.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report the following observations on the situation in Spain in the light of discussions with official and other informed circles here.

Beck had gained the impression from his recent confidential reports from Spain that at the conclusion of hostilities Franco might conceivably be faced with difficulties arising from a conflict of Spanish nationalist,

German,

German, and Italian interests. The source of Beck's information, whom Beck described as an experienced observer of political events and a man of usually sound judgment, had expressed his own opinion as follows:

We might look for an eventual clash between Italian and German interests to take place simultaneous with Franco's attempt to clear the country of foreign elements in an aim to keep Spain for the Spaniards. Accordingly, it was reasonable to look for the Italians to be reluctant at moving out due, among other reasons, to their knowledge that German technicians were in control not only of the public utilities, mines, and a major portion of the communications systems, but also of the intelligence service. Moreover, in anticipation of the confusion growing out of a possible three-cornered conflict of interests, Franco would undoubtedly welcome the presence of a French and a British representative at his headquarters, for they might serve at least as moral support, were Franco to find himself crowded by the Rome and Berlin representatives.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

A TRUE COPY
OF THE SIGNED
/ORIGINAL

PSF: Poland

TRIPLICATE

No. 948 Warsaw, February 15, 1939

Subject: Supplementing despatch No. 930 of February 3, 1939; Minister Beck's further disclosures regarding Ribbentrop's Warsaw visit; observations.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement despatch No. 930 dated February 3, 1939 regarding the aftermath of Herr Ribbentrop's visit to Warsaw, and to report the following additional observations.

Beck informed me that he was satisfied with the outcome of Ribbentrop's conversations during the latter's visit here. In effect, these talks had "boiled down" to

a

a "re-hash" of Beck's former conversations with Hitler at Berchtesgaden.

Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia

He was pleased to have had Ribbentrop confirm his impression previously gained during his talk with Hitler to the effect that Ruthenia did not figure in Hitler's immediate forward-looking program. Moreover, he had gained the impression from Ribbentrop that if Ruthenia continued to represent a center of activities threatening the security of the Polish state, Hitler would not be opposed to Poland's adopting military measures to restore order in that quarter. Hence, the Polish Government continued to regard Ruthenia as an "open" question. (In important connection with this statement, I shall report in a supplementary despatch an interesting disclosure made by the Rumanian Ambassador to Poland.) Beck then stated in effect that his recent reports indicated that German direct interest in Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia was already on the wane and that a number of German agents hitherto assigned to activities in Ruthenia had already been withdrawn.

Recently, moreover, conditions had taken a turn for the better in Ruthenia. Prague was taking a stronger hand in terms of efforts to restore order in that quarter and had adopted forceful measures against the influx of Ukrainians across Ruthenian frontiers. Beck hoped this would continue to prove the case.

Beck had moreover gained an impression from his discussions with Ribbentrop that in the eyes of Berlin the

position

position of Czechoslovakia was still far from settled, the boundaries not definitely determined, the status of internal policy not yet clearly and satisfactorily defined from the standpoint of Nazi policy.

Beck's impression as to the immediate outlook in terms of Hitler's plans.

Beck then stated that, as regards the general outlook from Germany's angle, the impression he had gained in his talk with Hitler had been subsequently confirmed in his talk with Ribbentrop to the following effect: (a) January and February were the months wherein Hitler would come to a decision as to a definite line of action; (b) Hitler would turn his main attention from the pursuance of his reportedly major objectives in the East to the West; (c) Hitler would concentrate in the West upon his colonial claims. In connection with these claims, and in response to my inquiry, Beck said in effect the following: he looked for Hitler's campaign in the West to develop into a major play for colonies, and Beck had the distinct impression there was a decided disinclination on part of Hitler's close associates, as well as Hitler himself, either to bargain or to consider the imposition of conditions, such as arms limitation or treatment of the claims within framework of a general agreement, in connection with Hitler's colonial claims. In fact, Beck's impression was that Hitler would flatly refuse to consider any such condition as disarmament. Moreover, Hitler felt the colonial aspect represented the last important unrectified injustice of the Versailles Treaty, and in such light Hitler would

would undoubtedly assume that the return of colonies constituted Germany's right. Moreover, his extremist associates were urging him to adopt this line of policy. In other words, Hitler might be expected to shy off from any attempt either to impose conditions to potential colonial concessions or to treat the question within the framework of a general European agreement. (Of further interesting and pertinent bearing on this question were (a) the remarks of an unofficial but prominent figure in Central European affairs, Prince Max Hohenlohe, and (b) substance of Beck's reports regarding Berlin's views on colonies as recently conveyed to London, which I shall recount in separate supplementary despatches.)

Beck's impression that Hitler may be expected not to wage war deliberately this year; Beck's reasons.

Beck told me he had the impression that Hitler still did not want war. He stated that so far reports he had received since his talk with Hitler at Berchtesgaden had borne out his impression that Hitler would not deliberately wage war this year, as Beck felt that Germany, from the standpoint of military training, adequate fuel supplies, and raw material reserves, was not yet up to a major conflict of lengthy duration. He added, however, that if the present grave state of affairs between France and Italy went from bad to worse, there was always a possibility that Mussolini might strike out against France in a conflict wherein Hitler might conceivably become involved. Indeed, a conflict between Italy and France would be most unfortunate - the differences at stake should be liquidated bilaterally through statesmanship and diplomacy rather

Beck does not overlook possibility of Mussolini's involving Hitler in a possible Italo-French conflict.

than

than war; it was only Germany which might conceivably profit by such a conflict.

Danzig and transit of rail and motorized traffic across Corridor.

As regards Danzig, Beck said that, while Hitler had in broad terms discussed the question of Danzig and the transit of German rail and motorized traffic across the Corridor to East Prussia and Danzig, and while Ribbentrop had subsequently, during his visit here, touched upon these questions, Ribbentrop had confirmed Hitler's previously expressed willingness to agree that these issues should be negotiated quietly in a neighborly spirit, and not be allowed to disrupt good Polish-German relations. Beck added in strictest confidence, however, that in the Warsaw-Berlin negotiations regarding Danzig, the position assumed by the German negotiators was still unsatisfactory to the Polish Government. From the Polish standpoint, the Germans were still seeking too much. In other words, the terms Germany had thus far pressed went beyond the capacity of Polish public opinion to stomach them. The matter was therefore still in the course of negotiations and, if continued at the present rate, would probably consume some little time yet before coming to a head. As regards the "Committee of Three", it continued in its course of consideration of the Danzig question, and the status of the League High Commissioner in connection therewith, in the light of the confidential Warsaw-Berlin negotiations. Thus far the Committee had shown a disposition to grant Warsaw and Berlin latitude in terms of time.

Beck

Beck was aware that both the Foreign Office in London and the Quai d'Orsay were concerned lest the already enfeebled status of the League might be further emburdened by a fait accompli in terms of an agreement between Warsaw and Berlin over Danzig. However, Beck had given his assurances to the British Ambassador to keep him posted as to the progress of these negotiations.

In concluding our conversation, Beck reminded me of his prediction before my departure for "leave" from Warsaw on January 18 to the effect that Ribbentrop's visit here would amount to little more than the creation of "atmosphere" and stated that such, in effect, proved to be the case.

Observations.

As a result of my inquiries in various conversations with Beck, his closest associates, and other competent individuals here, I have gained the impression that during Ribbentrop's conversations with Beck, the former had on several occasions actually touched on issues outstanding between Warsaw and Berlin; in only the most delicate manner he had tested out Beck, and the instant he had detected Beck's stiffening, he had dropped the question in point. This, according to my impression, occurred in connection with the question of a right of way over the Corridor, as well as other questions of potential dispute between the two countries. In thus having retreated from a preliminary delicate approach on these touchy points, he at least

learned

learned Beck's reaction, and I believe he was accordingly carrying out Hitler's willingness to let these issues "ride" as a means toward the main objective, namely, the creation of an atmosphere of friendly German-Polish relations, with an aim of giving the western powers the impression that Germany might possibly enjoy Poland's friendly neutrality during Hitler's course of action vis-à-vis the West.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

710
AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

A TRUE COPY OF THE SIGNED ORIGINAL

PSF Poland

File Personal

Warsaw, March 9, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

Appreciating your keen sense of humor and feeling that it would be an injustice to let slip an opportunity of having you share in the laugh in connection with the following incident which recently occurred here, I take occasion to recount it.

During the student demonstrations which took place in Warsaw at the time of Foreign Minister Ciano's visit here, the students, after cheering Ciano, proceeded to blaspheme Hitler, Nazidom, and the Axis. At one point they gathered in front of the German Embassy and before the police could disperse them broke two windows on the ground floor. On the night of this incident, the Italian Ambassador gave a reception at the Embassy in honor of Ciano and his wife. Upon entering the reception,

British

The President,

The White House,

Washington, D. C.

British Ambassador Kennard, who possesses an extremely dry sense of humor, spotted German Ambassador von Moltke standing in the corner engaged in earnest conversation with the Counselor of the German Embassy. Kennard, proceeding straight up to Moltke, said: "So, you have to come around here to do your business - now that your broken windows make it too cold to work in your own office." Moltke was so surprised he was at the outset at a loss as to what to reply and subsequently did his best to laugh it off. I was aware that the only one of the three who got a "kick" out of it was the Britisher, who nearly laughed himself sick and now considers it one of the crowning points of his career.

Several days later, however, another boisterous student body gathered outside the British Embassy, letting go a few bricks which fortunately missed Kennard's own windows, as a demonstration against the British Government in connection with the reported breakdown in the Palestine negotiations. Moltke telephoned me he had just received the reports of the demonstration and asked me if I

didn't

didn't think it would be appropriate for him to telephone Kennard and have a return "rub" at him by suggesting that, in anticipation of the crowds breaking his window, he had better make plans to carry on business in some other central-heated Embassy that day; wherefrom I take it that Moltke took some time in coming around to the humor of the situation, and it was only Kennard's misery that awakened him thereto.

The gathering clouds of tension in Europe do not altogether preclude, as the foregoing shows, an opportunity for an occasional laugh.

With every good wish, I am

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle

PSF Poland

file personal

Warsaw, March 11, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

As of possible interest to you, I am forwarding you attached hereto a memorandum covering the substance of Beck's recent remarks on the general European situation in terms of the near-range outlook, and certain other observations.

With every good wish, I am

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle

Enclosure:

Memorandum

The President,

The White House,

Washington, D. C.

PSF Poland

MEMORANDUM

[3-11-39]

Minister Beck's views on general European situation, in terms of near-range outlook; substance and potential bearing of Polish Government's reports from abroad; observations.

[redacted] FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

In discussing with Minister Beck various aspects of the current European political trend and their potential bearing on the period immediately ahead of us, he stated his opinion: (a) that Spain still constituted a potential source of worry; it was still too early to forecast the outcome of the current play of forces in connection therewith; in other words, Spain still bore watching in terms of a potential breeder of international complications; (b) as long as Czecho-Slovakia remained an unsettled question - and it was still far from settled - the consequent uncertainty thus created, and the potential confusion which might arise from disturbing developments in that country, might be expected to work an unsettling effect on Central Europe; (c) otherwise, although diplomatic circles, still suffering from the shock of last autumn's events, were tense, the chances of war in the near future were less than last fall, when the situation growing out of mobilizations in various quarters and attendant acute tension had failed to lead to war.

Moreover,

Moreover, and of pertinent bearing, in the opinion of official circles here, their persistent reports of "behind-scenes" conversations between the capitals of Western Europe and those of the Axis, afford grounds for a greater than hitherto degree of composure, in estimating events of the immediate future.

In this connection it may be recalled that I formerly drew attention in my despatch No.959, February 18, 1939, to the persistence of reports reaching here to the effect that, on the one hand, Monsieur Bonnet was inclined to attempt to avert a show-down with Rome by soundings on the possibilities for a potential compromise settlement, while on the other hand, Mr. Chamberlain was preparing for a "second major peace effort".

While my informants' reports are not sufficiently definite in character to gain a specific grasp of the aforementioned "behind-scenes" negotiations, nevertheless, the persistence of these reports from important quarters both in the West and in Central Europe, point, in my opinion, to a conceivable postponement of what until recently threatened to be the commencement of a tense crisis period on the heels of the Pope's coronation.

Considered in broad relief, it may be said that the past year has been characterized by a contest between Western and Eastern Europe to divert the course of the Axis cyclone in the other's direction. Until about six weeks ago, the West had succeeded in diverting the Nazi

cyclone

cyclone in an eastwardly direction. Thereupon, each state in the area northeast, east and southeast of Berlin struggled to divert the course of Nazi attention from its own to another state's home front. Then, about six weeks ago, the main force of Axis diplomatic attention swung around towards the West, in turn reflecting itself in an evident sense of relief amongst the statesmen of those Eastern and Central European powers which had hitherto escaped subjugation to Nazi expansion. How long Axis attention will continue concentrating on the West depends upon the turn of nearby events.

Moreover, in my opinion, (a) the firmness of attitude manifested by President Roosevelt and other members of our Government, together with our armament program, and (b) the "gingering" effect thereof upon the official attitude of London and Paris, combined with Britain's subsequent armament program, served as a "stop-look-and-listen" sign to the dictators and drove them to cover to re-examine their respective and joint positions.

They are now in a quandary, both as to their immediate objectives and as to the methods of approach thereto.

Past events indicate that, in preparing the ground for his expansion program, Hitler has made a scientific study of the potential weak spots in the European political arena. This indeed is an important factor in the technique of his political engineering. Considering then, the situation of today with a view to estimating Hitler's next move, it

may

may be said that he has already in the back of his mind an inventory of potential politico-economic-military weaknesses all along the line. He now faces the immediate future like the quarterback of a football team, who puts his play through the first opening he discerns. Moreover, such as in the case of the quarterback who has his team trained to the mechanics of each play applicable to a given potential opening, so Hitler has up his sleeve his formulae applicable to each potential opening in the international field. Hence, I believe we may look for him to approach his immediate objectives as a quarterback, ready to direct his play through whatever opening in the line he discerns.

As regards Mussolini's attitude, in terms of its bearing on France and the Mediterranean problem generally, it appears for the moment to be confused and often characterized by perplexing contradictions. On the one hand, he is manifesting an unusual self-restraint, vocally speaking; on the other hand, it is being stated in important quarters in Berlin that he is preparing to approach France, or to hint that he would like to be approached by her through discreet diplomatic channels for purpose of negotiations, not conducted from councils nor under the pressure of the extremist Fascist press.

One might perhaps ascribe Mussolini's self-restraint in part to his concern lest the formulation of Italy's demands in the open might land him in an awkward dilemma,

since

since France would be certain to reject those demands, both in form and substance. Thus he would find it impossible to square any potentially "reasonable" demands which France might conceivably treat as a basis for negotiation with the shrill and impossible program of his extremists. Whatever form Mussolini's next move in connection with Italy's claims might take, it is reasonable to look for the question of "timing" to play an important part; he will undoubtedly seek a moment which he considers psychologically favorable to his interests.

(Beck has gained the impression that Rome, believing that Paris is already cognizant of Italy's claims, is now awaiting some form of response from Paris; moreover, Beck has gained the impression that important elements in Paris official circles are apprehensive lest Mussolini formulate an impossible list of claims deliberately aimed as a pretext for coming to grips with France.

On the other hand, however, Beck gained the impression in his talks with Ciano that Ciano's attitude was non-aggressive vis-à-vis France when discussing Italian claims; furthermore, Ciano had implied Italy was not eager to go to war with France and hoped to settle Italo-French differences peacefully.)

In light of the foregoing, and in view of persistent reports from the Western and Axis capitals to effect that "behind-scenes" negotiations are in progress, I am now prompted to look for the immediate future to entail a period

wherein

wherein Hitler and Mussolini will feel their way and will conduct soundings looking to potential negotiations. During the early stage of these soundings we may conceivably enjoy comparative quiet. In event, however, the Dictators gained an impression at any stage of these soundings, either that the Western capitals were playing for time, or that little could be gained by potential negotiations, it would be reasonable to expect an immediate recrudescence of boisterousness and acute tension. It is moreover conceivable to my mind, that if (a) an agreement to expunge the "guilt clause", and a recognition of Germany's right to colonies; and if (b) Italy's realization of the so-called "reasonable" items of her list of claims were to grow out of any possible negotiations, this might mark a prelude to boisterous chantages by both ends of the Axis, aimed at attaining the more substantial objectives of their respective and joint appetites, for I do not believe the Axis chiefs have abandoned hope of prying further concessions from the Western European powers, before the latter may have attained a higher degree of armament.

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AdnB/

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

PSF Poland

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

2-18-39

In reply refer to Eu

March 16, 1939

My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing copies of the following strictly confidential despatches from Ambassador Biddle which have been marked for the President:

No. 954, dated February 16, 1939 concerning Chamberlain's talks with Mussolini;

No. 956, dated February 16, 1939 concerning visit of German trade mission to Moscow;

No. 958, dated February 17, 1939 concerning reports of adoption of a firmer policy by Chamberlain;

No. 959, dated February 18, 1939 reporting Minister Beck's observations on Italo-French friction;

No. 960, dated February 17, 1939 concerning Minister Beck's observations on Ciano's visit to Warsaw.

Sincerely yours,

Acting Secretary

Enclosures:

Copies of five despatches, as listed

The Honorable

Marvin H. McIntyre,

Secretary to the President,

The White House

Department of State

BUREAU / DIVISION: Eu

ENCLOSURE

TO

Letter drafted 3-15-39

ADDRESSED TO

Marvin H. McIntyre

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1033

PSF Poland

TRIPLICATE

No. 959 Warsaw, February 16, 1939

Subject: Supplementing despatch No. 954 dated February 16, 1939; observations of Minister Beck and his Cabinet Chief on Italo-French friction; Beck's opinion that in interests of all directly and indirectly concerned any possible Italo-French negotiations should be directed along bilateral channels.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 954, dated February 16, 1939, and to report the following observations on current French-Italian tension in the light of reaction of official circles here:

Despite Chamberlain's recent firm declaration Beck inclined believe Halifax's previous address described real spirit

In discussing with Minister Beck and his Cabinet Chief, Count Zubieński, various aspects of the outlook of current tension between France and Italy, growing out of Italy's claims, I was interested in their joint reaction to effect that, despite the firm attitude assumed by Mr. Chamberlain in his recent declaration that Britain would stand by France, these words should

of current British policy.

should not be taken too seriously. My informants were inclined to feel that the real spirit of current British policy had been expressed in Halifax's address before the conservative party meeting at Hull on February 3, wherein he stated in effect that Britain was ready to collaborate with everyone who, inspired by good will, would join Britain in formulating concrete and practical peace proposals. In brief, this was interpreted by my informants as an out and out bid for German cooperation, and taken to mean that one of the fundamental points in British policy was sound cooperation with Germany.

Britain's current tactics resemble her pre-Munich tactics.

Moreover, my informants remarked that Britain seemed to be adopting somewhat the same tactics as she had during the crisis leading up to Munich; namely, moving the Navy about and playing up home defense units. At the same time, Government spokesmen were, in their public utterances, injecting words of firmness into their continued plea for appeasement.

In discussing Britain's potential capacity to support France, under conditions currently prevailing in Britain in terms of military considerations, my informants felt that in the event of war today, the amount of planes Britain could spare France was something under two hundred in number. Moreover, Britain could hardly be counted on for more than two or three army divisions. Beck then repeated what he had previously stated to me, and which I subsequently reported, that until Britain "took the bull by the horns" and

instituted

instituted some kind of compulsory military service as a means of building up a strong military establishment, London could not be expected to assume a really forceful rôle in Continental affairs. In fact, it was only in Paris that a forceful decision "to go to war" could be taken by the London-Paris axis.

Paris real center of strength in London-Paris axis.

My informants' reports had led them to feel that the note of firmness in Chamberlain's recent declaration regarding Britain's willingness to stand by France was aimed as much at consolidating Britain's position in regard to the Spanish affair, as at checking Rome in its demands on Paris. In fact, they felt Chamberlain might conceivably still be in a mood to embark upon a second major peace effort whereby he might appeal to Hitler to intervene in cooperation with him in the French-Italian dispute. My informants then recalled to my mind their statements to me of over a month ago, which I subsequently reported, to the effect that Ciano had told the Polish Ambassador he believed there were ample grounds for expecting a peaceful settlement of Italy's claims. (See my despatch No. 896 dated January 13, 1939.) Moreover, my informants divulged that they had received further reports about that same time indicating that even in official circles of Paris there were certain elements who felt that, with an improvement in Italo-French relations, and with a tranquilization of press bombardments between the two countries, it might be possible for Paris to come to some arrangements with Rome whereby

Is Chamberlain preparing to embark on second major peace effort to bring about 4-power Conference looking to compromise settlement of Italo-French dispute?

whereby Djibouti might be set up as a free port, readjustments in Suez tariffs favorable to Italian interests might be effected, and even the control of the railway leading into Djibouti might be passed on to Italian hands.

In this connection, my informants felt that Mr. Chamberlain and his associates had undoubtedly received reports similar to the latter. Indeed such reports might conceivably raise hopes in Chamberlain's mind that there was room for a last-moment compromise. Moreover, since they felt that Mr. Chamberlain was still in an appeasement mood, they believed it possible that he might flirt with the idea of urging Hitler to join him in an intervention in the Italo-French dispute towards bringing about a compromise settlement in the event Paris formally turned down a formal demand from Rome.

Though they hoped it was not the case, my informants did not put it beyond the realm of possibility that Chamberlain, during his Rome visit, might have given some form of encouragement that London and Berlin might be willing to mediate in the event the Italo-French dispute reached the danger point.

Beck then repeated in effect what he had told me before, namely, that in the event France decided to trade rather than fight it out, France would do far better to limit any possible negotiations with Italy to <u>bilateral</u> negotiations rather than to permit herself to be pressed to a compromise by London

cooperating

cooperating with Berlin. It would undoubtedly cost France far less in terms of concessions.

To interest of all directly and indirecly concerned that possible Italo-French negotiations be conducted along bilateral lines.

It was of paramount importance, in his opinion, and to the ultimate interest of all directly and indirectly concerned that any possible negotiations between Rome and Paris be directed into bilateral channels. Beck's confidential reports from abroad had indicated that certain elements in French Government circles were deeply apprehensive lest Chamberlain be tempted to intervene, in cooperation with Hitler, in Italo-French differences. If cause for such suspicion on part of the aforementioned French elements had foundation, Beck could readily appreciate the latter's sense of concern, for they would be bound to realize that a four-power conference, looking to a compromise settlement, would necessarily entail France's going into the conference with a "blank check".

France would necessarily enter a 4-power conference with a "blank check".

Beck's Cabinet Chief, Lubienski, then observed that both he and Beck felt that, although Chamberlain might harbor ambitions to mediate an Italo-French quarrel within the framework of a four-power conference, and though he might actually be flirting with the idea at the moment, they doubted whether a consolidated and stiffened French public opinion would stand for any such proposals. Moreover, although they were unable to estimate the sincerity of firmness on part of all of Daladier's Government associates, they did feel that Daladier appeared to be determined in his refusal to submit to Italian pressure. Indeed, if Paris were to give way to Rome pressure aided by the intervention

Potential effect of a compromise settlement growing out of a 4-power conference.

of

of London and Berlin, the French masses would suffer an acute disillusionment, which might subsequently lead to weakening France internally, thus proving a blow of serious character to the democratic front. At the same time, it would prove profitable for the axis and serve further to strengthen it.

In conclusion, Beck emphasized his opinion that, if France were willing to come to terms with Italy, it was important she should settle her differences bilaterally.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

710
AJDB/is/ip
(In quintuplicate)

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 960 Warsaw, February 17, 1939

Subject: Minister Beck's observations on Ciano's forthcoming visit; Polish Chief of Staff's observations on military capacity of Axis in event it came to grips with the London-Paris axis; Polish Government's recent reports from Rome; observations.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that in recent conversation with Minister Beck he expressed his sense of real satisfaction over a letter which he had just received from Italian Foreign Minister Ciano regarding the latter's forthcoming visit to Warsaw, scheduled for February 25. Beck was pleased to note from Ciano's personal communication that the latter would bring his wife with him, marking the first

time

time that he would have done so on an official visit. Moreover, Ciano would be accompanied by a formidable group of Italian journalists, headed by Signor Gayda.

In view of what Beck considered the gravity of the situation in connection with strained Italo-French relations, Beck would welcome the opportunity to discuss with Ciano all aspects of the dispute. Indeed, Beck would do what he could in a conciliatory rôle. Though he did not know how much his own efforts might count on this score, still he was willing to have a go at it.

Of significance and at least indirect bearing in light of its potential effect on Polish Government's attitude is today's strictly confidential disclosure by Polish Chief of Staff, General Stakiewicz, to effect that the Polish General Staff estimated that in event the two axes came to grips, the French and British would for the first two months find "rough going" - thereafter, however, the tide would undoubtedly turn in their favor. Moreover, the Staff excluded the possibility of a victory of the Rome-Berlin Axis in a lengthy conflict. Furthermore, in a conflict between Italy and France, Italy would be defeated. The General went on to say Mussolini was said to have changed the Italians' soul - maybe to a certain extent, but not sufficiently to meet the crisis now staring them in the face - it would take more than the past fifteen years - at least fifty, and probably twice that.

Moreover,

Moreover, the officer corps of the Italian Army was not up to that of the French. Neither, in terms of quantity, was the German. Besides, in terms of trained reserves, the Germans trailed the French to a marked degree. Moreover, Germany was definitely not yet prepared in terms of raw materials or fuel reserves. Besides, Britain and France had both effectively stepped up their plane production - and the availability of American planes was an enormous factor, and should be taken into important consideration.

The Chief of Staff, with whom the Marshal was in accord, had so informed the Government here during the past twenty-four hours.

It is moreover pertinent to add that today's reports from the Polish Embassy in Rome, to effect that political circles there were discernibly increasingly nervous lest Mussolini make some unexpected bold move, have made a marked impression in official circles here.

In consideration of the foregoing, I feel the Government now looks forward to Ciano's visit with mixed feelings. On the one hand, Poland, since its regeneration, has developed a natural sympathy for Italy which, due to a lack of conflict in Italo-Polish interests, Poland can afford - and Ciano's visit will mark an occasion permitting Poland an opportunity to express its friendly feelings. On the

other

other hand, in view of mounting tension between Italy and France, the Polish Government does not welcome an occasion at the moment which might afford Ciano an opportunity to put questions - the Government here will want to steer clear of commitments; besides, it is reasonable to suppose that Beck will wish to avoid offending France at this time.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

710
AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

A TRUE COPY OF THE SIGNED ORIGINAL

PSF Poland

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 954 Warsaw, February 16, 1939.

Subject: Polish Government's reports regarding substance of Chamberlain's confidential observations on his talks with Mussolini; Mussolini's remarks to Chamberlain regarding Italo-French friction.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that in conversation with official circles here, they disclosed in strictest confidence that they had received confidential reports to the following effect:

On about January 25th the British Government had decided to adopt new technique in rearmament plans in order to place Britain's defense on a basis of semi-mobilization; for this purpose it had been decided that a professional officer should supersede all politicians - hence the appointment of Lord Chatfield.

On

On that same day, Mr. Chamberlain had expressed to his Government associates that he was disturbed by the duality of the German and Italian policies.

Mr. Chamberlain had, moreover, imparted to his associates that in his Rome conversations, and in his exchanges with Berlin through diplomatic channels, he had received "passive" cooperation in the "Munich spirit", but his advisers had informed him that both Germany and Italy, especially Germany, were carrying on an intensified propaganda, the aim of which was to make it appear that Germany was going to take direct action vis-à-vis France regarding the Mediterranean - and that both Germany and Italy were seeking to keep Britain neutral.

Chamberlain had then informed his associates that he intended the following Tuesday to address Parliament, and gave his associates an approximate gist of what he intended to say. Among the features which he would outline were his talks with Mussolini during his Rome visit. As it turned out, however, according to my informants' reports, Chamberlain failed to divulge to Parliament all that he had reportedly told his Government associates previously on January 25, for Chamberlain had imparted to his associates on the latter occasion, January 25, the following: Mussolini had told Chamberlain he was prepared to stand by his pledge on the status quo in the Mediterranean, on fortifications and navies, and that he had no territorial ambitions in Spain. Mussolini, moreover, had said he was anxious to see the question of

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the Suez settled consistent with Italian demands, but this pledge applied to Britain and not to France and that the Italian position regarding Tunis, Corsica, and Djibouti was one on which public opinion in Italy required settlement either (1) by concession, or (2) by force of arms.

Mussolini, moreover, had repeated emphatically his peaceful intentions vis-à-vis Britain and his intention completely to honor his word in this respect, adding, however, that the French press had so agitated Italian opinion that the settlement of outstanding questions between France and Italy could be settled only by one of the two methods above outlined.

Chamberlain had also told his associates that he had informed Mussolini there was no doubt that the Suez was an open question, requiring solution. He had also told Mussolini that he accepted his word on Spain and the status quo in the Mediterranean. Chamberlain had then stated to his associates that at the request of the French that he should not mediate on the French problems during his Rome visit, he had refrained from so doing. At that point he had told his associates that he believed he would soon be faced with his second major peace effort; just as he had appealed to Mussolini to intervene over Czecho-Slovakia, so he might have to appeal to Hitler to intervene over the French-Italian quarrel, in favor perhaps of another four-power conference - or if preferable he was prepared to send Halifax to Berlin or to have Goering come to London. He was determined to bring these

points

points to a head in the immediate future.

It is interesting to note that in Chamberlain's above-reported observations to his Government associates, that part which dealt with his talks with Mussolini regarding Italian-French friction were not included in his report to Parliament.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

710

AJDB/is/ip

(In quintuplicate)

A TRUE COPY of the signed original

PSF Poland

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 956 Warsaw, February 16, 1939

Subject: Referring to despatch No. 820 of November 26, 1938; disclosures and observations of Soviet Embassy circles here regarding German trade missions recently postponed trip to Moscow; observations of Polish official circles; my own observations.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 820 dated November 26, 1938, wherein I reported information reaching here indicating that Berlin had initiated secret negotiations in Moscow for an agreement envisaging a German-Soviet non-aggression pact and a division of the spheres of influence, and, of pertinent bearing, to report the following disclosures which came to light in my recent conversations with Soviet diplomatic quarters here regarding Berlin's recently postpone efforts reportedly aimed at

negotiating

negotiating an extension of German-Soviet trade relations.

In response to my inquiry, my competent informants in Soviet diplomatic quarters here imparted confidentially that about six months ago the British Board of Trade had circulated British importers and exporters of Russian goods with an inquiry as to whether, if that particular form of Russian business they were then transacting was terminated, they could obtain substitutions elsewhere and how serious would be the curtailment of this business. This had resulted from a previous drive by the Associated British Chambers of Commerce, together with the Soviet, to purchase more goods manufactured in Britain.

The Germans had got wind of the aforementioned inquiry and had immediately initiated a move for an increase in German-Soviet trade. Moscow subsequently learned that, from the trade angle, the main items required by Berlin were timber and manganese. Moscow was at the outset reluctant to supply Germany with manganese to aid German steel output. Moreover, Moscow was reluctant to engage in trade conversations which Moscow had been led to suspect might afford the German negotiators their reportedly desired opportunity to extend the scope to include the political aspect. Accordingly, Moscow's lack of enthusiasm over the suggested negotiations had contributed towards a postponement of the German trade mission's visit to Moscow.

These

These disclosures are interesting in that my subsequent conversations with Polish official circles revealed that, when the prospect of Berlin-Moscow trade negotiations was first reported, Moscow had tried to give Warsaw the impression that the scope of these contemplated negotiations would be extremely broad in character, even hinting they might not be confined to trade. It is interesting to note that the Polish Government had put these hints down more to tactics on Moscow's part than to the latter's actual willingness to consider transacting political arrangements with Berlin at this time. Accordingly, my informants in Government circles here continue in the opinion that from Moscow's standpoint any trade negotiations between that capital and Berlin will be limited to the trade aspect.

As previously pointed out, it seems to my mind reasonable to believe that Stalin would be hesitant to enter into any political arrangement with Berlin which might spell placing Stalin in manacles during a period wherein Berlin might envisage "consolidating" its position up to the Soviet border. Moreover, I doubt whether, under present conditions, Stalin would be tempted by Berlin's suggested division of spheres of influence outside the Soviet's own frontiers.

Respectfully yours,

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AJDB/is
(In quintuplicate)

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

A TRUE COPY OF THE SIGNED ORIGINAL

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 958 Warsaw, February 17, 1939

Subject: Polish official circles' reports on Chamberlain's adoption of a new and firmer policy, and reasons therefore - previous to February 6.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 954 of February 16, 1939, and to report that in further conversation with my informants in official circles here, they disclosed that their recent confidential reports indicated in effect the following:

Just

Just previous to Chamberlain's having made his statement to Parliament on February 6, reavowing Britain's intention to stand by France, Chamberlain had informed inner Governmental circles that he had been waiting for a sign from Hitler and Mussolini, but there had been no sign. In view of the uncertainty and certain developments which indicated fresh difficulties, he was forced (a) to consolidate his position, and (b) to resort to the inception of a new and firmer policy.

In this connection, I recall having gained the following impression in my various conversations with experienced observers of British policy during my recent visit to Paris: that the aforementioned inception of a "new and firmer policy" might be construed to mean continued insistence on appeasement, but braced by a firmer attitude. I moreover gained the impression in these talks that official London's views on the outlook were about as follows: (a) the Spanish affair was entering its final phase, and London expected Mussolini to consolidate his Spanish position by keeping his troops there until a Spanish National Government finally established control everywhere throughout Spain; (b) anticipation of this had been a contributing factor to Chamberlain's decision to make his February 6 declaration about France, in order to consolidate Britain's position and to serve as a warning to Mussolini. Anglo-French military cooperation was considered the cardinal point in this consolidation.

I

I moreover understood that an integral part of this consolidation was the bill introduced to Parliament on February 6, calling for revaluation of the gold reserve and envisaging the turning over of about 100 million pounds to the Equalization Fund, aimed at stemming further attacks upon sterling and the franc, even if the international situation deteriorated.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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(In quintuplicate)

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OF THE SIGNED
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ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

file Confidential

PSF Poland

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to Eu

3-3-39

March 23, 1939

My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing copies of the following strictly confidential despatches from Ambassador Biddle which have been marked for the President:

No. 980, dated March 3, 1939 concerning Poland's attitude on Italo-French friction;

No. 982, dated March 3, 1939 concerning Warsaw-Berlin negotiations on Danzig.

Sincerely yours,

Acting Secretary

Enclosures:

Copies of two despatches, as listed

The Honorable

Marvin H. McIntyre,

Secretary to the President,

The White House

FSF Poland

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 982 Warsaw, March 3, 1939.

Subject: Current status of secret Warsaw-Berlin negotiations regarding Danzig.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 879 of January 5, 1939, and to report the following observations on the current status of negotiations between Warsaw and Berlin regarding Danzig. My own impression gained in recent conversations with official circles here is confirmed by the following strictly confidential disclosure by the British Ambassador here, Sir Howard Kennard, in his opinion that Warsaw-Berlin negotiations are currently at a standstill. Moreover, German Ambassador von Moltke had imparted to him his own opinion that these negotiations would probably not be carried much further this year. Moltke had

added

added that League High Commissioner Burckhardt should be allowed to stay in Danzig. Not only Moltke, but also his Government hoped Burckhardt would not be withdrawn, for they felt that his withdrawal might cause a vacuum in relations between Berlin and Warsaw and might conceivably presage tension of potentially serious character. In fact, Berlin felt that as long as Burckhardt remained he would serve as a "safety valve".

British Ambassador Kennard agrees with my opinion that neither Berlin nor Warsaw are yet willing to have the Danzig matter come to an issue.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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AJDB/emq
(In quintuplicate)

OF THE SIGNED
ORIGINAL
A TRUE COPY

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 980 Warsaw, March 3, 1939.

Subject: Supplementing despatch No. 979, March 3, 1939; Observations on Poland's attitude at this stage towards Italo-French friction.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 979 of March 3, 1939, and to report my following observations on Poland's attitude at this stage towards Italo-French friction.

As I have pointed out in previous writings, Beck looks with concern upon currently strained relations between

France

France and Italy and he would welcome the opportunity of bringing about a settlement of differences. Indeed, he has more than once emphasized to me his opinion that only one nation might profit by an Italo-French conflict: Germany.

I have moreover imparted my impression in despatch No. 979 of March 3, 1939, to the effect that at this juncture Beck would endeavor to steer clear of any attempt on part of either Axis to exact commitments from Poland with views to a potential Italo-French conflict. In fact, if pressed by London or Paris for a commitment at this point, I feel he might conceivably resort (a) to the legal aspect of Italy's claims on France (particularly as regards Tunisia); and (b) to France's failure to inform Poland regarding the Laval Agreement; as a means of evading pressure for commitments.

Accordingly it is of pertinent interest that Polish officialdom has gained the following impression of Italian official attitude as regards the basis for their claims on France:

Polish officialdom's impressions of the Italian viewpoint regarding legal aspect of claims.

The Italian claims were based on paragraph 13 of the secret London convention of 1915, between France, Britain, and Italy. By this convention, Britain and France had promised Italy a share in the colonies should Germany be defeated. The Italians now felt that Britain had already made its contribution by granting Italy the right to Jubaland. Hence, the Italians felt their account with Britain was to a certain extent closed.

France,

France, however, had contributed nothing; this then represented a legal basis for Italy's claims.

Re the Laval Agreement.

The Laval Agreement of 1935 had never come into force - it was not ratified by the two countries, and Italy had denounced it in December 1938. Hence, from the Italian point of view, France was still due to repay Italy for her participation in the Great War.

In connection with the foregoing, and in event London and/or Paris pressed Warsaw for a commitment at this juncture, I should, as result of my inquiries in official circles, be inclined to look for Warsaw to adopt an attitude somewhat along the following lines:

Polish viewpoint re secret London Agreement of 1915.

Poland was not in existence in 1915, when the secret London convention was signed. In fact, this secret convention had never been mentioned in any agreement to which Poland subsequently became a signatory.

In 1935, moreover, when France had joined Italy in the Laval Agreement regarding the colonial question, France had treated this as a purely bilateral question, and had failed to keep Poland informed in regard thereto. In other words, when the European situation was comparatively tranquil, France regarded this in the light of a bilateral transaction, and only when an eruption threatened, did France endeavor to engage Poland's sympathetic interest, and turn to the French-Polish alliance.

Moreover, Poland could hardly be asked to serve as a policeman for an Italo-French convention signed in the 80's.

Were

Poland's potential attitude should Germany surreptiously aid Italy against France and yet formally assume neutrality.

Were Warsaw moreover, to be pressed today either by Rome or Paris for a commitment as to Poland's potential stand vis-à-vis an Italo-French conflict in the event Germany assumed a neutral position, and yet surreptiously accorded Italy assistance in form of "volunteers", amunition, heavy guns, and other supplies. I am inclined as a result of my inquiries, to believe Warsaw would assume somewhat the following attitude: Poland would not be concerned over her direct obligations, embodied in the Polish-French alliance untill France recognized Germany's assistance to Italy as an open aggression, and consequently became engaged in actual fighting on the Rhine.

In other words, I do not believe Warsaw may be expected to commit itself at this juncture beyond stating that until France fought at the Rhine, Poland would "sight tight".

The foregoing points were disclosed to me in strictest confidence, and in effect represented the legal construction to which barring a change in circumstances and conditions currently prevailing in the European political picture, I am inclined to believe Warsaw might conceivably resort, if pressure by London and/or Paris were applied here for commitments at this point.

Respectfully yours,

A.J.Drexel Biddle,Jr.

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AJDB/emq

(In quintuplicate)

OF THE SIGNED
ORIGINAL
A TRUE COPY

PSF Poland

March 27, 1939

Dear Tony:

Thank you ever so much for your letter of March fourth. It was most interesting.

Things seem fairly quiet here in Washington. Europe is causing most of the excitement as you know only too well.

I am leaving on Wednesday for ten days in Warm Springs, which will probably be my last "break" for some time.

I do hope you and Margaret will get home soon. It will be grand to see you. My love to you both.

As ever,

F. D. R.

Honorable Anthony J. D. Biddle, Jr.
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary
Warsaw
Poland

MAL:G

P.S. Thank you also for your fine letter of February twenty-eighth. I well remember meeting Monseigneur Cortesi in Buenos Aires.

MEMO FOR THE P. S.

NICE LETTER OF THANKS - MY LOVE TO MARGARET.

F. D. R.

PSF Poland

Warsaw, March 4, 1939.

My dear Mr. President:

Permit me to assure you, in all sincerity, that I am profoundly impressed by your realistic appraisal of the current developments in Europe and their potential bearing upon events apparently in the making, as well as your combined foresight and courageous intelligence, which prompted your sound and far-reaching policy, aimed at averting war in Europe.

Your firmness of attitude, your armament program, and your decision to afford the French and British opportunity to purchase planes from us, have been greeted by official circles here with a genuine sense of satisfaction. While leading Government and military authorities in Poland are frank in expressing this to me, they are careful to treat the matter confidentially, for, due to Poland's delicate geo-political situation during this period of mounting tension, they are careful not to say or do anything which might provoke Germany's suspicion and ire.

Moreover, my numerous conversations with diplomatic and Government circles here, reveal in effect, the following:

The firm attitude you have manifested, and the effective steps you have taken, have served (a) as a "stop, look and listen" sign to the dictators; they have driven

The President

The White House

driven them to cover, and forced them to reexamine their respective and joint positions vis-à-vis the West; (b) to stiffen Paris and London; (c) as an important contribution towards consolidating the British dominions behind a firmer attitude in London; (d) to "ginger up" the French, whose leading political circles had previously been given somewhat to a spirit of defeatism; (e) to curb the tendency of the Italian press to minimize Mr. Chamberlain's statements in reference to the binding character of Britain's alliance with France; Rome is reportedly no longer indifferent to Mr. Chamberlain's assurances on this point; (f) to dampen Rome's warmongering boisterousness, at least up to this point; Polish official circles confidentially inform me, that during Ciano's visit here, his close associates imparted that the attitude of the United States had now become a consideration of major importance in the minds of the ruling circles of Rome.

It is moreover interesting to note, that competent observers here hold, that mainly attributable to your reported attitude, are traces of a desire in Berlin for a four-power conference, traces first brought to light in a leading article in the Frankfurter Zeitung of February 5. The gist of the article may be characterized as a ballon d'essai for a four-power conference. Competent observers here interpreted this as an attempt on the part of Berlin to keep the United States out of the European picture, and to circumvent the potential influences of our attitude upon the Western European capitals, as regards the demands of "gangster diplomacy".

With renewed assurances of my admiration and esteem for your far-sighted and effective policy and with every good wish, I am,

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle, Jr

PSF Poland

Warsaw, February 28, 1939.

My dear Mr. President:

During my rather lengthy visit with the Papal Nuncio immediately after the death of the late Pope, the Nuncio stated with sincerity that in his opinion the two men in the world of today who had proved themselves the greatest combinations of courageous intelligence, heart, soul, and a real love and interest in humanity, were yourself and the late Pope.

It is hardly necessary for me to assure you what a real sense of pleasure, pride, and satisfaction this remark from so representative an officer of the Catholic Church afforded me. (You may possibly recall that when you were in Buenos Aires, Monseigneur Cortesi, then Papal Nuncio at that capital, was presented to you).

With every good wish, I am,

Yours faithfully,

Tony Biddle, Jr.

The President
The White House.

P.S. ~~May~~ I thank you also for your fine letter of February 28th. I ~~recall with much pleasure my~~ well remember meeting Monseigneur Cortesi in Buenos Aires.

F.D.R.

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

File Personal & Confidential

PSF: Poland

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

3-10-39

March 28, 1939

In reply refer to
Eu

My dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am enclosing copies of the following strictly confidential despatches from Ambassador Biddle which have been marked for the President:

No. 993, dated March 10, 1939 concerning visit of Rumanian Foreign Minister to Warsaw;

No. 996, dated March 10, 1939 reporting Polish suspicions of activities of German Embassy in Poland;

No. 998, dated March 11, 1939 concerning conversation between Rumanian Foreign Minister and a representative of Zionist Revisionist Movement.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosures:

Copies of three despatches,
as listed.

The Honorable

Marvin H. McIntyre,

Secretary to the President,

The White House.

Department of State

BUREAU / DIVISION: Eu

ENCLOSURE

TO

Letter drafted 3-24-39

ADDRESSED TO

Marvin H.
McIntyre

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1033

PSF Poland
3-10-39

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 995 Warsaw, March 10, 1939

Subject: Observations on Rumanian Foreign Minister Gafencu's visit to Warsaw.

[redacted]AL.

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 984, March 4, 1939, covering my preliminary observations on Rumanian Foreign Minister Gafencu's visit to Warsaw,

and

and to report the following further observations in connection therewith.

Polish Govt. and military circles favorably impressed by Gafencu

The Minister was accorded an exceptionally cordial reception both by official and press circles. Moreover, his and Minister Beck's numerous and lengthy conversations were carried on in an atmosphere of friendliness, frankness, and comprehension. (On several occasions previous to this visit, Beck had informally expressed his esteem for Gafencu and his appreciation of the latter's clear and independent line of thinking.)

In general it may be said that Minister Gafencu made an excellent impression not only upon Government and military circles but also upon all those who came in contact with him during his stay here; I believe that his visit has served not only to alleviate the strain imposed on Warsaw-Bucharest relations by King Carol's negative response to Beck's preliminary bid for his approval of a common Polish-Hungarian frontier, but it has also gone far towards clarifying and strengthening these relations.

Gafencu's favorable impression of Poland's attitude towards the Polish-Rumanian Alliance

During a conversation in which I had the pleasure of engaging with Minister Gafencu during the Rumanian Ambassador's reception in his honor, he stated, among other things, that he was deeply impressed by the unanimity of Polish public opinion as reflected in the Polish press as regards the importance, necessity and utility of the Polish-Rumanian Alliance. This

appreciation

appreciation was reciprocated by all categories of people in Rumania.

Gafencu's expressed satisfaction over political results of talks with Beck.

Minister Gafencu stated, moreover, that in their talks, he and Minister Beck had come promptly to complete accord on all points covered in their political discussions. This had been a source of gratification to him, and he was about to leave Warsaw with a feeling of marked satisfaction with the political results of these conversations.

Beck's disclosures re his talks with Gafencu.

Subsequent discussion with Minister Beck disclosed that the substance of his talks with Minister Gafencu was in effect as follows: (a) They had agreed that both countries would try to maintain friendly relations with all their neighbors, and each would give the other assistance towards this end; (b) Not only were their points of view in accord, but they also agreed to coordinate their respective activities in connection with all those Polish and Rumanian interests which were in common; (c) They had agreed to increase the communication lines between the two states; they would concentrate on a new railway connection which would be made possible by the construction of a new bridge over the Danube (this would amount to an extension of the Warsaw-Bucharest railway to Sofia and Saloniki).* Moreover, they would concentrate

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* In a previous writing I pointed out that Minister Beck's efforts to improve closer relations between Bulgaria and Rumania had importantly contributed towards the establishment of a ferry service across the Dniester between the two countries; moreover, that for several years he had contemplated bringing about the construction of a bridge either to augment or replace the ferry service.

concentrate on the construction of canals between the Vistula and the Dniester Rivers and the Dniester and the Prut Rivers, looking to the establishment of a Vistula-Danube waterway, linking the Baltic and Black Seas (See page 9 of my despatch No. 199 dated October 8, 1937).* In this connection, my informants pointed out that a Polish committee was already working on the Polish side, and a Rumanian committee would start work shortly along similar lines in connection with Rumanian part in this scheme. The main task was to render navigable the upper part of the Vistula, which would be done by Poland, while the work in connection with the Prut would be done by Rumania; (d) the Jewish problem had also been thoroughly discussed. Indeed, this problem presented itself in the same aspect, both in Poland and Rumania, and both Ministers had agreed that they shared the same ideas in relation thereto. Both Ministers had expressed the desire for a solution which, as regards the state, would be based on the respect of the interests thereof, and, as regards the Jews, would be based on justice and equity. (Minister Gafencu subsequently so stated his and Minister Beck's desire in his interview with the assembled press correspondents).

Both

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* I pointed out in the aforementioned despatch that a canal connecting the San and the Dniester Rivers had for several years been under contemplation.

Both Ministers believed Poland and Rumania understood that such a solution might be found only through a broad international understanding.

Minister Gafencu had brought to Minister Beck all the memoranda that Bucharest had worked out on the Jewish problem, and Minister Gafencu had had opportunity to study Warsaw's memoranda on the subject previous to his visit here.

It was, moreover, agreed between the two Ministers that when Minister Beck went to London, where he would have the opportunity to discuss the matter with the British Government, he would represent the problem not only from Poland's standpoint but also from that of Rumania. In fact, Minister Gafencu had requested Minister Beck to do so.

Gafencu and Beck now in accord as to their views on sub-Carpathian Ruthenia

As foreseen and pointed out in the second paragraph, page 2, of my despatch No. 984, March 4, 1939, they discussed the question involving sub-Carpathian Ruthenia in the light of past and current events in Czechoslovakia. This question was treated by both Ministers as a matter of important interest for their respective countries, and they considered it still constituted an open question. In other words, I have the distinct impression that if (a) the present wave of political unrest in Czechoslovakia went from bad to worse; (b) Ruthenia continued as a center of anti-Polish and anti-Rumanian activities;

activities; and (c) Hitler did not again change his mind as against the impression he had given Beck during the Beck-Hitler talks at Berchtesgaden; Rumania might conceivably work in full accord with Poland towards establishing a Polish-Hungarian common frontier.

In fact, Beck emphasized that, following the outcome of the Vienna arbitration, Warsaw and Bucharest had followed and would continue to follow attentively, all developments in connection therewith and that this would be done in a spirit of perfect accord. (Beck's remarks on this score were subsequently borne out by Gafencu's statements at a press conference.)

(I shall develop further observations on other aspects of the Ruthenian question in a supplementary despatch.)

Gafencu's disclosures to press conference: (a) re Rumanian-Hungarian relations

It is moreover interesting that, when questioned by a correspondent at his press conference, Minister Gafencu admitted having discussed the question of Rumanian-Hungarian relations with Minister Beck, and stated Bucharest wanted good relations with all neighbors based on justice and equity. He hoped that this policy, applied to the Hungarian minority in Rumania, would develop in this minority an attachment of the state to which they belong. This would help to normalize Bucharest's relations with Budapest.

This

This would seem to imply that any idea of territorial concessions to Hungary is, from the Rumanian standpoint, out of the question.

(b) re Rumanian attitude re Jewish and colonial problems

Moreover, to another correspondent's question as to whether the joint Polish-Rumanian activity regarding the Jewish problem had any connection with the colonial revindications of certain European countries, Minister Gafencu replied in the negative. Both he and Minister Beck wanted to talk, in regard to the Jewish problem, with states which might help them find a solution; in other words, with states which might open doors of other territories where the Jews could find a healthy climate and a comfortable home. He added that Rumania had no colonial claims whatever, and that the Polish-Rumanian Alliance did not embrace the colonial problem as such.

The Rumanian Ambassador subsequently confirmed what Minister Gafencu imparted to me in conclusion of my conversation with him to the effect he would return to Bucharest with a feeling of increased friendship for Poland and increased enthusiasm for the Polish-Rumanian Alliance.

Appraisal of outcome of Beck-Gafencu conversations

In appraising the outcome of the Beck-Gafencu conversations, I am of the opinion that it presages an increased political cooperation between Poland and Rumania in regions, principally the Danubian,

wherein

wherein both countries are interested. Moreover, I interpret their agreement to collaborate on the establishment of a Vistula-Danube waterway and the extension of the Warsaw-Bucharest railway to Sofia and Salonika as moves in the direction of economic independence of Axis economy. In fact, I take the gist of these conversations in general to mean the envisagement of a political and economic mobilization against Axis expansion.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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AJDB/emq
(In quintuplicate)

A TRUE COPY
SIGNED
ORIGINAL

QUINTUPLICATE

No. 996 Warsaw, March 10, 1939.

Subject: Polish official circles unexpressed but discernible apprehension over the existence of three German institutes engaging in scientific study of Eastern Europe in general and Poland in particular; suspicions of German Embassy's activities in Poland; interruption of Warsaw-Berlin minority negotiations.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that beneath the surface atmosphere of relief over (a) relaxation in the severity of German pressure vis-à-vis Poland and (b) the diversion of the main force of Nazi diplomatic pressure towards the

West

West, there is an unexpressed but discernible apprehension both in Government and military circles here regarding Berlin's potential intentions vis-à-vis Poland. For example, official circles here are aware that there are within German frontiers three separate institutes, one in Breslau, one in Berlin and one in Konigsberg, devoted to the study of Eastern Europe in general and of Poland in particular. As a result of their costly and scientific research, these institutes have recently published a series of books dealing with general and particular studies in this area. In this connection, the Voivode of Lodz, confidentially imparted that he had secured one of these books dealing with the region wherein his voivodeship is located. He had found this book so thorough and precise in its data that he found it quite unnecessary to study any other informative references towards acquiring a knowledge of the territory under his direction. In fact, the information was so correct in detail that it had given rise to his concern, for it could only have been written by some one thoroughly familiar with the region and some one on the spot. He did not therefore like the implications.

I have moreover learned lately, in strictest confidence, that the Government has become increasingly suspicious of the activities of the German Embassy throughout Poland. In this connection the belief is gaining ground that members of the German Ambassador's staff are busily engaged in activities aimed at whipping up German self-consciousness

amongst

amongst the German minority in Poland.

Personally, I am of the definite opinion that the suspicions of Polish official circles on this score are correct. I have in mind one particular individual in German diplomatic quarters here whose chief efforts since his arrival at this post, have to my mind been directed towards stirring up the potential dynamic forces of the German minority. I have crossed his trail in numerous sections of this country and without any great difficulty have been able to satisfy my curiosity on this score.

Finally, I am aware that of the fact that recent negotiations between Warsaw and Berlin looking for a settlement of minority problems, have been interrupted, is a source of added concern for Government circles here.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr.

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QUINTUPLICATE

No.998 Warsaw, March 11, 1939.

Subject: Supplementing my despatch No.993, of March 10, 1939; Minister Beck's disclosure regarding Minister Gafencu's conversation with representative of Zionist Revisionist movement, Dr. Joseph Schechtman.

[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my despatch No. 993, of March 10, 1939, and to report that Minister Beck informed me in strictest confidence that during Rumanian Foreign Minister Gafencu's visit here he received on March 5, Dr. Josehp Schechtman, representative of the

Zionist

Zionist Revisionist movement in Poland.

In response to Minister Gafencu's inquiries, Dr. Schechtman had stated that if the Palestine conference in London resulted in consequences unfavorable to the Jews, possibly to the extent of either limiting or stopping emigration to Palestine, this would undoubtedly work a bad influence on the Jews of Poland and Rumania. He had urged, therefore, that Rumania and Poland should be interested in maintaining free emigration to Palestine and suggested that the friendly relations between Rumania and Turkey might enable Rumania to win over Turkey to that group of countries which were disposed against Arab demands.

Respectfully yours,

A.J.Drexel Biddle,Jr.

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