

France 1/13/27 - 4/30/27

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A-44

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

LMS

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

FROM

Paris

Dated January 13, 1937

Rec'd 4:15 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

50, January 13, 5 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR MOORE.



Francois Poncet, French Ambassador in Berlin, called on me this morning and gave me a detailed account of his recent conversations in Berlin.

He said that the German Government had indicated to him its entire willingness to come to an agreement for the limitation of armaments; the restriction of the use of poison gas; prohibition of bombardment of towns and other unfortified spots, and a series of minor measures for the "humanization of warfare". This statement surprised me so greatly that I questioned its accuracy but he assured me it was true.

Poncet stated that there are a number of wild men in Germany including Goebels and Goering who believe that a policy of rapid action should be followed; but that Hitler at the present time is siding with Schacht, the industrialists, and the saner members of the general staff who prefer an arrangement that would enable Germany to live in peace.

He

751.62/387

FILED

FP

Confidential File

LMS 2-No. 50, January 13, 5 p. m., from Paris.

6516231
He went on to say that the essential thing the Germans would need in case they should stop their rearmament program would be markets for the finished products of their heavy industries which are now producing war materials. He stated that he hoped to use the present negotiations between France and Germany, for the reestablishment of a treaty of commerce, to develop a project for a larger accord which would give Germany the raw materials and economic outlets she needs.

Poncet added that he was convinced that if Germany were faced by the alternative of economic collapse or war she would choose war. If on the other hand she should be given an opportunity for peaceful development she would choose peace. (END SECTION ONE)

BULLITT

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM

Paris

Dated January 13, 1937

Rec'd 6 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

50, January 13, 5 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

Tomorrow he will see Blum who is still absent from
Paris and will attempt to obtain the full support of the
French Government for negotiations along these lines.

I had luncheon with Chautemps who had already talked
with Poncet and stated most vigorously and in detail his
support of Poncet's project. He expressed some apprehension
that Great Britain might attempt to block Franco-German
conversations and the hope that the Government of the
United States might in case of need indicate to the British
that we would not look favorably on an attempt to interfere
with what appears to be the one possible path to peace.

Delbos in the course of our conversation said to me
that Bonnet before leaving for America would be equipped
with the fullest information from all departments of the
French Government supplement to all matters at issue
between France and the United States but that he could
assure me that Bonnet would have no grandiose and all em-
bracing schemes to propose. It was clearly evident that
he was referring to grandiose schemes referred to in my

telegram

751.62/387

FILED

FP

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

U -2- #50, Jan. 13, 5 p.m. Sec. 2 from Paris

75164/1386
telegram No. 45 of January 12 and that he desired to indicate to me that they did not represent the considered judgment of the French Government.

6220
I remain somewhat skeptical as to Hitler's inclination to accept limitation of armament in return for market outlets as that would seem to mean abandonment of Germany's desire to alter her Polish and Czechoslovakian frontiers.

Delbos said to me that he still fears a German attack on Czechoslovakia. He added that he would much prefer a direct attack on France as France would certainly have to march if Czechoslovakia were attacked but would march without the support of either Poland or England. I shall see Blum after he has talked with Poncet and report to you at once.

(END SECTION TWO AND MESSAGE)

BULLITT

KLP

Copy to A-M & A-W.
Sub

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

SECRETARY OF STATE
FEB 4 1937
NOTED
WE

RB

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

Paris

Dated February 3, 1937

Rec'd 5:05 p. m.

Special Assistant to the Secretary
FEB 4 1937
MR. DUNN
Secretary of State
Washington.

152, February 3, 5 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

In the course of a conversation today Blum said
that he felt that Hitler's speech indicated an uncertainty
with regard to the course he should take in the future.
He said that Francois Poncet had telegraphed that Hitler
had prepared the speech under the influence of Neurath
and Schacht but that Goering on his return from Italy had
persuaded Hitler to make it much less positive and con-
ciliatory than the first draft.

In this connection it may be of interest to the
Department to know that von Lersner an extremely close
friend of Schacht and Neurath is again in Paris. He is
to have a conversation with Blum on Friday morning. He
asked to see me and called on me yesterday.

He said that the circles he represented believe that
there could be no peace in Europe except a peace based on
reconciliation between France and Germany and that in order
to bring

751.62/398

FILED

FEB 6 - 1937

GDG

RB

-2-#152, February 3, 5 p. m. from
Paris

to bring about this reconciliation the assistance of the United States would be essential.

I asked him to be specific. He replied that he felt that the Government of the United States could be of the greatest service to European peace at the present time by instructing its Ambassadors in Paris and Berlin to urge the Governments to which they are accredited to make a sincere effort to reach agreement. He then added that even more important perhaps would be the service which could be performed by the United States if the American Government could let the British Government know that it would regard with disfavor any maneuvers by the British to prevent reconciliation between France and Germany.

BULLITT

CSB



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Paris, February 5, 1937.

No. 325

CONFIDENTIAL.

DIVISION OF
TRADE AGREEMENTS
TA
MAR 9 1937

Subject: Conversation with M. Bonnet,
newly appointed French Ambassador
to Washington, regarding his
mission to the United States.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC ADVISER
MAR 8 1937
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RECEIVED
FEB 18 1937
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CONFIDENTIAL

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

Sir:

I have the honor to transmit herewith a memorandum
of a conversation with M. Bonnet, newly appointed French
Ambassador to Washington, regarding his mission to the
United States.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

Edwin C. Wilson
Edwin C. Wilson.
Counselor of Embassy.

Enclosure:
1. Memorandum, Feb. 4, 1937.

In triplicate.

ECW/FP

862.50 FOUR YEAR PLAN/28

FILED
MAY 13 1937

310

Copies to White House and WE

Sub

~~WE~~

BC

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

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RECEIVED
FEB 23 1937
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Secretary of State
Washington.

Paris
DIVISION OF FROM
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 24 1937
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Dated February 20, 1937
Received 2:12 PM 22nd

SECRETARY OF STATE
FEB 23 1937
NOTED

250 February 20, midnight.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

Delbos, Minister for Foreign Affairs, called on me this afternoon and we talked for two hours. As his remarks contained an extremely comprehensive and confidential exposition of French foreign policy I venture to burden you with a telegram which is much too long.

I thanked him on your behalf for his assistance in arranging the question of St Pierre Miquelon. He said that at the Cabinet meeting at which the matter had been discussed he had taken the position that the Minister of Colonies must make a settlement entirely satisfactory to the American Government and that Blum had supported him fully.

He then said that he was aware that there was a certain distrust of France in the United States due largely to France's default on its debt and that he hoped the present Government's cooperation in arranging this slight matter of St Pierre Miquelon might be the beginning of

more

740.00/117

SEC 1

Confidential File

GH

FILED
FEB 26 1937

more confident relations. I replied that the cooperation of the French Government with regard to St Pierre Miquelon has certainly produced a most happy impression in Washington.

I asked Delbos how he felt about the present international situation and what he foresaw for the future. He replied that at the moment he was more disturbed by the behavior of Italy than by Germany. He said that the French Government had positive information that the Italians now had fifty thousand troops in Spain, that two days ago six ships had left Naples and Gaeta carrying further troops and munitions and that by the end of this week there would be more than sixty thousand Italian troops in Spain. This Italian action on the eve of the ban on volunteers was a striking example of Mussolini's good faith.

Delbos added that he had been informed, but was not certain of the accuracy of the information, that in this final shipment of Italian munitions there had been large supplies of gas. He said he feared that if the Italians should begin to use gas in Spain serious international repercussions might follow.

He then went on to express the belief that Franco would win unless it should be possible in the near future to come to an agreement for the withdrawal of "volunteers".

The agreement

Page 3 from Paris No 250.

The agreement already reached to prevent further sending of "volunteers" was a real step forward and he did not despair of getting some agreement for withdrawal of "volunteers".

652101
In any event he was to a large extent in agreement with the British opinion that if Franco should triumph he would not establish a totalitarian Fascist Government and that if the Valencia Government should triumph it would not establish a totalitarian Bolshevik Government. In the end Spain would come out with a government which might be either somewhat to the Right or somewhat to the Left. It was certainly not the part of wisdom which would make a European war about the nuances of a future Spanish Government.

He then went on to say that Mussolini had become the jackal of European politics. He was attempting continually to stir up trouble in the hope that from some conflict he might sneak away with a piece of meat. So long as France and Germany should remain hostile to each other Mussolini would have great importance but the day France and Germany should reach reconciliation Italy, in international affairs, would not be much more important than Belgium.

BULLITT

CSB

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

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Paris

Dated February 21, 1937

FROM

Rec'd 22nd, 9 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RECEIVED
Secretary of State

Washington FEB 23 1937

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
251, February 21, 1 a.m.

Continuing my 250 (SECTION TWO) —

He felt that Germany definitely had inaugurated a more moderate policy since the sixth of January of this year. This he attributed to the facts that the Germans had discovered by experience in Spain that neither their airplanes nor their tanks were so good as they had believed; that it was not proving easy to create an adequate officers' corps in Germany; and that in spite of all the words of Hitler and others to the contrary Germany knew very well she could not in the long run live satisfactorily under a closed economy cut off from normal trade with the rest of the world. He felt that Hitler's recent statements to the international gathering of war veterans had been most important. After making the pacific statements he had made to the veterans it would be difficult for Hitler in the near future to launch a war.

His latest information from Francois-Poncet was to the effect that Schacht and the business men of Germany once more had rather more influence with Hitler than the leaders

of

740.00/117

SEC 2

Confidential

FILED

FEB 26 1937

GH

U -2- #251, Feb. 21, 1 a.m. from Paris

641.623
of the Nazi party. He was sending the experts of the Ministry of Commerce to Berlin tomorrow to conduct the negotiations for the renewal of the Franco-German Treaty of Commerce. He had given them orders to act with the greatest liberality. They were not to push for a surplus of French exports to Germany or even for equality of exports from one country to the other. They were to accept a surplus of exports to France.

641.623
He went on to say that there was a most private and secret negotiation with regard to which he would like to inform me. Leith-Ross had met Schacht in Basel and they had had a long conversation with regard to ways and means of reducing the barriers to trade between Germany and England. Leith-Ross had expressed to Schacht his great regret that the Franco-German negotiations had not gone further. Delbos commented "that was of course a typical British remark because the truth is that the British Government was furious with us for having those conversations with Schacht and said to us that while they would be glad to have us have conversations with the Germans in which they participated they resented our conducting such conversations as we had had with Schacht". I told him that this interested me particularly as the British Ambassador here, Sir George Clerk, had taken the trouble to invite me to lunch in order to assure me that his one desire and the
desire

U -3- 251, Feb. 21, 1 a.m. from Paris

751.6
desire of the British Government was to see the French and the Germans reach reconciliation. I asked him if Sir George Clerk had ever said anything similar to him. He said that Sir George Clerk had never made any such statement to him. He said that Eden, he believed, was a good European and would really like to see France and Germany get together. Unfortunately however, Eden often did not control British foreign policy. The ground was cut from under him by other members of the British Cabinet and even by the permanent officials of the British Foreign Office. He believed that the British would pretend to desire Franco-German reconciliation but would continue to follow their old policy of keeping France and Germany hostile to each other though not at war.

Delbos then said that Leith-Ross was to meet Schacht again in the very near future secretly probably in Berlin to continue the conversations they had begun. He said that Schacht had spoken to Francois-Poncet three days ago and had said that he believed much more progress could be made if the conversations should be enlarged to include France. Delbos said that the entire matter was being handled with the greatest secrecy; that Poncet had communicated with him by letter brought by personal messenger and then said "I happen to have my reply in my pocket for I have just written it and I will read it to you". The substance of his handwritten reply was that he would attempt to send

Charles

U -4- #251, Feb. 21, 1 a.m. from Paris

Charles Rist to represent France in the negotiations. He had already spoken to Blum who approved in principle.

Delbos said he hoped that from the negotiations between Schacht, Leith-Ross and Rist might arise some definite plan for the reintegration of Germany in the economy of the western world. He said that he felt personally that it was entirely unfair to Germany to ask her to stop arming and to turn her factories to peaceful purposes unless the nations of the world were prepared to give her outlets for her products of peace.

I asked him how he proposed to do this.

He said that in the first place he believes that something could be done by ordinary bilateral negotiations for the reduction of tariff barriers. That would be the first step. The second step would be one which he would ask me to regard as most secret. He and Blum had not discussed it even with the other members of the Cabinet. They had in mind the creation of consortiums to develop sections of Africa. Germany would not be able to put up much money but a large proportion of the development would be done by the use of German machines. The money would be found in France and England and, if the United States should be inclined to join, in the United States.

To crown the entire proposal Germany would be given a colony probably the Cameroons. Then all the African colonies except French North Africa and British South Africa would

U -5- #251, Feb. 21, 1 a.m. from Paris

so to speak be put into a common pot; British, French, Belgian, Portuguese, and German colonies would all be exploited by international consortiums which would in considerable measure favor the use of German products. He felt there was work enough in Africa to consume the energies of the civilized world for the next fifty years. Thus he hoped the manufacturing genius of Germany could be turned from war to peace purposes. At the same time he proposed to attempt to reach agreement with Germany on limitation of armaments. He then used almost word for word one of the sentences in the speech which I telegraphed you for approval two days ago saying: "You cannot expect France or any other nation to help to supply Germany with iron and steel in order to receive it back in the form of shells and bombs". I asked him if he had any other plans for drawing Germany away from war and he said that he had none.

He asked for my opinion and I told him that the ideas he has expressed were close to those of my government and that I was certain you and the President would be glad to know that he was working in this manner.

BULLITT

CSB

Paris, February 4, 1937.

CONFIDENTIAL.

MEMORANDUM

In conversation to-day with M. Bonnet, newly appointed French Ambassador to Washington, we discussed Hitler's recent speech and the possibilities of getting Germany to cooperate with other countries. In connection therewith, M. Bonnet said that of course the real object of his mission to Washington was to endeavor to obtain American support for the efforts which the British and French Governments intended to make in the way of drawing Germany away from her policy of self-sufficiency and towards a policy of economic cooperation. M. Bonnet said that France and England alone could not hope to accomplish this, but with American support they might, and that upon the accomplishment of such a program rested the peace of the world.

I asked whether he believed that the Nazi political system would lend itself to modification to the extent that would seem to be necessary in order to permit the adaptation of the Nazi economic system required for cooperation in the economic field with other countries. He said that this was, of course, a doubtful question, but as he saw it, it was one of two things: either Hitler would continue with his present policy of economic self-sufficiency and of arming to the hilt, which could only result

in.....

762.00
862.00
in war, or else he would find a way to modify his régime so as to permit cooperation with other countries and thus lay the bases for peace in Europe. He said that Hitler must realize that he could not hope to wage a successful war against the nations in Europe which would inevitably be arrayed against him, and that therefore the only sane policy left to him was one of cooperation. Of course, there was considerable risk involved in any attempt to modify the Nazi régime, since loosening the shackles on freedom of speech and individual liberty would result in opportunity for criticism and for weighing the advantages which Germany might have obtained from Nazi rule, and this might let loose a force of opposition which could bring about the removal from power of the Nazi leaders. However, since any policy leading to foreign war would be suicidal from Germany's point of view, the only sane road open to Hitler was to modify his régime so as to cooperate with other countries, taking his chances on being able to justify this change to his people and to remain in control.

8604.00
I asked whether there was not perhaps a third possible policy, namely, without provoking directly a foreign war, to foment trouble in Czechoslovakia and obtain control of that country on the alleged ground of preventing disorders and communism there. Bonnet said that this could only lead immediately to war, since the effects of any such move could not be restricted to Czechoslovakia but would be bound to bring about counter-intervention from other countries.

1.....

862.014
841.014

I asked M. Bonnet whether, in case Germany showed a real desire to cooperate economically and abandon some of her more alarming policies, the British would be willing to do anything on the colonial question. M. Bonnet said that he was convinced that England in this case would do something regarding colonies and mentioned that there was "a plan being worked out".

(SIGNED) EDWIN C. WILSON.

Counselor.

500.50

In connection with the foregoing, it is of interest to note that an officer of the Foreign Office told Mr. Lewis Clark of this Embassy to-day that he was at work on a memorandum for M. Blum, intended eventually for M. Bonnet, regarding the possibilities of the United States, France and England cooperating in the economic field with Germany. E.C.W.

ECW/FP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

BC

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

FROM

Paris

Dated February 21, 1937

Received 5 pm 22nd

Secretary of State,

Washington.

252 February 21 2 a.m.

Continuing my 251, (section three)

I then said that in spite of what appeared to be a new moderation in Hitler's policies I was somewhat fearful that this might prove to be the lull before the storm. I had reason to believe that Hitler was speculating on a possible collapse of the French financial situation and the overthrow of the Blum Government. This, in the opinion of the Germans, would result in the Socialists, the Communists, and the Left wing Radical Socialists going into a united opposition which would produce an immense series of strikes of the gravest nature. Delbos said that all this was indeed a possibility but he did not believe personally that the financial situation would get out of hand to such an extent as to produce the overthrow of the government. He said frankly that he knew both Labeyrie, Governor of the Bank of France, and Auriol, Minister of Finance, enjoyed no confidence in the country. There might be some slight return of confidence if

740.00/117

SEC 3

Confidential File

GH

FILED

FEB 26 1937

851.602
confidence if Labeyrie should be replaced which was possible. I asked him if there were any chance that Auriol might be replaced and if there might be other changes in the Cabinet. He said that he did not believe there would be any changes in the Cabinet. It would be extremely difficult for Blum to make any. The solution of the difficulty which he himself had suggested to Blum a few days ago which he expected to attempt to push through at the earliest opportunity was the following: He proposed to form a National Economic Council which would have the duty of supervising and coordinating the work of the Ministries of Finance, National Economy, Commerce, Agriculture and having a vague supervision over the Bank of France as well. He felt that if Blum would appoint Rist to this position there would be an immense return of confidence throughout France.

751.602
I then suggested to Delbos that it might be possible to expect some help from Poland in the matter of reconciliation between France and Germany. He said that he was beginning to believe that Poland might help. Relations between France and Poland had improved incredibly since Blum's Government had been in power. It was Gamelin who had insisted that the French Government should come to terms with the Poles and Gamelin had done much of the work in

personal

personal conversations with Rydz-Smigly. The change in Beck's attitude had been phenomenal. Delbos said that the first two times he had met Beck in Geneva, Beck had been frigid and distant. That last time he was in Geneva with Beck, Beck had almost overwhelmed him with attentions and personal affection. When Beck had invited him to dinner Beck had worn only a French decoration and then before sitting down to dinner had decorated Delbos with the highest Polish decoration saying "we should now wear always each other's colors on our coats as we wear them on our hearts."

7602604
Delbos said that in spite of this demonstration he had not been able to get anywhere in his repeated attempts to persuade Beck to adopt a more friendly attitude toward Czechoslovakia. "When you are allies" he said, "as close as Poland and France are today you have a right to expect that your ally will assist you in your general foreign policy". Beck absolutely refused to do anything to guarantee Czechoslovakia and refused to adopt a more friendly tone toward Czechoslovakia. Moreover while Beck was hostile to both Germany and the Soviet Union he was hostile toward Germany only because it was his deepest conviction that the foot of a German or a Russian soldier must never be placed on Polish soil whereas there was real hatred in his attitude toward the Soviet Union. Delbos said he

said he argued constantly with Beck that Poland should give a guarantee to Czechoslovakia in order to prevent Germany from attacking Czechoslovakia. His argument was that if Germany should attack Czechoslovakia, France would attack Germany the next morning. Poland then would be obliged to go in. Poland thus stood a much better chance of avoiding war with Germany if she should guarantee Czechoslovakia in advance. He said that Beck was not impressed by this argument.

He said that he had used the same argument on Sir George Clerk the other day with what he thought was somewhat beclouded success. He had assured Sir George Clerk in the most categorical terms as he could assure me once again that France would fight at once if Germany should attack Czechoslovakia. Sir George Clerk had then said "then we'll all be dragged in".

The pathetic eagerness of the French to believe that they will have British support in Czechoslovakia was never better shown than by Delbos adding "so while of course that was not a formal diplomatic promise I feel that we should have the support of England also."

BULLITT

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

MM

PARIS

This message must be closely
paraphrased ¹⁻¹³³⁶ before being com-
municated to anyone. (D) FROM

Dated Feb. 21, 1937

Rec'd. 9:40pm. Feb. 22.

Secretary of State

Washington, D.C.

253, February 21, 3am.

Continuing my telegram No. 252 (Section four).

I then asked Delbos whether he felt Germany intended to attack Czechoslovakia. He said that he felt that much would depend on whether the internal situation in France should remain solid or should begin to disintegrate in terrible strikes. In the latter case Germany might act. He then said that it is presumed that in case of war Russia would be able to give great assistance to Czechoslovakia. I expressed skepticism saying that Germany's first act in making war on Czechoslovakia would be to bomb all the Czech landing fields so that if Russian planes should reach Czechoslovakia they would find no fields on which to land. He then made a statement which I regard as exceedingly important. He said that the Russian planes would be on the Czech fields before Germany attacked. I asked him precisely what he meant by this. He said that the moment there was such a state of tension between Czechoslovakia and Germany that war appeared likely the Russian planes would fly at once to Czechoslovakia. Inasmuch as the planes could make

740.00/117

SEC 4 AND 5

Confidential File

GH

500 kilometers an hour they would reach the Czech fields before Germany could attack. I asked him if he had thought of the political consequences adding that if, in a state of tension between Czechoslovakia and Germany, thousands of Russian planes should fly to Czechoslovakia for the obvious purpose of threatening to attack Germany public opinion in both England and the United States would regard Czechoslovakia and Russia as the aggressors and not Germany. I also asked him how the Russian planes were to reach Czechoslovakia without violating the neutrality of Poland or Rumania. He replied that he did not know. He felt certain that the Russians would not dare to fly over Poland because the Poles would at once attack them. The present government of Rumania would be equally opposed to permitting the passage of the Russian planes. He left off the rest of the thought, implying that the Rumanians had no planes with which to stop the Russians.

Dolbos then said that he had been informed that the German Government recently through its Ambassadors in Italy and Great Britain had told the Italian and British Governments delicately but definitely that an attempt to restore Otto to the throne of Austria would produce immediate action by Germany which was taken to mean that German troops would enter Austria. I asked him if France would react in the same

U -3- #253, Feb. 21, 3 a.m., from Paris

some manner with regard to German invasion of Austria as in case of German invasion of Czechoslovakia. He said "no". So far as he was concerned he believed there were only two reasons which should or could lead France into war. One was an invasion of French territory, the second was the invasion of the territory of some ally of France, that France had promised to protect under such circumstances. France had no obligations to protect Austria. He felt it was impossible to predict how the situation in Austria would develop but he was somewhat disturbed by a report which the French Minister in Vienna had just sent to him to the effect that ^{Schuschnigg} had informed him most confidentially that he intended to get married in the near future and to resign his Chancellorship. Delbos said that he felt the mere knowledge that ^{Schuschnigg} was contemplating resignation might produce great uncertainties in Austria with unforeseeable consequences.

BULLITT

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

Paris

FROM Dated February 21, 1937

Rec'd 10.15 p.m., 22nd

Secretary of State

Washington

254, February 21, 4 a.m.

Continuing my 253 (SECTION FIVE)

I then asked Delbos if there were any conversations in progress between the Russian and French General Staffs. He said there were no new or large scale conversations in progress but that there were constant interchanges of information and discussions of possible eventualities through the French Military Attache in Moscow and the Soviet Military Attache in Paris. He then went on to say that it was his belief that Stalin for the moment had decided to pursue a more moderate policy in interfering in the affairs of the outside world. He considered the withdrawal of Rosenberg from Valencia most significant. He said that he was, however, not really sure that this meant any change in Stalin's attitude toward pushing world revolution through the Comintern because he had also been informed that the reason the Soviet Government had lost interest in further adventures in Spain was because the Soviet Government had become convinced that if the Valencia Government should triumph it would not establish a

Communist

U -2- #254, Feb. 21, 4 a.m. from Paris

Communist state and the Soviet Government would prefer to have Franco as an easy target to shoot at with propaganda than a decent democratic government which would not afford such a good target. He said that all his information from Russia indicated that Stalin was deeply afraid of the Trotskyist movement ^{especially of its} ~~and its~~ strength among the youth and in the army. Mass executions of which no one outside heard were taking place.

He said that Coulondre, the French Ambassador in Moscow, had been about to leave for Paris three days ago. He had refrained from coming and had sent a most secret message to say that his reason was that he believed Litvinov was in serious trouble and probably would soon be dismissed from his post and might soon be on trial. It appeared certain that Litvinov's wife (Ivy Low of British origin) was seriously compromised having had most intimate relations with many of those who have been executed or imprisoned and many of those who are about to be placed on trial. Delbos felt that these internal difficulties in Russia would now keep Stalin calm for a while. Thus with Stalin uncertain and Hitler uncertain the prospect for peace would not seem altogether bad. Delbos concluded by saying that he himself felt that the next six months might offer a really great opportunity to produce reconciliation in Europe. The mere prospect of British rearmament on such a vast scale as had been

proposed

U -3- #254, Feb. 21, 4 a.m. from Paris

proposed was already beginning to have a sobering effect on the dictators. At the end of three years when the British were fully rearmed they would of course become intolerable but that was another story.

(END OF MESSAGE)

BULLITT

CSB



RB

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

Paris

Dated March 16, 1937

Rec'd 5:23 p. m.

Secretary of State

Washington.

366, March 16, 6 p. m. (SECTION THREE)

in the event of conflict between Germany and Czechoslovakia in which France would go to the assistance of Czechoslovakia, Belgium wished to be free of any commitment that might involve her in the conflict. Delbos said that he had told the Belgian Ambassador that while Belgium was making every effort to keep out of war she was at the same time running the risk that if war should in fact break out she would find that there would be no immediate and effective assistance for the defense of Belgium against attack. It was all very well Delbos said to speak of Belgium being guaranteed but everyone knew what a guarantee by Germany was worth and in order that the guarantee by England and France should be effective it would be necessary to have a military understanding between the three powers. This, however, the Belgian Government did not (*) apparently believing that there would be a greater chance of keeping out of war if

Belgium

RB

-2-#366, March 16, 6 p. m. from
Paris SECTION THREE

Belgium were entirely "neutral" and being willing to run the risk that if war should break out Belgium would be at the mercy of Germany without any immediate means of assistance from England and France.

Delbos went on to say that in view of the Belgian position the French Government was prepared to release the Belgian Government from the existing

WILSON

(*)apparent omission

SMS

NPL

RB

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

Paris

Dated March 16, 1937

Rec'd 5:54 p. m.

Secretary of State

Washington.

366, March 16, 6 p. m. (SECTION FOUR)

obligation of Belgium to protect France against aggression and that he thought it might be possible to work out a five power pact guaranteeing Belgium against aggression along the lines which the Belgian Government was proposing. He thought that this might be the outcome if there was any outcome at all of the negotiations which had now been resumed with regard to the so-called western pact. He said that, of course, the German and Italian proposals regarding this western pact were wholly unacceptable to the French Government. The French Government, however, welcomes the fact that any proposals at all have been made by Germany and Italy and is disposed to discuss the matter fully.

I asked what the attitude of the British Government was. He said that while there had not been time as yet to

"concert"

RB

-2-#366, March 16, 6 p. m. from
Paris (SECTION FOUR)

"concert" the positions of the British and French Governments, he understood that the British views were about the same as those held here in Paris.

I remarked that it must have been obvious to the Germans that neither the British nor the French Government could accept a proposal which sought in effect to shut the League of Nations out of any part in guaranteeing security in Western Europe and which sought, as Delbos had observed

WILSON

NPL

RB

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

Paris

Dated March 16, 1937

Rec'd 4 p. m.

Secretary of State

Washington.

366, March 16, 6 p. m. (SECTION ONE).

CONFIDENTIAL.

I called upon the Foreign Minister today. In response to my inquiry regarding the German and Italian replies to the British memorandum of last November concerning a western pact he said that the German reply was in effect negative, that it does not advance matters at all. He said that the Italian reply had been received at the Foreign Office only last night, that he had not had an opportunity to do anything more than to glance at it but that it was his impression that it was on the same lines as the German reply while being less precise.

Speaking of the German reply he said that it proposed that in the new western pact there should be no guarantee of England since it was inconceivable according to the German Government that there should be a war between

872

RB

-2-#366, March 16, 6 p. m. from
Paris (SECTION ONE)

757162
between Germany and England or between Italy and England. The German proposal therefore according to Delbos is that the western pact in effect should be limited to a non-aggression agreement between France and Germany guaranteed by England and Italy. However, the Germans proposed that this guarantee should not become effective until both England and Italy, acting more, commented Delbos, as joint arbitrators than as guarantors, should decide that there had in fact been a case of aggression. In view of the close working agreement between Germany and Italy -- if not alliance -- and the knowledge which has been gained, Delbos remarked, as a result of the Spanish experience as to the degree of reliance which may be placed in the good faith of Italy, the value for France of any such supposed guarantee is only too evident.

WILSON

CSB

RB

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

Paris

Dated March 16, 1937

Rec'd 5:42 p. m.

Secretary of State
Washington.

366. March 16, 6 p. m. (SECTION TWO)

The German note proposed, according to Delbos, that the League of Nations should have nothing whatsoever to do with the new Western pact: instead of the Council of the League deciding when aggression had taken place it will be as mentioned above, only England and Italy acting together. The obligations of mutual assistance under Article Sixteen of the Covenant would cease to exist. In other words, Germany was proposing, said Delbos, to wipe out the League of Nations and the whole system of security in Europe as it exists today.

751.6111
Delbos said that the German note also proposes to destroy the French treaties of mutual assistance with Russia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia through providing that in any case France could not go to the assistance of these countries. The German proposal evidently is that with a new nonaggression arrangement

RB

-2-#366, March 16, 6 p. m. from
Paris SECTION TWO

arrangement between Germany and France, it must be understood that under no conditions could Germany and France ever be at war, and that if a situation should unfortunately arise in which Germany might find herself at war with, for example, Czechoslovakia, France would still be bound by her nonaggression arrangement with Germany and hence could not go to the assistance of Czechoslovakia.

With regard to the special case of Belgium, the Minister said that the Belgian Government was pressing for an arrangement which would define the status of Belgium along the lines expressed by the King in his message of last October, namely that Belgian security would be guaranteed by the others but Belgium would not guarantee the security of any other country. Delbos said that the Belgian position was that they wished to avoid at any cost danger of being drawn into a war not directly affecting Belgium, for instance Belgium feared that

WILSON

SMS

RCC

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

PARIS

Dated March 16, 1937

Rec'd 7:51 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

366, March 16, 6 p.m. (SECTION FIVE).

to leave Germany a free hand in Eastern Europe and I asked what in his view had been the reasons which might have led the German Government to put forward such a proposal. He said that he felt that the extent of the British rearmament program and the successful way in which France was working out of her financial difficulties were factors which had greatly influenced the German Government; Nazi foreign policy had reached an impasse and it had become apparent to the German Government that it could no longer remain in the position of seeming to refuse to make any contribution towards a settlement of the problem of security in Western Europe, these proposals had therefore probably been made more for the purpose of gaining time than with any hope that they might be accepted.

In speaking of Spain, Delbos said that he thought it might be difficult for the governmental forces defending Madrid to resist indefinitely an offensive which was being carried out by regularly constituted divisions of the Italian army. He spoke of the armed intervention of the

Italian

852.00

From Paris, No. 366, Section Five.

752.65
852.221
Italian Government in Spain as "abominable" and said that the French Government had information (which it believed reliable although it did not have conclusive proof) to the effect that since February 20 when the ban on volunteers was adopted 27,000 regular Italian troops had landed in Spain. He said that

WILSON

SMS NFL

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

PARIS

Dated March 16, 1937

Rec'd 7:51 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

366, March 16, 6 p.m. (SECTION SIX).

he had spoken plainly with Cerruti yesterday regarding this situation but that Cerruti had denied that the information was correct. Delbos said that five days ago Ciano had sent for the French Charge d'Affaires at Rome and had denied to him the reports published in the press of the landing of Italian troops in Spain since February 20. Ciano had proposed that Delbos should himself put out this denial. Delbos had replied that he would be glad to make a statement to the effect that Ciano denied these allegations. Ciano, however, had declined to have it done this way and had requested that this exchange of communications between Delbos and himself be kept absolutely confidential. It was, said Delbos, another example of the "utmost cynicism" on the part of the Italian Government. END MESSAGE.

WILSON

SMS NPL

LMS

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (40)

Paris

Dated April 22, 1937

FROM Rec'd 4:30 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.



516, April 22, 9 p. m. SECTION ONE

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

I was informed today by the Belgian Ambassador and the French Foreign Office that the British and French had submitted to Belgium their notes with regard to Belgium's new position in international affairs; that the Belgian Government had not yet commented but that the notes probably would be made public within the next few days.

The Belgian Ambassador informed me in addition that he believed the German Government probably would issue a statement guaranteeing Belgium.

The Belgian Ambassador went on to say that Belgium is absolutely determined not to permit her soil to become the battleground of the next war; nor to permit either the foot of a German, British or French soldier to be placed on her soil.

Now that this new policy of Belgium, which was originally announced in the speech of the King last October, is about to become a reality, its effect on the position of France in Central and Eastern Europe has become a subject

of

740.00/149

Confidential GH

LMS 2-No. 516, April 22, 9 p. m., Sec. 1, from Paris.

of acute disquiet throughout Central and Eastern Europe.

755.600
7600.62
For example, the Polish Ambassador in a highly confidential conversation said to me that at the recent conference which Beck had held with all the Polish Ambassadors in Europe, it had been decided that the barring of Belgium to the passage of French troops would render the Franco-Polish alliance virtually useless. He went on to say that Poland's position vis-a-vis Germany would be so weakened that a serious reconsideration of Polish foreign policy must be envisaged.

7600.62
The Polish Ambassador pointed out that the position of Czechoslovakia would be affected as disastrously as that of Poland. In this connection Delbos said to me a few days ago that Benes had asked him recently if France would have any objection to Czechoslovakia attempting to work out a more friendly relationship with Germany. He had replied that France would have no objection. I discussed this question with Leger today who said that he considered it within the bounds of possibility that Czechoslovakia would now press to reach a non-aggression agreement with Germany similar to the German-Polish agreement.

BULLITT

SMS:EMB

LMS

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

Paris

Dated April 22, 1937

FROM

Rec'd 6 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

517, April 22, 9 p. m.

Section Two, continuing my 516.

European politics today are based essentially on the military position of the great powers, and, although it is arguable - and is argued by the French Foreign Office - that France's defensive position will be strengthened and not weakened by the new status of Belgium, no one can argue that France's offensive position - that is to say her ability to come to the aid of Poland or the Little Entente - has been strengthened. Indeed there is general agreement that recent developments are closing rapidly the door to French influence in Central and Eastern Europe.

962.20
I have information which I believe to be reliable that the Germans have now constructed to the east of the Rhine from Switzerland northward to Karlsruhe a series of fortifications which though less elaborate do not compare unfavorably with the French Maginot line. Competent military observers, including our Military Attache, believe that a French attack on Germany from Alsace in the face of these

EDA - 2 - #517, April 22, 9 p.m. from Paris

(obstacles)
these fortifications and the obsolete presented by the
river itself is out of the question.

If Belgium is now to be considered as a neutral state like Switzerland, France can advance on Germany therefore only through the zone of about 125 miles which separates the Rhine from the southernmost point of the Belgian frontier. This territory is for the most part very difficult to traverse. Our Military Attache estimates that Germany could hold this short front with less than half her army against an attack of the whole French Army. Furthermore, Belgium's refusal to allow France to use her territory for airplane bases from which to attack the Ruhr weakens the situation of the French aviation arm.

BULLITT

SMS:EMB

S

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

LMS

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

Paris

FROM Dated April 22, 1937

Rec'd 5:55 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

518, April 22, 9 p. m.

Continuing my 517, Section Three.

I discussed this position with Leger today and he said with some diffidence that the French General Staff did not consider either the Rhine or this short line unattackable and insisted that Belgium's new position would not diminish the influence of France in Central and Eastern Europe.

I know no competent observer, either political or military, who agrees with this point of view which the French Foreign Office feels obliged to maintain.

751.607
When I asked Leger how he expected France to support Czechoslovakia in case of attack by Germany, he said that there were plans already made to support Czechoslovakia by expeditionary forces which would pass through Rumania and Yugoslavia. I said that this seemed to me somewhat fantastic but he replied that plans had actually been drawn up for such expeditions!

BULLITT

SMS:EMB

S

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

LMS

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

Paris

Dated April 22, 1937

FROM

Rec'd 5:20 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

519, April 22, 9 p. m.

Continuing my 518, Section Four.

7608.61
In conjunction with the position of Czechoslovakia
Coulondre, French Ambassador in Moscow who is in Paris at
the moment, has said to me that he is certain that Russia
will not support Czechoslovakia in case of a German attack
on Czechoslovakia. He said that aside from minor pieces
of evidence on this point he had one major piece. He and
a French general had been talking recently with Litvinov
and the French general had asked Litvinov pointblank, "If
Germany attacks Czechoslovakia will you send support to
Czechoslovakia?" Litvinov had replied, "No". Coulondre
said that Litvinov later had covered up the "no" by saying,
"We should wait to see what France would do and would do
whatever France might do." Coulondre said that in his
opinion the "no" was decisive and sincere.

BULLITT

EMB:SMS

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

LMS

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

Paris

Dated April 22, 1937

FROM

Rec'd 5:30 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

520, April 22, 9 p. m.

Continuing my 519, Section Five.

In view of these developments it is only natural that Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the other states of Central and Eastern Europe should be beginning to lose whatever confidence they had had in the effectiveness of French support and should attempt to come to terms of one sort or another with Germany. Leger today admitted that he expected this to happen; but added that neither Poland nor Czechoslovakia nor any other state of Central and Eastern Europe would have any confidence in any promises which Germany might make and while cultivating better relations with Germany would attempt to do everything possible to obtain additional support from France and England.

BULLITT

SMS:EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

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

FROM Paris

Dated April 22, 1937

Rec'd 7:12 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

521. April 22, 9 p.m.

Continuing my 520. Section Six.

Both Delbos and Leger are in agreement that it is highly improbable Germany will risk war during the next twelve months since Germany will need about twelve months to (#) alterations due to the defects in her aviation motors and her tanks which became visible in Spain. They are both apprehensive, however, that Hitler may possibly decide at some time during the next twelve months to provoke a Nazi revolt in Austria and support it by so-called "volunteers" from Germany.

In this connection the Austrian Minister stated to me a few days ago that he had certain knowledge that the basis of the agreement between Hitler and Mussolini with regard to Austria was that Hitler had said that he would not intervene in Austria unless Otto should be placed on the Throne; that Mussolini had accepted this exception because he was

confident

740.00/149

SEC 6

GH

JR #521, April 22, 9 p.m., from Paris,

confident that the influence of the Catholic Church and the Vienna Jews would be sufficient to keep Austria from turning Nazi without the return of Otto. Hitler had made the proposal because he was confident that unless Otto should return the Nazi movement in Austria would overcome all opposition.

Leger said that he had (?) received information from Austria that the Germans had mobilized some troops on the Austrian frontier. He did not regard this as a serious threat of immediate action.

BULLITT

KLP

S

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EDA

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closely paraphrased
before being communi-
cated to anyone (d)

PARIS

Dated April 22, 1937

FROM

Received 7:20 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

522, April 22, 9 p.m.

Continuing my 521, Section Seven.

762.60
Both Delbos and Leger believe that Hitler has not
decided on his next move. For the moment he is keeping
open all possibilities. He will have Schacht explore the
possible advantages which Germany may achieve by entering
into international economic agreements and following a
policy of peace. He will prepare at the same time for a
policy of war.

I cannot find anyone in Paris, including the members
of the French Foreign Office, who believes that Van
Zeeland's efforts may be crowned with success. Frere who
visited London recently for Van Zeeland and had a series
of conversations chiefly with Leith-Ross said to me
today that he had found the British extremely negative.

762.63
In general therefore the expectation in Paris is that
there will probably be no war before next spring but that
during that period French influence will diminish and
German influence will increase throughout Central and
Eastern Europe and that Hitler may move on Austria.

END OF MESSAGE.

BULLITT

SMS:EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HC

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

FROM

Paris

Dated April 26, 1937

Rec'd 9:40 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington



552, April 26, 8 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

I lunched alone today with Blum who made the following statements.

One. He said that he had decided this morning that the exposition should be opened officially on Monday May 24 and should be opened to the public on Tuesday May 25.

He believed there would be no further trouble with the exposition workmen. I asked him if this meant that he had submitted to the demand of the exposition workmen that he should inaugurate a new program of public works to take care of the exposition workers after its completion. He said that he positively would not undertake any new ~~source~~ ^{Program} of public works whatsoever but he thought that work could be found for almost all the exposition workmen on projects in the neighborhood of Paris.

Two. I asked Blum if there were any truth in the current reports (which I have had from Communist sources)

FILED

Confidential File

GC

851.00/1666

851.00
7776

851.607 Paris Intl

~~WE~~
~~EE~~
A-M

HC

Page 2,
#532 from Paris

951-003
sources) that a union of the French Communist and Socialist parties might be expected this summer. He said that such reports might and might not be justified; that two months ago the French Communists at the direction of Moscow had expressed a very great desire for the union of the two parties. He had been given to understand that Stalin was entirely ready to have the French Communist party withdraw from the Third International. He added that the Socialist Party of France positively would not coalesce with the Communists unless the Communists should break off all relationship with the Third International.

BULLITT

CSB EPD

S

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

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

FROM

Paris

Dated April 26, 8 p.m.

Rec'd 9 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

533. April 26, 8 p.m.

Continuing my 532, (Section Two).

I asked him if this meant that the unified Communist Socialist Party would enter the Second International. He said that such a unified party might either enter the Second International or might remain independent without affiliations for a time. He went on to say that he had been given to understand that Stalin had been more or less prepared to dissolve the Comintern if the French Communist Party should secede from the Comintern as that would leave only the Czech Communist Party as a strong Communist Party on the continent of Europe.

He went on to say that recently the Communists had been much less active in pushing the project for the union of the French Communist and Socialist Parties. In any event he had taken the position, and the French Communist leaders had agreed that any such union would be impossible so long as the present Front Populaire Government might exist. Union of the Communists and Socialists would produce

on

851.00/1666

Confidential File

JR #533, April 26, 8 p.m., from Paris.

an immediate withdrawal of the Radical Socialists from the Front Populaire and would throw the Radical Socialists into the arms of the Center and the Right. He concluded by saying that no French Socialist or Communist leader today could oppose a project for union of the two parties since the laboring masses of the nation ardently desired such a union.

I asked Blum if this meant that as soon as his Government should be overthrown we might expect a union of the two parties. He indicated that such a result was not ~~not~~ ^{improbable}.

BULLITT

KLP:WNC

(*) Apparent omission.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

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

FROM Paris

Dated April 26, 1937

Rec'd 10:55 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

534. April 26, 8 p.m.

Continuing my 533, (Section Three).

Three. Blum said that his Government was, of course, in financial difficulties and would continue to be in financial difficulties; but he was confident that in one way or another the Treasury could meet its difficulties until the month of July. Then if the exposition should be a great success the financial situation might improve.

He went on to say that he knew from Neville Chamberlain that the British were much preoccupied about the possibility of a further French devaluation; that the British realized that such a devaluation might place the pound in jeopardy as it would produce a considerable exodus of capital from England and England was already overburdened financially because of the rearmament program.

Four. I asked Blum if he had any hope that any concrete result might be produced by Van Zeeland's efforts. He said that

851.00/1666

Confidential File

600.0031 World Program

JR #534, April 26, 8 p.m., from Paris.

that I must not take Van Zeeland's commission too seriously; that the idea had been Eden's and that Eden had asked the French Government to acquiesce and that the French Government had acquiesced. He was certain that the moment Van Zeeland should begin to try to get agreements on economic subjects he would have to obtain agreements on financial and political subjects, as well. In other words Van Zeeland would have to obtain world agreements on all subjects of interest to all nations which was no small task.

BULLITT

VWC:KLP

JR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (P)

Paris

Dated April 26, 1937

FROM

Rec'd 9:10 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

535. April 26, 8 p.m.

Continuing my 534, Section Four.

755.80
862.20
7607.62
761.62

Five. We then had a long discussion on the new constellation in European affairs produced by Belgium's new position of "neutrality". Blum expressed himself in almost the same terms as those I used in my telegrams numbers 516 to 522 April 22, 9 p.m. He said that the French general staff did not yet regard German fortifications to the east of the Rhine as absolutely unattackable. He finally admitted, however, that the most the French could hope to do in aid of either Czechoslovakia or Poland would be to retain approximately one-half the German army on the German frontier and send her airplanes to attack Germany. He also said that the effectiveness of these airplanes in attacking the Ruhr would be greatly reduced by the impossibility of using Belgian territory as a base. He went on to say that he believed the Soviet Union would support Czechoslovakia in case of German attack. I expressed skepticism but he insisted he believed the Russians would not allow Germany to swallow up Czechoslovakia.

851.00/1666
Serial File

BULLITT

RR:WVC

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

KLP

Paris

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

FROM Dated April 26, 1937.
Rec'd. 9:30 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

536, April 26, 8 p.m.

Continuing my 535. (Section Five).

Blum then expressed the opinion that the closing of the door to French military invasion of Germany would of necessity produce a rapprochement between Poland and Czechoslovakia for their mutual protection. I disagreed with him and said that I felt it would produce on the contrary an increasing desire on the part of the Poles to see Germany expand to the southward and not to the eastward.

(Later this afternoon I had a talk at the Polish Embassy with Count Sczembek, Polish Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs and the Polish Ambassador who confirmed entirely the opinion I had expressed to Blum. They both expressed the opinion that Hitler intended to dismember Czechoslovakia and that at the critical moment neither Russia nor France would assist Czechoslovakia.

351.00/1666

GC

Official File

#536 from Paris - April 26, 8 p.m. (Section five)

4604.014
I asked Sezembeck how Poland would regard the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by Germany. Sezembeck replied "we should be delighted". Lukasiewicz, the Polish Ambassador, was more discreet and said "we should not grow excited" and went on to say that he believed Hitler would be content with that section of Bohemia inhabited by Germans and the other regions where there are a considerable number of Germans and that he would give a portion of Slovakia to Hungary. He did not say that Poland would expect to get Teschen from the dismemberment.

I asked Sezembeck and Lukasiewicz how they envisaged the future and they expressed the opinion that Austria was such a ripe fruit that Hitler could take it at any time, that he would dismember Czechoslovakia and that he would go on to control Hungary and Rumania not by conquest but by other means. They both said that they felt that this would leave Poland in an entirely satisfactory position and I gathered that they felt Hitler would be content to have Poland as ^{free state} ~~simply~~ guarding Germany's flank from attack by Russia during his advance through Central Europe.)

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

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

Paris

FROM Dated April 26, 1937

Rec'd 10:21 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

537. April 26, 8 p.m.

Continuing my 536 (SECTION SIX).

I then asked Blum if he did not expect both the Poles and the Czechs to make increased efforts to come to terms with Germany. He said that he did but that behind Germany's back they would try to strengthen their relations with Russia and France because they would have no confidence in Germany's promises. He said that the present weakening of French position in Central and Eastern Europe had begun at the moment when the Germans had been allowed to march into the Rhineland with impunity. From that moment it had been inevitable that France should be closed out of Central and Eastern Europe.

I asked Blum if France would take any action whatsoever to prevent Germany's absorption of Austria. He said that France would not and he did not believe that England would. His latest reports were that Schuschnigg had come back from Venice in an extremely depressed state of mind and with his

back

851.00/1666

GC

File

863.01
763.65

JR #537, April 26, 8 p.m., from Paris.

back to the wall. The handwriting on the wall was that Austria would fall into the hands of Germany.

7604.62
He did not expect any immediate German attack on Czechoslovakia. As I was aware the British had been urging the Czechs to come to terms with Germany and that the Czechs had been making very great efforts to do so. He referred to recent Czech-German conversations saying that each time the Czechs made a proposal the Germans would make some further demands.

BULLITT

WTC:HPD

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

TO

1-1336

FROM

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

Paris

Dated April 26, 1937.

Rec'd 9:46 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

538, April 26, 8 p.m.

Continuing my 537, (Section Seven).

In discussing the Polish situation he said that the economic position of Poland was most difficult and that the Poles were continuing to request the French to permit them to ship the Polish Jews to some French colony preferably Madagascar. The French Government had rejected the proposal.

Blum said that he had not yet seen Daladier since his return from London but said that he was certain Daladier had no serious military conversations with Great Britain.

In conclusion Blum said that while he perceived no immediate catastrophe on the international horizon he was not optimistic about the possibility of Europe avoiding war. The future was in Hitler's hands which was not comforting. (END OF MESSAGE)

BULLITT

KIP ENC

851.00/1666

GC

Admiral File

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RD

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

FROM

PARIS

Dated April 29, 1937

Rec'd 5:15 p. m.

Secretary of State

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RECEIVED

APR 30 1937

547, April 29, 6 p. m. SECTION ONE.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY. OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

I dined last night in Brussels with Ambassador Morris and Van Zeeland.

In view of Van Zeeland's forthcoming visit to the United States I shall inform you fully by despatch with regard to his remarks -- which covered the entire world situation -- and confine myself in this telegram to certain points of immediate interest.

One. Van Zeeland said that he and Eden had worked out a new project for a western pact. He asked that this be kept most secret. He said that he and Eden had agreed that any revival of the Locarno Pact was impossible but they believed it might be possible if considered to establish a "pluilateral non-aggression pact" to include Germany, France, England, Belgium, and perhaps Italy. If this attempt should fail he would try to make a non-aggression pact

FILED

MAY 3 - 1937

740.00/153 SECTIONS 1-5

CONFIDENTIAL

RB

-2-#547, April 29, 6 p. m. from
Paris SECTION ONE

600 0031 World Program
pact with Germany on behalf of Belgium alone.

Two. With regard to his mission to the United States, he said that he would refuse to ^{make} / any statement whatsoever until he had felt out the situation completely both in Europe and in the United States. He did not expect to be able to begin to draw any conclusions for perhaps three months and he was not sure that at the end of that time he would have anything highly important to offer. It was obvious that any serious attempt to hear the world's commercial and economic problems must entail settlement of financial, disarmament, and political problems as well. His task therefore was to search the ground for a new world settlement.

BULLITT

1

SMS

EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RB

1-1336

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

FROM

Paris

Dated April 29, 1937

Rec'd 6:45 p. m.

Secretary of State

Washington.

548, April 29, 6 p. m.

Continuing my 547, SECTION TWO.

962.50
He described in great detail his conversations with Schacht and asserted that Schacht had said to him that Germany was reaching the end of her tether economically, that the system of economic autarchy in Germany had given good results up to the present time but could not be carried much further.

762.014
Schacht had then stated that it was absolutely essential that Germany should have colonies. Van Zeeland said that he had argued with Schacht that no colonies that Germany conceivably could get would solve the German economic problem but that Schacht had continued to argue that colonies from which Germany could obtain colonial products for German markets were essential.

550 A1
Van Zeeland said that Schacht was opposed to any general economic conference but believed that some result might be reached if one qualified representative from each of the

leading

RB

-2-#548, April 29, 6 p. m. from
Paris SECTION TWO

leading powers should meet in a small conference. Van Zeeland said that he had replied that he was glad to have the suggestion but had established as a principle that he would not comment on any suggestion until he was familiar with the opinions of all the leading governments of the western world.

BULLITT

SMS

EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RB

1-1334

FROM

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

PARIS

Dated April 29, 1937

Rec'd 7:05 p. m.

Secretary of State

Washington.

549, April 29, 6 p. m.

Continuing my 548, Section Three.

Three. With regard to the position of England, Van Zeeland said that for the first time within his knowledge the British had today an entirely definite and strong line of policy. They would continue to rearm and they would continue to maintain the tariff walls around their Empire unless they felt certain that the changing of these policies would give them peace. He said categorically several times that the British were not interested in the reduction of barriers to international trade and that they would accept such reduction only as a part of a global settlement which they felt certain would give them peace. He went on to say that he believed that during the next few years the British would very nearly control the trend of international affairs; they were increasing in strength daily and were fully disposed to use the strong paw of the lion.

RB

-2-#549, April 29, 6 p. m. from
Paris

lion in accordance with their old traditions.

I suggested to him that if there were no one in the British Cabinet who sincerely and intensely desired to restore the economic life of the world there was not much chance that his mission would achieve success.

He said that he felt the British might come in at the end and support his efforts strongly if he could find sufficient previous support from other nations

BULLITT

SMS

EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RB

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

FROM

Paris

Dated April 29, 1937

Rec'd 7:11 p. m.

Secretary of State

Washington.

550, April 29, 6 p. m.

Continuing my 549, SECTION FOUR.

Four. Van Zeeland said that he regarded the full cooperation of the United States as essential and asked me a series of questions with regard to the attitude of the United States. I replied to him in exact accordance with your remarks to me in our recent conversations in Washington, emphasizing the fact that while we would be most eager to cooperate in any efforts to reduce the barriers to international commerce and to achieve an accord for limitation of armaments we could not take any political commitments and that it was almost inconceivable that European countries should be allowed to float loans in the United States. I made these latter two statements because he had asked me if there might be a possibility that the United States would join the League of Nations provided Article Sixteen should be re-defined and because he had asked me if there were not a possibility that the

Johnson

RB

-2-#550, April 29, 6 p. m. from
Paris SECTION FOUR

Johnson Act might be repealed. Van Zeeland said that he hoped he could have utterly frank conversations with you and the President when he reached Washington. I told him I was certain that this was what you both desired.

BULLITT

SMS

EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RB

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

FROM

PARIS

Dated April 29, 1937

Rec'd 7:35 p. m.

Secretary of State

Washington.

551, April 29, 6 p. m.

Continuing my 550, SECTION FIVE.

5601-01
Five. Van Zeeland admitted that he thought that Belgium's new status in the international picture would inconvenience greatly the ability of France to come to the aid of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, or any other state of Central Europe. He said, however, that he considered it most important that England had changed her attitude toward the status quo in Central Europe. For example Eden recently had assured Benes that Great Britain was not disinterested in the fate of Czechoslovakia. (For your confidential information, Delbos has made the same statement to me.) Van Zeeland said that Eden had assured him in the most categorical manner that Great Britain was now prepared to push to the full her support of the League of Nations and had intimated that under the aegis of the League of Nations Great Britain might intervene in case Czechoslovakia should

RB

-2-#551, April 29, 6 p. m. from
Paris SECTION FIVE

should be attacked by Germany. He felt that this new attitude on the part of the British Government would go far to counterbalance the argument of France's offensive position against Germany caused by the present policy of Belgium.

He went on to say that there was at the present time the most absolute accord which could be imagined between the British, French and Belgian Governments and added in reply to a question that the leader of this trio who called the tune to which the others danced was unquestionably the British Government.

755.6
Six. Van Zeeland said that he regarded it as a possibility that Germany shortly would issue a statement guaranteeing Belgium but this might well be preceded by the negotiation of the non-aggression pact referred to in the paragraph numbered one of this message.

755.515
Seven. Van Zeeland was extremely apprehensive with regard to the financial situation in France, saying that he could not see how the French could avoid a financial crash in June or July and that another devaluation of the franc seemed inevitable.

END OF MESSAGE.

BULLITT

SMS

EMP

JS

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

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

PARIS

Dated April 30, 1937

FROM

Rec'd 6:43 p.m.

Secretary of State

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RECEIVED

Washington, D.C.

MAY 1 - 1937

556, April 30, 5 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MR. MOORE

I lunched today with Delbos and Sir Eric Phipps, the new British Ambassador. Delbos admitted that he felt the ability of France to come to the assistance of Czechoslovakia or any other state of Central or Eastern Europe had been diminished greatly by the new policy of Belgium. He said that, in view of this diminution of France's ability to come to the assistance of Czechoslovakia, he felt that it would be necessary in order to save Czechoslovakia from Germany to have the British Government make it clear that in case of a German attack on Czechoslovakia Great Britain would go to war for Czechoslovakia.

Reference was then made to the recent statement of the British Foreign Office to Benes that Great Britain was not interested in the fate of Czechoslovakia. Delbos said that he considered this insufficient and urged Phipps to obtain from his Government a definite promise to support Czechoslovakia. Phipps replied that the British Government could not make any such promise in advance

and could

SEC. 1 AND 2

GMB

-2-
From Paris, #556

and could only act as it saw fit if a German invasion
of Czechoslovakia should occur.

BULLITT

SMS EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

PARIS

FROM Dated April 30, 1937

Rec'd 4:40 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

557, April 30, 5 p.m.

Concluding my 556, Section Two.

462,014
462,002 letter
Phipps who has just been transferred to Paris from Berlin exhibited a hostility to Germany and the German Government surprising to me. I questioned him with regard to Germany's colonial demands. He said that the German Government had informed him that it would be satisfied with nothing less than the return of all the colonies taken from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. He went on to say that he considered Hitler a fanatic who would be satisfied with nothing less than domination of Europe.

462,004
There was much conversation between Delbos and Phipps on the theme that peace might be preserved in Europe if England and France should show their teeth to Germany and have behind them the benevolent neutrality of the United States. Both Delbos and Phipps expressed themselves as extremely satisfied by our neutrality legislation. They agreed that it was now desirable to attempt to push conversations with regard to settlements in the matter of armaments not because they thought that any result would be

achieved

From Paris #557 Section Two.

achieved but because they felt it would be desirable to keep Germany talking about something while Britain re-armed.

I gathered that both the French and British Governments had encouraged Hitler to prepare proposals for Geneva with this end in view.

Both Delbos and Phipps were of opinion that Hitler could now take Austria at any time he might choose without creating serious international complications.

End of message.

BULLITT

963.01
SMS EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EDA

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

FROM

PARIS

Dated April 30, 1937

Received 10:12 a.m.
May 1st

Secretary of State

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RECEIVED

Washington

MAY 3 - 1937

563, April 30, midnight.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE SECRETARY

In the course of a long conversation this afternoon

— Sir Eric Phipps stated to me that he did not see the faintest possibility of coming to any agreement with Hitler. He was certain from his experience in Berlin that the only thing which could impress the Germans today was military force. He believed that any negotiations which might be begun today with Germany by England or France would end in failure unless France and England should be prepared to accord Germany absolute domination of the international situation.

He said that the Germans frequently had approached him with the statement that they desired the most friendly and closest relations with Great Britain but that they had followed this remark invariably with the statement that there were really only two nations in Europe which amounted to anything, England and Germany, and that they should divide between them the domination of the continent. He said that

this

740.00/158

Confidential File

CORRECTED PAGE

EDA - 2 - #563, April 30, midnight from Paris
this policy would mean the end of international morality.
I suggested that it might also mean the end of the British
Empire since when Germany had established a sufficient
dominance on the continent she would be in a position
to turn her attention to Great Britain.

54120
He replied that in any event it was his opinion and
that of his Government that the only chance of preserving
peace was for Great Britain to rearm as fast as possible
and during the period of rearmament try to keep Germany
quiet.

He added that he thought that if France and England
should remain on the most intimate terms of friendship
and should have behind them a benevolently neutral
United States, Germany would

BULLITT

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EDL

¹⁻¹¹¹⁶
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone (d)

FROM PARIS

Dated May 1, 1937

Received 1:06 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

565, May 1, noon.

Concluding my 563. (SECTION TWO).

hesitate to risk a major war. He repeated emphatically to me the statement that he had made to Delbos reported in my 556, April 30, 5 p.m., with regard to Czechoslovakia. He said that it would be absolutely impossible for Great Britain to promise to come to the support of Czechoslovakia if Czechoslovakia should be attacked by Germany. He again expressed the opinion that Germany could take Austria at any time she liked and added that Neurath had said to him after his return from his recent trip to Vienna that Austria was such a ripe fruit that Germany was no longer worried about the date at which it would fall into Nazi hands.

Sir Eric then said that he was somewhat disappointed to find that there were people in Paris who still believed that it might be possible for France to come to terms with Germany. He considered this totally impossible.

He also expressed the opinion that little or nothing could

Confidential File

EDA - 2 - #565, May 1, noon from Paris Section two.
could be achieved by Van Zeeland.

I gathered the general impression from a long conversation that Sir Eric has been instructed during his mission in Paris to prevent the French from having any tete-a-tete conversations with Germany, that the policy of Great Britain is still to keep the continent of Europe divided, that the determination of Great Britain to rearm as quickly and completely as possible is absolute and that little or nothing is to be expected from Great Britain in the way of support of the policy of reduction of barriers to international commerce and restoration of the economic life of the world.

BULLITT

CSB