The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

No. 1649

St. Jean de Luz, January 7, 1939.

[Received January 18.]

Sir: I have the honor to submit some observations on the present attitude of the Rebel Government of Burgos toward the United States.

In the first days of the war it will be recalled that every effort was made to create the impression in the United States that the military rising was not against the Republic or Democratic institutions, and that General Franco in his interview given the United Press for distribution in the two Americas specifically said as much. I had no faith in his statement at the time.

Until a few months ago my contacts here with Franco supporters, and on a few occasions, known to the Department, with Franco officials, I got the impression that the insurgents were very eager to maintain friendly relations with us. This was shown in (1) the case of the death sentence of Dahl the aviator; (2) in the case of the unprecedentedly quick release of the Nantucket Chief and the pardon of its captain, and (3) in the request that I act as intermediary in the exchange of prisoners, and the granting to us the first exchange of military prisoners during the war. I was given to understand in so many words until recent months that the rebels realize that at the end of the war they will be in need of loans for rehabilitation purposes, and that they look hopefully to us.

But during the last three months there has been a radical change in the attitude of the rebels toward the United States. It is significant that this change came with the reactions in the United States toward the rape of the Czechs. The rebel press which is wholly a controlled press enthusiastically followed the Hitler Government and the German

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4 See telegram No. 487, May 19, 1938, from the Ambassador in Spain, ibid., p. 285.
5 See telegram No. 510, August 8, 1938, from the Ambassador in Spain, ibid., p. 316.
press on this and began making hostile comments on the United States. To me this seemed more in harmony with logic of the situation than the protestations of friendship, since more and more Franco has become a dependant of Germany and Italy, and more and more an enthusiastic supporter of the Rome–Berlin Axis. The Fascist element has notoriously become the dominant element in rebel Spain, supported and encouraged by the German and Italian Ambassadors in Burgos. It must be kept in mind that Franco has been recognized by Germany, Italy and Japan; that the fascist technique, the use of the red herring of "communism", has been used by Franco in Spain as it was used in Austria, Czechoslovakia, and China, and that the Spanish fight is a vital part of the plan for the Fascist World Revolution.

The extravagent attacks on our program at Lima, with the personal abuse of the President, of Mr. Hull, and of Americans in general, with special reference to "American womanhood", went beyond the bounds of common decency. These were published conspicuously with glaring headlines of a hostile character. They urged the South American Republics to oppose Mr. Hull's program and went into ecstasies over the attitude of Argentina which has, in reality if not in theory, been militantly pro-fascist in Spain, whatever it may be in the Argentine.

This seemed to me inevitable, and I have frequently reported to the Department my opinion that the result of the war in Spain would have important repercussions in South and Central America affecting our policy on the continent to our South. However, I was astonished at the vehemence and indecency of the tone of these attacks.

Following close upon the jubilant tone of the rebel press over what it describes as the failure of Mr. Hull's plans, come the attacks, in an equally offensive tone, on the President's Address to Congress.

This all vindicates my conviction, long held and expressed, that the foreign policy of Franco is dictated by Germany and Italy, and in the event of a Franco victory this domination certainly will continue and we shall find ourselves with another problem nation in Europe.

In striking, and natural contrast with this, is the attitude of the press in Government territory which has consistently praised our own policy, and has shared our views regarding Munich, the Czechs, the persecution of the Jews, and which warmly supported Hull's policy at Lima, and President Roosevelt's speech to Congress.

To sum up, it seems utterly impossible by any rule of reason to escape the fact that the Franco regime is hostile to the United States, its leaders and its principles and policies.

Respectfully yours,

CLAUDE G. BOWERS

*For correspondence concerning the Eighth International Conference of American States held at Lima, December 9–27, 1938, see Foreign Relations, 1938, vol. v, pp. 1 ff.

*Congressional Record, vol. 84, pt. 1, p. 74.
The Spanish Ambassador (De los Rios) to the Secretary of State

[Translation]

No. 142/16

Washington, January 9, 1939.

Mr. Secretary: I have the honor of asking Your Excellency to communicate the following message to the President of the United States, addressed to him by the Prime Minister of the Spanish Republic:

"Mr. President: Permit me to express my wholehearted accord with the contents of your splendid speech. The Spanish people and their government fully endorse it. It is for the principles expressed therein, and for no others, that we have fought for two years and a half. The foes of democracy and of liberty have tried to deceive the world regarding the significance of our struggle. To this end they have resorted to crafty provocation within Spain and to the spread of false propaganda among men of good will. Their machinations and calumnies have been effective; but our tenacity and resistance are furnishing the time needed to thwart their purpose.

Feeling the necessity of speeding up events, our enemies are bending every effort to bring about our defeat immediately. At the same time that they carry out terrific offenses at the front, they strive to terrorize our rearguard. Our cities, which have little or no defense, are devastated every day; our civilian population is murdered by German and Italian airplane squadrons manned by pilots from those two nations. Our fronts are attacked by Italian divisions, by corps of German technicians, and by troops of African mercenaries, with an abundance of war material the like of which had never been seen in any war.

Our people make superhuman efforts; but if our men have to go on without weapons, our cities and forts without cannon and our people without food, there can be but one outcome. However strong their spirit, a hungry people cannot halt the advance of totalitarianism. Our enemy counts on every factor; on weariness and exhaustion. Blockaded by its enemies, with whom neutral and friendly countries cooperate, Spain cannot struggle indefinitely against the economic and military power of Germany and Italy.

Let the withdrawal of German and Italian aggressors be enforced; let us receive economic and material means for our defense and we will be able to determine the outcome of the war ourselves.

We have given good proof of our convictions by withdrawing our foreign volunteers.

Mr. President, the outcome of the struggle in Spain will decide what Europe and South America will be; therefore, it will determine the course of the world that is to be. History will be severe toward those statesmen who have shut their eyes to evidence and toward those whose indecision in this critical hour leads them to risk the principles of tolerance, harmony, liberty and high morale justly attributed to democracy in Your Excellency's speech. Every minute lost in adopting adequate measures is a river of blood and sorrow; but it is also one more trench lost by the cause of liberty and justice. I am cer-
tain of our victory; but should Fate and the impassivity of others prevent it, we shall resist until we are annihilated. Should we perish, we would have at least fulfilled our duty, as a national collectivity, toward our historic mission and, as individuals, toward the dictates of our conscience.

Mr. President, your words, imbued with religious and human emotion, give us spirit and courage.

In Spain’s name, and in my own name, I thank you. (signed) Juan Negrín.”

Accept [etc.]

FERNANDO DE LOS RIOS

852.00/8777: Telegram
The Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

BARCELONA, January 12, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received January 13—10:15 a. m.]

1163.

1. Military. The rebel lines now run roughly as follows: From Tremp to a point slightly to the east of Artesa de Segre, thence south through Bellpuig to a point near Montblanch (which may have fallen today) and finally west to the Ebro parallel and quite near to the Reus-Falset-Gandesa Highway. I understand that the Government forces in the lower Ebro sector are now falling back on Tarragona and that this city probably will be lost.

The Minister of State* informed me this morning that the morale of the army is excellent but that it is for the moment virtually overwhelmed by the rebel superiority (almost ten to one) in artillery, planes, and machine guns—denoting unsuspectedly large shipments to Franco from Germany and Italy during the last 2 months. He stated that the Government expects to receive further supplies from Russia and elsewhere (provided their passage through France is permitted) and he stressed the hope that has been aroused by the possibility of a change in our neutrality policy which will enable it to acquire military equipment in the United States.

Senor del Vayo stated that while the military situation is undeniably grave neither he nor Negrín regards it as disastrous. They expect to save Barcelona and ultimately to win the war. In answer to my inquiry as to their plans if the rebels should succeed in breaking through to Barcelona, he replied that the war would continue. In reply to the same question a few days ago Negrín stated to the British Minister that the government would remove to the southern area. The British Minister* incidentally informed me that in that event he would follow the government.

*Julio Alvarez del Vayo.
*R. C. S. Stevenson.
2. Political. I was informed this morning by Zugazagoitia (who will soon be appointed Ambassador to Mexico) that a rearrangement of the Cabinet would be a controversy between Negrín and the Minister of Government over the attempted imprisonment of the writer Eduardo Zamacois prevented by Negrín. Efforts are being made to avoid the resignation of Gomez but if they fail he probably will be replaced by Mendez, the present Sub-Secretary.

3. International. While no illusions now are entertained, mild encouragement is derived from the recent visit of a group of members of the French Parliament and evidence of a growing sympathy with the government cause in England and the United States.

Alvarez del Vayo will leave for Geneva Saturday to attend the meeting of the League Council.

THURSTON

832.00/8808

The Secretary of State to the Spanish Ambassador (De los Ríos)

WASHINGTON, January 14, 1939.

EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's Note No. 142/16 of January 9, 1939, communicating a message addressed to the President by the Prime Minister of Spain, and to request that Your Excellency be so good as to convey in reply the following message from the President to Dr. Negrín:

"I have received the message which you addressed to me through the Spanish Ambassador at Washington, and I thank you for the kind references to my remarks before the Congress of the United States on the fourth of this month.

"I have read the contents of your message with profound interest, and I may add, with full comprehension of the bitter anguish which the Spanish people are being compelled to endure.

"I am sure that I speak for the American people when I express to you the sincere hope that the blessings of peace and the spirit of good will and common understanding may soon be restored to the Spanish people."

Accept [etc.]

CORDELL HULL

124.521/170: Telegram

The Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

BARCELONA, January 15, 1939—11 p. m. [Received January 16—9:45 a. m.]

1166. The rebel advance into Cataluna appears to be progressing relentlessly on all fronts, and if rebel claims are to be credited they

Julio Zugazagoitia, Sub-Secretary for National Defense.
Paulino Gomez Salz.
have completed the initial stages of an enveloping movement which may result in the fall of Cervera—thus opening the direct road from Lerida to Barcelona. It is also claimed today but not confirmed that Tarragona has fallen.

The Government is making desperate efforts to meet the situation, and is attempting to establish new fortified lines and to assemble new reserves. Reports are in circulation regarding the receipt of fresh war material and the imminence of another Government offensive of diversion in the southern area. It is probable however that despite these measures the rebel offensive cannot be dominated in time to save Barcelona, and that (excluding the possibility of collapse) the Government must soon elect between capitulation and flight.

I respectfully recommend therefore that early consideration be given to policy with respect to the Barcelona Embassy and Consulate General regarding which my opinion is as follows.

(a) Under no circumstances short of personal danger should we run the risk of losing this important Consulate (as in the case of Bilbao) by closing it. I have been assured by Alvarez del Vayo that if the Government must succumb it will do so "with dignity," but should disorders occur or war operations envelope the city the consular personnel could go aboard naval vessel until conditions improved.

In connection with the foregoing the Department may wish to authorize the Consulate General to warn the resident Americans that they remain here at their own risk and that no assurance can be given that an American naval vessel will be available to evacuate them in the emergency. Transportation to France is still available by highway, train and air. This would not of course preclude the evacuation of Americans (especially those of the bank, telephone company and correspondents whose work has held them here) if necessary.

(b) Should the Department regard the conquest of Cataluna as establishing Franco's paramountcy and desire to enter into de facto relationship with his regime the retention of this office would be indicated; should it desire to maintain its Embassy near the Government of Spain so long as that Government exists it would be feasible for me to proceed to the new residence of the Government on a naval vessel and I am of course ready to do so. I have informed you of the statement of the British Minister as to his intentions in this respect and I shall report as soon as possible the attitude of the representatives here.

thurston
The Secretary of State to the Counselor of Embassy in Spain
(Thurston)

WASHINGTON, January 16, 1939—7 p. m.

506. Your 1116 [1166], January 15, 11 p. m. We have given careful consideration to your telegram and to the problems which may have to be faced in the near future at Barcelona.

(1) Our first concern is the personal safety of the members of our staff. As we have repeatedly stated, we do not desire that our officers expose themselves to danger if it can possibly be avoided. We must necessarily leave much to your discretion, but from this distance it seems to us that it would be hazardous for you and the consular staff to return to Barcelona under present conditions. You should also bear in mind that it is considerably safer to send one of our naval vessels to Caldetas than to Barcelona.

(2) Whenever in your judgment circumstances justify such action the Consulate General should urge American residents to leave while means of transportation to France are still available.

(3) We recognize the desirability of keeping the Consulate General open if it can be done without personal danger to the staff. If Barcelona should be occupied by General Franco consideration will be given to returning Flood 12 and the consular staff to that City on an American naval vessel.

(4) If the Spanish Government should remove to some other place in Spain we shall in all probability desire you to follow if it is safe and practicable. Before doing so, however, you should inform us of your plans. Embassy clerks Gilbert and Krieger would accompany you.

(5) With reference to your 1167, January 16, 10 a. m., 13 the Navy Department approves the despatch of a vessel upon your request, and has so informed Admiral Lackey.

Keep us informed of all developments, including action taken by your principal colleagues.

Copy has been sent to Ambassador Bowers for his information.

Hull

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12 Douglas Flood, Vice Consul at Barcelona.
13 Not printed; it suggested that Admiral Lackey be authorized to dispatch a naval vessel to Caldetas should the Counselor of Embassy so request (852.00/8789).
No. 1657

St. Jean de Luz, January 16, 1939.
[Received January 27.]

Sm: In view of the bitter fighting now in progress, with the rebel offensive in Catalonia, and the Loyalist offensive in Estremadura, I have the honor to submit some observations on the political significance of these military operations. These conclusions are based on my own judgment reenforced by the common conclusion of colleagues and some supporters of General Franco from across the border with whom I have contacts.

It has now been many weeks since Mr. Chamberlain entered into his engagement to visit Mussolini in Rome. As you know there has been grave apprehensions concerning such a meeting, especially in France, but also in England, as denoted by the sharp questioning in the Commons and by the tone of the press. To this, I add private information from within the Foreign Office, which is increasingly nervous over Mr. Chamberlain’s passion for visiting the caves of the Forty Thieves.

It has been commonly believed here, and feared in France, and among the Loyalists in Spain, that the Rome meeting might resolve itself into another Munich, and that it was the purpose of Mr. Chamberlain to grant belligerent rights to Franco in the belief that through the effective starving of the loyalist civilians, the fascist forces would achieve the victory now more than two years and four months over due according to the original calculations.

It is the common belief here that this concession at the expense of the Spanish democracy was to be made easier by achieving a crushing victory before Mr. Chamberlain reached Rome.

To this end, Franco has been accumulating more war material than has ever been assembled at one time in the entire history of Spain. This has been brought in in streams from Italy and Germany, particularly from Germany, for weeks. This is common knowledge. It will be recalled that when Mr. Hudson of the Overseas Trade Division of the British Government was asked in the Commons to explain why there were five German to one British ship entering Franco harbors, he explained quite frankly that this did not imply an advantage in normal trade since “these German ships are carrying war material to Franco.” Included in the war material are many additional planes. And, while it is denied by Rome, there is absolutely no doubt that

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"See telegram No. 17, January 16, 1 p. m., from the Ambassador in Italy, vol. I, p. 2."
additional Italian soldiers have been brought in for this offensive in Catalonia which was to bring the Spanish Government to its knees before Chamberlain reached Rome. Four divisions of Italian troops were given conspicuous places in the offensive.

The plan to inflict a crushing defeat before Chamberlain reached Rome miscarried for two reasons.

First, the stubborn resistance of the loyalist army, which, considering its disadvantage in heavy artillery and planes, which Non-Intervention forbids it to buy for defence, has been most remarkable.

Second, the launching of the loyalist offensive in the South which, before Chamberlain reached Rome had taken more than 300 square miles of territory from the rebels, had surrounded the famous lead mines, and had come within a very few miles of cutting Franco’s communications between the North and South. This compelled Franco to bring many more Moors over from Morocco, to scour his entire southern section for troops that had been diminished through transfers to the Catalonian front, and finally to send many of the planes and some of the soldiers concentrated for the Catalonian offensive.

Thus when Mr. Chamberlain reached Rome the plan had failed. He was deprived of any excuse for agreeing to belligerent rights.

Two other factors entered to prevent any pro-Franco agreement with Mussolini.

The first was the stupid blunder of Mussolini in making his demand for Tunis, Corsica and Nice. This thoroughly aroused the French and unified the factions as they have not been unified for some years. It awakened the French to the meaning to them of a Franco victory and the domination of Spain by Berlin and Rome. It led to the very sharp refusal of the French Government to permit Chamberlain to act as mediator with Italy. It called forth the warning that France would not think of granting belligerent rights. And it sent Daladier 16 forth on his African journey to make speeches which, for the first time, from a European Democracy, challenged the pretensions of the totalitarian States.

There was another factor which is believed here to have been important—the militant speech of Roosevelt and the general acclaim among the English people.

I have learned from inside the Foreign Office in London that Mr. Chamberlain’s statement in approval of the general tone of the Roosevelt speech was not a spontaneous act on his part; that he was urged by the Foreign Office to give out such a statement; and that the statement was prepared, not by Mr. Chamberlain himself, but by functionaries in the Foreign Office. Thus when the Rome conference began all plans had gone awry.

Respectfully yours,

Claude G. Bowers

16 Edouard Daladier, French Prime Minister and Minister of Defense.
The Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Barcelona, January 18, 1939—10 a.m.
[Received 3:34 p.m.]

1173. Your 506, January 16, 7 p.m. I fear that my 1166, January 15, 11 p.m., and 1167, January 16, 10 a.m., must have reached you in a garbled condition, as I did not suggest that the Embassy and Consulate General should return to Barcelona under present conditions or that a naval vessel should attempt to call there. I specified Caldetas.

My tentative plans are as follows: I have been promised advanced information should the Government decide to leave Barcelona, and if I receive that warning or otherwise anticipate such a development I shall arrange to take the Embassy staff, codes, files, and essential equipment to France pending clarification of the situation. At the same time, I shall call for (and await the arrival of) a naval vessel on which the consular staff and Americans in general may be removed if necessary. Should events take place with such rapidity that the foregoing plan would not be feasible I shall remain here as long as seems prudent and thereafter with the staff and equipment cited go aboard a naval vessel. Have you any instructions?

Thurston

The Chargé in France (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

Paris, January 19, 1939—2 p.m.
[Received 3:15 p.m.]

112. There is no doubt that responsible quarters here are deeply concerned over the danger to France which may develop from the Spanish situation. Bonnet, as much to me last night. He stated at the same time that France has assurances from Britain that if after Franco’s victory the Italians attempt to maintain control of strategic points in Spain the British will help the French to “dislodge” them.

Bonnet said that he will speak in the foreign affairs debate in the Chamber tomorrow, that the Government will maintain the policy of nonintervention and that he is confident it will be supported by the “customary” safeguards. (Others tell me that the Radical Socialist

Latter not printed.
Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Party is fairly well divided on this point and that while it is likely that most of the party will support the Government this will only be the result of strict stipulations imposed by party leaders.

Bonnet said that he wanted to inform me in strict confidence that while the Government was maintaining the façade of nonintervention it was in fact permitting war material to cross the frontier. It was he said in part due to this assistance that the Loyalists have been able to defend themselves as well as they have done. (Undoubtedly arms have been trickling over the border recently; I doubt very much, however, whether substantial shipments of war material such as airplanes and artillery have been allowed to cross into Spain since last June when Bonnet is believed to have clamped the control down tightly.)

In conversation with General Gamelin, Chief of Staff, he made no effort to conceal his concern over the situation. He said that the fate of France might be at stake very shortly and that any weakness or indecision would be fatal.

I also had a brief talk with Daladier and asked him if the growing uneasiness in the Chamber might not oblige the Government to modify its stand towards nonintervention. He said no, that it was too late now to change policy and that the time to have made a change was 2 years ago. (A left-handed criticism of Blum who is now attacking the Government for failure to take the action which he himself when head of the Government refused to take).

Wilson

852.00/8828: Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

Rome, January 20, 1939—11 a.m.
[Received January 20—9:14 a.m.]

20. I am informed by the British Ambassador in strictest confidence that he was summoned on Saturday by Ciano and informed that the Italian Government was holding 60 battalions of troops in readiness to send to Spain if France should take any steps to intervene on behalf of Negrin Government. The Ambassador immediately communicated this information to his Government which forwarded it without comment to Paris before the recent meeting of the Council of Ministers. In addition to the anti-French press campaign reported in my 19, January 17, 7 p. m., this was obviously intended by the Italians to bring further pressure on the French.

According to the best information available in Rome the decision of the French Council not to intervene has apparently eliminated any

18 Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.
19 Not printed.
immediate danger since it does not appear that the Italians will take action to support Franco unless other powers intervene on the other side.

PHILLIPS

124.521/171: Telegram

_The Secretary of State to the Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston)_

WASHINGTON, January 20, 1939—4 p. m.

512. Your 1173, January 18, 10 a. m. Our reference to return of staff to Barcelona and use of naval vessel was based upon implications of section (a) of your 1166.

Subject to unforeseen developments we shall expect you to follow Spanish Government if it removes to some other place in Spain, provided you feel at that time that such action is safe and practicable. In the meantime we do not feel that it would be advisable to remove Embassy staff to France. If critical situation develops before actual departure of Spanish Government from Barcelona we should expect you to transfer Embassy and Consulate stafis together with codes, files, and essential equipment on board an American naval vessel which Admiral Lackey is authorized to order to Caldetas whenever you so request. We feel that with respect to codes and files this procedure would be preferable in any event from the point of view of safety.

As stated in our 506, January 16, 7 p. m., consideration will be given to returning consular staff to Barcelona on naval vessel if the city is occupied by Franco forces. We are informed that entire naval squadron is at Villefranche and would be available if more than one vessel should be needed.

HULL

852.00/8838: Telegram

_The Chargé in France (Wilson) to the Secretary of State_

PARIS, January 21, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 1:20 p. m.]

126. It will be recalled that during the height of the crisis in September it was generally understood that the French General Staff had perfected plans for the immediate occupation of the Spanish zone in Morocco in the event of hostilities. Rumors of similar plans in connection with present events in Spain and the general belief that

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20 For correspondence regarding the German-Czechoslovak crisis, see *Foreign Relations, 1938*, vol. 1, pp. 483 ff.
in case of a Franco victory Mussolini will not withdraw his forces from Spain and the Balearic Islands at least until he has driven a hard bargain with France have been circulating here for the past few days. The fact that these rumors have been set in motion by the press section of the Foreign Office first by word several days ago to a few selected foreign correspondents including the London Times man and again yesterday afternoon at a press conference with the Anglo-American correspondents seems significant. In our opinion this is a maneuver on the part of Bonnet to reply in kind to Mussolini’s intimation in Informazione Diplomatica of January 15 that strong French support of Republican Spain would bring about the substantial increase of Italian forces in Spain. Last night’s announcement that General Gamelin and Vice Admiral Darlan had postponed their scheduled departure on visit of inspection to North Africa until probably the end of next week also seems of some interest in connection with the Spanish situation and the debate on foreign policy in the Chamber in which the Left parties continue to attack nonintervention. The debate was adjourned last night until next Tuesday.

WILSON

124.52/174; Telegram

The Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

[Barcelona?], January 23, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received January 23—9:05 p. m.]

1183. The rebel advance on Barcelona continues and apparently is encountering but feeble resistance. The lines are believed by Colonel Cheadle\(^2\) to run near Montserrat and Martorell—thus virtually impinging on the Government’s last defences along the Llobregat River. Whether this natural line and the fortifications and entrenchments being erected along it will serve to check the advance is problematical. Most observers are of the opinion that they will not and that the fall of Barcelona is but a matter of days if not hours.

Alvarez del Vayo is still absent and the Diplomatic Corps has received no formal advices regarding developments or the Government’s plans. Negrin has informed the French Ambassador however that the Government will when compelled to leave Barcelona first go to Gerona and he recommended that the Ambassador take quarters nearby. The Ambassador will leave by sea for France when the Government abandons Barcelona as will the British Minister although both will I understand seek to reestablish contact with the Govern-

\(^2\) Military Attaché in Spain.
ment. The Norwegian and Swedish Chargé d'Affaires (the latter’s Legation was damaged slightly last night by a bombardment of the outskirts of Caldetas) will leave for France in the morning by automobile.

I am in communication with Admiral Lackey who will arrive off Caldetas tomorrow forenoon with the USS Omaha and a destroyer. The Consulate General will evacuate about 30 American citizens. I shall remain ashore and in contact with the Government as long as possible and will report as usual.

THURSTON

852.00/8851: Telegram

The Chargé in France (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, January 24, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received 3: 45 p. m.]

138. The Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Alvarez del Vayo, whom I have known before, came to see me this morning. He said that he had been out of touch with representatives of the American Government for some days and that he would like to have my Government informed of the attitude of the Spanish Government.

He said that the situation was critical but that the Spanish Government intended to hold fast in Barcelona. The Government was confident that it could do so and that it would come through this crisis as it had done on similar occasions in the past when the outside world had given up the Loyalist cause as lost.

He said that the superiority in matériel on Franco’s side was of course almost overwhelming. Throughout November and December, in preparation for the offensive, Franco had received heavy and continued reinforcements of war material from Germany and Italy in the form of airplanes, tanks and machine guns. The Spanish Government had brought this situation to the attention of the French and British Governments. The Spanish Government was receiving absolutely nothing in the way of war material from France. A little, however, was still being received from Russia and this was the only outside assistance being accorded the Government side.

Alvarez said that the Spanish Government could have held up Franco’s advance longer if they had been willing to risk two or three army corps at Montblanch. Instead of this, however, they had decided to fall back on Barcelona to convert the city into a fortified area and to hold out there. He said that they have 200,000 trained troops in Barcelona and adequate munitions for such artillery and machine guns as they possess. Barcelona, he said, will be another Madrid.
He said that his principal worry is the refugee problem in Barcelona. There are over a million refugees there now. It is essential to evacuate 150,000 children without delay. He saw Bonnet yesterday and requested that the French Government allow these children to come into France, the Spanish Government being responsible for their maintenance. He believes that the French Government will agree that at least part of these children may enter France, finding it advisable for domestic political reasons to try to cover itself in this fashion for its failure to give any assistance to the Spanish Government.

Alvarez spoke with gratitude of the assistance of the American Government and the American Red Cross in providing flour for the starving refugees in Spain.\textsuperscript{22} He said that on broad humanitarian grounds he deeply hoped that our Government would give any encouragement it appropriately could to efforts to get these 150,000 children admitted into France or other countries.

The Minister said that even if Negrin and he should prove to be wrong regarding their ability to hold out in Barcelona,—and he emphasized again that he was absolutely convinced that they would in fact hold out—then the Government would carry on the fight in central Spain for months and years if necessary. He said that the Estremadura and Levante armies are in good condition and capable of resisting indefinitely.

He said that the members of the Government were remaining in Barcelona. He and his wife return there tonight. The personnel of the Ministries however was being distributed in various places between Gerona and Figueras since it was impossible for them to carry on their work in Barcelona because of the constant air bombardments.

At the close of our conversation he reiterated his desire that the Government of the United States should be informed that it was the firm intention of the Spanish Government to hold out in Barcelona and that they were convinced that they would be successful in doing so.

\textit{Wilson}

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862.00/8847 : Telegram

\textit{The Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston) to the Secretary of State}

\textit{BARCELONA, January 24, 1939—5 p. m.}

\textit{[Received January 24—3:20 p. m.]} \textit{1186. My 1185, January 24, 4 p. m.}\textsuperscript{23} The British Minister has just read to me by telephone the following message from Negrin to the
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\textsuperscript{22} See Foreign Relations, 1938, vol. i, pp. 364 ff.; also post, pp. 786 ff.

\textsuperscript{23} Not printed.

278152—36——47
Sub-Secretary of State and delivered to the latter for distribution to the Diplomatic Corps:

"The Government has been transferred to the Province of Gerona and has removed all its services there. Representatives of each Ministry are remaining in Barcelona, the Ministry of State is charged with the organization of administrative functions. I ask the Diplomatic Corps to go to the Province of Gerona and I wish that the Ministry of State should give this notification to the Diplomatic Corps assuring them that despite all difficulties the Government will maintain a tenacious resistance and that the present distress will be followed by an indefinite prolongation of the war. Please instruct Senor del Vayo to remain at Figueras."

The French Ambassador and British Minister are submitting the foregoing to their Governments and for the time being will remain at Caldetas, where French and British naval vessels are stationed. I shall see them again tomorrow and inform you of their instructions on the situation.

THURSTON

124.521/175: Telegram

_The Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston) to the Secretary of State_

BARCELONA, January 25, 1939—9 a. m.
[Received 11:41 a. m.]

1192. Matthews, of the New York Times, who left Barcelona early this morning, says the Llobregat line has collapsed and that the rebels are now in close proximity to the city. The covering defensives cannot possibly hold out through the day but this is not certain. I have talked by telephone with the Consulate General which says no disorder there although front cannon fire heard through night. I have sent Americans to the beach and they are in process of embarkation on the Badger. I shall next place Embassy and Consulate General files aboard the Omaha. As final hour seems near at hand I may go aboard the Omaha during the day with Colonel Cheadle, Palery, Gironda, Krieger, and Malone, and Caldwell and Denys of the telephone company. I shall thereafter delay departure pending an attempt to learn final plans of British and French representatives. When no further useful purpose can be served by remaining here I shall go to Marseille and disembark. If Government succeeds in setting itself up in the north I can, when its whereabouts is ascertained, go to it over the frontier.

But by [sic] de Mar and coast road now under active bombardment.

THURSTON

*In telegram of January 25, 8 p. m., the Counselor of Embassy reported that he had embarked on the Omaha and would arrive at Marseille the next morning (124.531/176).*
Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] January 26, 1939.

Mr. Thurston telephoned me this noon from Marseille. He said that although his instructions were to follow the Government, he found that there was no accommodation in or near Figueras, and accordingly proposed to go to Perpignan, on the French side of the border, crossing over as soon as he could to make an appointment to call on Del Vayo and keep contact in that way. I replied that this seemed entirely logical, and that I could think of no better way in which we could convey the impression that there had been no loss of touch between the Government and our representation following the former's departure from Barcelona.

I inquired what the British and French representatives were doing. Mr. Thurston replied that the British Minister was reaching Marseille tomorrow, but that the French Ambassador had already gone to a place the name of which, owing to our poor connection, I did not seize.

He told me that he had left the American Flag flying over the Consulate in Barcelona, and had instructed Flood, when the Franco authorities took over, to announce himself and to request protection of the offices. I said this seemed all right.

I also told Thurston that everybody here felt he had done an exceedingly good piece of work; that he had kept his head and managed the evacuation, both as to timing and otherwise, with real skill.

He said that he had one other thing to tell me, namely, that, despite press reports of a sensational nature, he did not believe that the Franco authorities had specifically endeavored to bomb the Americans while attempting to board the U.S.S. Omaha. In any event, he had given out no statement whatsoever.

Pierrepont Moffat

The Spanish Ambassador (De los Rios) to the Secretary of State

[Translation]

No. 142/18   Washington, January 26, 1939.

Mr. Secretary: In the gravest hour of the struggle for the independence of Spain, invaded by Italy and Germany, I have the honor to state to Your Excellency, in the name of my Government, that the

*He arrived at Perpignan the evening of January 27.
war, whatever may be the vicissitudes of the struggle, will continue without faltering until the foreigners are expelled from Spain. It is therefore not too late to modify the legal situation whereby Spain is deprived of a right of sovereignty, that of purchasing arms; rather, on the contrary, it is urgent, and if it were done its effects, both military and political, would be immediate. As the enemies, with their powerful means of propaganda, attempt to appear as if they had already achieved definitive victory, and do so for the purpose of paralyzing noble impulses of democratic countries which might lead the latter to revoke the historic injustice which has been committed on the Spanish Republic, the Spanish Government states that it is exclusively the lack of war matériel, which according to indisputable principles of international law, it ought to be able to acquire in countries with which it maintains normal relations, that renders difficult the struggle with the rebels and with the invading foreign armies provided with the most modern matériel in unlimited quantities.

My Government, therefore, has the moral duty of believing, in view of the most noble words spoken before the Congress on the fourth day of this month by the Illustrious President of the United States and the unequivocal manifestations of the public opinion of this country, that the Government of which Your Excellency forms a part will act with the greatest promptness possible and will raise the embargo on arms which weighs on the Government of the Spanish Republic, to the end that the coalition of aggressive forces which is acting against Spain with unheard-of violence may not de facto be strengthened and indirectly assisted by the country which has declared solemnly, by the Supreme Magistrate of the United States, that it adopts as the norm of its international course of action the just differentiation between aggressors and those against whom aggression is directed.

I avail myself [etc.]

FERNANDO DE LOS RIOS

852.00/8865: Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, January 26, 1939—4 p.m.
[Received January 26—1 p.m.]

25. My 20, January 20, 11 a.m. On January 24 under instructions Perth26 protested to Ciano against any precipitate action contemplated by the 60 battalions of troops in question explaining at the same time the possibility that Italian information with regard to the French intervention in Spain might be inaccurate. He asked whether

26 British Ambassador in Italy.
in the event that the Italians received reports of French intervention they would first consult with the British and afford the latter opportunity to do whatever might seem desirable in the circumstances. The Italian Government has given these assurances.

Yesterday and again under instructions Perth called at the Foreign Office to express the hope of the British Government that upon the occupation of Catalonia Franco would exercise leniency and avoid retaliatory measures. Ciano agreed thoroughly with the British hope and gave assurances that he would do everything he could with this end in view. Perth informed me that his Government had been requested by the Barcelona Government to use its influence in this respect upon Franco and that the Government while doing so had felt the desirability of inducing the Italian Government to take similar action.

It is impossible at this moment to foresee the situation which will develop after the occupation of Catalonia and the end of the war in its international aspect. It is probable that Mussolini himself has not determined his own program which will depend considerably upon the general European atmosphere and upon the attitude of Germany. That he will make demands upon France is certain but in precisely what form and with what definite objectives is still guesswork.

PHILLIPS

124.521/178: Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

St. Jean de Luz, January 30, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 6:55 p.m.]

571. Your telegram No. B-476, January 26, 6 p. m. last sentence.27

1. Del Vayo called me from Perpignan 4 days ago to say war would continue against the foreign aggression. My fixed conviction is that so long as the constitutional Government in possession of the national capital and seven provinces and with an army of 700,000 men continues to function and to fight we should maintain our Americanist position which is based on our traditional policy and refuse to be blackmailed into any form of recognition of the Fascist government.

27Not printed; the last sentence stated that the Secretary of State would welcome any recommendations the Ambassador might have as to the most effective way to maintain representation in the future in the light of recent developments (124.521/177).
Thurston’s reference in his telegram of January 28, 10 a. m. to the advice of the Chargé d’Affaires of a certain nation to his Government was foreshadowed 18 months ago in my reports. We cannot afford to rush to the recognition of a crime never so flagrant as now with the machine gunning of women and children refugees by Italian and German aviators.

I therefore respectfully urge that we do not deviate one hair’s breadth from our present position and that pending further developments we do all possible to continue contact with the legal Government.

I shall go to Perpignan this week to see Thurston and others.

2. New Czechoslovak Chargé d’Affaires accredited to Franco under pressure from Hitler last Friday but for 5 months commercial agent in Burgos looks for serious factional disturbances should Franco win. Understands in Burgos that Chamberlain-Mussolini conference decided on Juan for King in hope of reconciling nobility and church to extreme Fascist system. Chamberlain’s plea for Alfonso rejected by Mussolini.

He says that the Czechoslovak factories are now working day and night making war material for Hitler.

BOWERS

862.00/8893: Telegram

The Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

PERPIGNAN, January 30, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received January 31—2:15 p. m.]

1199. At the request of Del Vayo conveyed through the Spanish Consul here I visited Figueras this afternoon accompanied by Colonel Cheadle. An escort met us at the border for the purpose of opening passage through the refugees and motor traffic.

At Figueras Senor del Vayo informed me that he desired to request the United States Government to lend its support in behalf of two measures, namely:

(1) to bring about greatest speed on the part of the French in admitting refugees. He said that the flow of refugees to the frontier has been checked and that if these now awaiting clearance could be removed this problem would be solved;

(2) to obtain international action perhaps through the League of Nations to safeguard the art treasures of the Prado which are now stored in the great fort at Figueras.

I stated to the Minister for Foreign Affairs that I would at once report the foregoing to you and to the French Embassy here (a simi-

* Not printed.
lar invitation to visit Figueras was extended to the French Ambassador and the British Minister but neither is here at the moment) and that I was glad to know that the populations of towns were no longer being evacuated from them. The Atajunquera is greatly reduced and the road is now fairly clear within a few hundred yards of the line.

As to the Prado treasures the problem is one of preventing them from being destroyed by bombs and as the Government is installed within the same fort it is likely that methodical bombing will begin at any moment. The solution would seem to be for the Government to remove either itself or the Prado treasures from the fort and at once.

Negrín joined the conference and he and Del Vayo seem even yet to be unaware of the magnitude of the disaster that has overtaken them. Both spoke of saving the situation and affirmed that it is not hopeless. I felt it to be my personal duty to remark that outside opinion holds that in so far [as] Catalonia is concerned they are virtually lost. Del Vayo stated that if the “new lines” do not hold the Government will remove to the southern area. It does not seem likely that a transfer to that area on any large scale is now possible.

THURSTON

862.00/8911: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, February 3, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received February 3—5 p. m.]

204, Rochat who visited me in my bedroom today, since I am still down with grippé, said that Leon Berard’s mission to Franco’s headquarters would have two objects. The first to make definite arrangements about the return to Spain of the 60,000 refugees who are already on French territory, the additional refugees who are arriving daily and the 2 or 300,000 armed men who are expected to cross the frontier within the next week.

The second object of Berard’s trip would be to arrange the form of French representation at Franco’s headquarters. The French Government could not send an Ambassador to Franco because it positively would not withdraw its Ambassador accredited to the Negrín Government and could not have two Spanish Ambassadors in Paris. On the other hand it had become a prime necessity to have some sort of representation at Franco’s headquarters such as the British had had for the past year and the Belgians had recently established.

29 Assistant Director of Political and Commercial Affairs in the French Foreign Office.
30 French Senator.
Berard had been ordered to propose that the French representative should be the head of a commercial mission like the British and Belgian representatives. It is feared that Franco under Italian pressure would refuse this proposal and would insist on having a full-fledged Ambassador. The French Government hoped that some compromise might be worked out as Franco soon would be in control of the whole Spanish frontier of France and it was absolutely essential to have some sort of diplomatic relations with him.

Rochat said that the opinions of French observers differed as to the length of time the Valencia–Madrid section of Spain might continue to resist. Some competent observers believed that the Valencia–Madrid section could and would hold out for 2 or 3 months. Others believed that morale would collapse as soon as Franco should have the whole of Catalonia in his hands.

Rochat said that every one in the Quai d’Orsay felt that the reports of the President’s attitude toward the present situation in Europe would deter the Italians and the Germans from making war in the immediate future.

Bullitt

852.00/8916 : Telegram

The Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

Perpignan, February 4, 1939—noon. [Received February 4—11:23 a.m.]

1205. The Belgian Chargé d’Affaires who is unusually well informed has just advised me that the British Minister was requested by Negrin night before last to endeavor to arrange terms of capitulation on behalf of the Spanish Government with General Franco. The bases upon which the Government desires to rest its surrender appear to be the following points made in Negrin’s message to the Cortes on February 1st:

(a) that Spanish independence and territorial integrity be guaranteed;
(b) that the Spanish people be guaranteed the right to choose their destiny; and
(c) a guarantee that there shall be no persecution.

Thurston
The Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

PERPIGNAN, February 5, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received February 6—8:22 a. m.]

1206. Best information available indicates that complete collapse has occurred in Catalan area, and that rebel forces probably are now in Figueras. President Azana was seen here this morning and is reported to be in Paris. Negrin is said to have reached Madrid area.

It also is reported that all restrictions have been removed at border and that Loyalist forces will be permitted to enter France throughout the night for internment. 85,000 refugees are understood to have entered France already and arrival of remnants of army will probably raise this figure to about 125,000.

Alvarez del Vayo is expected to come to Perpignan tonight and I shall endeavor to see him.

THURSTON

PERPIGNAN, February 6, 1939—noon.
[Received February 6—11:25 a. m.]

1208. The British Minister has just informed me that (as a development from the approach by Negrin mentioned in my 1205, February 4, noon, and later supplemented by Azana who stated to Stevenson that he would resign if terms were not sought) he and the French Ambassador have been instructed to advise Del Vayo this afternoon that the British and French Governments are inquiring of the Franco regime whether in the event the Spanish Government lays down its arms it would be prepared to give the three guarantees roughly outlined in the telegram cited.

I remarked that Franco probably would reject clause (b) if not all, to which he replied that the fundamental point of the proffer of capitulation is all that matters and since it has been made, the working out of terms will be a mere formality.

THURSTON
The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

ST. JEAN DE LUZ, February 6, 1939—1 p.m.
[Received February 6—10:30 a.m.]

574. Thurston's telegram February 4, noon. The alleged request by Negrin merely submits to Franco directly the precise terms for peace frequently announced by Negrin and in the very words used in his Cortes speech of last Wednesday night. These terms manifestly improbable of Franco's acceptance and the Cortes and Government, agreeing as they have to the terms, unanimously voted for no surrender without this acceptance. My impression is if Thurston's informant is correct that Negrin's purpose is to force a formal official rejection of the terms for the sake of the record or their acceptance.

Bowers

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

PARIS, February 7, 1939—4 p.m.
[Received February 7—3:33 p.m.]

229. Bonnet said to me today that he believed that even though Negrin might wish to continue, General Miaja would come to terms with Franco in the near future. He had reason to believe that Miaja was already in contact with Franco. Furthermore he believed that Miaja had informed Negrin that he would arrest him and imprison him if he should come to Madrid.

Bonnet added that he had received a message from former King Alfonzo of Spain in which Alfonzo had said that one of his sons would be put on the throne as soon as Franco was victorious and that France should not oppose this restoration since France should remember how friendly he had been throughout the Great War. Bonnet said that the son in question was Jaime.

Bonnet said that Berard had, of course, not been able to arrange to have France represented in Burgos by a commercial representative. It was too late to make any such arrangement. He had talked with Berard on the telephone and had gathered through a discreet conversation that Berard's mission had been relatively successful.

Bullitt

*In command of the Republican forces in Central and Southern Spain.*
The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

No. 1667

St. Jean de Luz, February 7, 1939. [Received February 18.]

Sir: I have the honor to report on my conversation, an hour in length, with Alvarez Del Vayo, Minister of State, in the Spanish Consulate at Perpignan on the evening of Thursday, February 2.

The Minister began by frankly setting forth the military situation in Catalonia and the reasons for it. He said that during the fighting on the Ebro the Loyalist army was over-matched in planes, tanks and artillery by at least four to one, but that it had been able to make a splendid fight and hold up the fascists for some weeks. He said the Government knew that from the first of November on German and Italian war material was pouring in to Franco but that it had greatly underestimated the amount. He said it was not an exaggeration to say that in the fighting against Barcelona the Loyalists had one machine gun to a hundred on the other side, one tank to sixty on the other side, one plane to twenty on the other side. This was due entirely to the enforcement of non-intervention against the legal government and the absolute freedom accorded the rebels to bring in Italian and German war material by the shiploads. As a result of the attitude of the great Democracies the Government had been forced to get contraband material and he said that one thousand machine guns and 60,000 rifles had been bought and were on the way but that they could not arrive in time to be of any service in Catalonia. He told me of his appeal to the French Government for permission to buy just a little artillery and of the "cold" rejection of the plea. He ascribed the French attitude to the pro-fascist attitude of Bonnet. In this connection, he referred to Jules Henry, the present French Ambassador, as a mere tool of Bonnet, hand-picked by the latter because of his own anti-democratic slant. He said that in normal times, when the Spanish Government was more of a free agent, and less under the necessity of not offending Paris, the Government would have refused to accept Henry because of his well-known hostility to the Spanish Government.

I asked him if it were true that on that day in the morning Henry had informed the Government at Figueras that the French Government advised a complete surrender. He appeared a bit stunned for a moment, but admitted it to be true. He added that the advice was instantly rejected.

I asked him the present intentions of the Government. He said that it was thought possible to maintain discipline in the Catalanian
army for a few days but he made it clear that the Government had no expectation that any part of Catalonia could be held for any length of time because of the impossibility of getting war material. The purpose was for the Government to go to the central zone, to Madrid or Valencia, and continue the fight. He said that General Miaja has an army of 500,000 men who are better soldiers than those in Catalonia and that the machine guns, tanks and rifles would be available for them.

II.

In compliance with instructions I inquired regarding the pictures from the Prado that were in the old fort at Figueras where the Government had its headquarters. At the time these paintings were taken there it was probably the safest place in Spain. But he said the Government had been greatly concerned over the possible fate of these canvases and that on the morning of the day I saw him arrangements had been made for the paintings to be turned over to the art section of the League of Nations to be sent to Geneva for the period of the war.

III.

He asked me to convey to Washington the request of the Spanish Government that the American Government, separately or in conjunction with other nations, exert such influence as may be possible to prevent wholesale massacre in Barcelona. He said that reports had reached the Government that about five thousand people had been shot, mowed down by machine guns as in Badajoz. The press correspondents were not permitted to send out anything on the proceedings in Barcelona. The correspondent of the London Mail, who managed to get into the city, told me that on trying to enter a certain section of the city he was stopped by a bayonet at his breast and told he could not enter that section. Later he tried to enter another section with the same result. He assumed that the "purge" was going on. Press correspondents told me that no one will know just what is happening in Barcelona until later on when witnesses trickle out from time to time.

Respectfully yours, 

CLAUDE G. BOWERS

852.00/8934 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, February 8, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received February 8—6:30 p. m.]

244. I discussed the Spanish situation with Bonnet this afternoon. He read to me Jules Henry's telegram recounting his conversation with Negrin last night.
Jules Henry stated that Negrin had said to him for the first time last night that he knew the Republican cause in Spain was lost. He was ready to make peace immediately with Franco on the following terms: (1) that Spain should be independent; (2) that the Spanish people should have the right to decide the form of government they prefer; (3) that there should be no reprisals.

Negrin said to Henry that if Franco should accept these conditions he would be prepared to surrender immediately. If Franco should reject these conditions he would take an airplane to Valencia and attempt to hold out against Franco’s attacks as long as possible. He added that Franco was preparing a major attack on the central part of the southern front and he did not know whether sufficient material could be brought together to parry this attack; but in any event if Franco should refuse these terms the only course would be for him to fight to the bitter end, however terrible might be the suffering of the Spanish people.

Bonnet said that the British were transmitting these terms of Negrin’s to Franco today. He added that he thought Franco would reject them and propose unconditional surrender.

Bonnet also showed me a telegram from the French Consul in Valencia recounting a conversation he had today with General Miaja. The Consul stated that the General appeared to be exhausted and to have some difficulty in bringing out his words. The General had said that never had any man been left in such a situation as he was left in. He had received no orders of any kind from his Government for many days. He would continue to hold out to the bitter end. No sooner had Miaja said this, however, than he asked the Consul to give him a visa on his diplomatic passport good for entrance into France or Algiers. This visa was given to him.

Bonnet also showed me a telegram from a representative of the French Government in Barcelona. It stated that General Franco had stopped the northward march of all Italian troops at Gerona and had ordered them sent southward so that no Italian soldier should appear on the French frontier.

Senator Leon Berard returned from Franco’s headquarters today. He had two long conversations with General Jordana but did not see Franco. He will return to see Franco in 3 or 4 days. From his conversations with Jordana and other contacts, Senator Berard derived the impression that Franco genuinely desired to get the Italians and Germans out of Spain as soon as possible. General Jordana insisted to him that there were only 16,000 Italian soldiers now in Spain and 2,000 Germans. It was the intention of the Franco Government either to buy the Italian and German aircraft now in Spain or to send them home.

Vice President and Minister for Foreign Affairs in Franco’s Cabinet
Bonnet said that the French Government was now convinced that General Franco would favor the reestablishment of a monarchy in Spain with ex-King Alfonzo's son Jaime on the throne. It would be the policy of the French Government to support the establishment of Jaime as King of Spain.

Van Zeeland as a few days ago quoted to me Salazar, the Portuguese dictator, as saying that "as soon as Franco had won his war against the Republican Government the real civil war in Spain would begin". Salazar was of the opinion that the Phalangists who were controlled largely by the Germans would set out to destroy the Requetes and the Carlists. Salazar expressed the opinion that Franco would be unable to retain his hold on the Phalangists and might be eliminated personally by the Phalangists who were determined to behave with great savagery if necessary in order to establish a Fascist state in Spain.

I asked Bonnet if he had had similar reports and he stated that the French Government was fully aware of this danger. If however the Germans and Italians should attempt to eliminate Franco and the Requetes and the Carlists then the French and British Governments could not remain passive.

In this connection I asked whether the French Government was going to permit the Italian Government to take over the Island of Minorca. Bonnet said that the British Government had agreed to prevent the Italians from taking over the Island of Minorca.

Bonnet said that Franco was not interested in obtaining the de facto recognition of the French Government. He wanted help. Franco had not however insisted on the immediate sending of an Ambassador. Bonnet added that the question of a title for the French representative at Burgos in his opinion [would?] be a great stumbling block to the establishment of diplomatic relations. The French must have a representative in Burgos at once to whom he could telephone.

Bonnet said that General Jordana had stated to Berard that even though Negrin and Miaja should attempt to resist to the utmost and even though morale in the Valencia-Madrid area should remain intact, Franco's forces now would be so overwhelmingly strong that resistance could not be prolonged for more than one month at the outside.

In spite of protests from the Extreme Left in France public opinion here has reconciled itself to a Franco victory and I believe that there will be no serious political resistance to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Franco.

Bullitt

*Former Prime Minister of Belgium.*
The Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

PERPIGNAN, February 11, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received February 13—7:50 a.m.]

1216.  
1. Military. The Nationalists are now in occupation of all peninsular Spain except the southern area and all Spanish possessions. Should the Government make the tragic decision to continue the war it is virtually certain that the Nationalists would in a relatively brief period conquer the southern area as well—for despite the Government's manpower there, the handicaps under which it would labor are fatal. It would be without direct access to France and without the great Catalan industrial plants and it would be exposed to a probably effective sea and air blockade. At the same time it is to be assumed that the Nationalists would utilize their almost absolute control of the air with an intensity of devastation which would be appalling. I find, however, a general feeling here that the efforts presumed to be in course by the British and French Governments may contribute to an early settlement of some kind.

2. Political. Authoritative information regarding the whereabouts of the various members of the Spanish Government is not obtainable. I understand, however, that President Azana and Minister Giral * are in Paris. I also understand that Azana has virtually divorced himself from the situation and that he would not return to the southern area should it be decided to prosecute the war. Mariano Gomez, President of the Supreme Court, and Martinez Barrio, President of the Cortes, are here as is the Chief of Staff. Other members of the Cabinet are at Toulouse. I assume that we would require the presence in the southern area of more than the Prime Minister and Minister of State before following the Government back there.

THURSTON

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124.52/241: Telegram

The Counselor of Embassy in Spain (Thurston), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

PERPIGNAN, February 13, 1939—11 a.m.
[Received 4:06 p.m.]

1217. Perpignan has no further significance vis-à-vis the Spanish Government and I believe no useful purpose would be served by my remaining here. The few subordinate Loyalist officials abandoned in

* José Giral, Minister without Portfolio.
Perpignan appear to be without instructions or information and do not, in my opinion, constitute a formal channel of contact between the Government and the Diplomatic Corps. The Government insofar as I am aware did not advise the Diplomatic Corps which had followed it here of its return to Spain or offer any suggestion as to the course to be followed by the Corps.

I respectfully recommend in view of the foregoing that I be authorized in my discretion to transfer this office to Saint Jean de Luz. We have found and begun documentation or examination of the American and alien volunteers now in concentration camps in this district but completion of this work could and perhaps should be left to our consular officials at Marseille.

I shall appreciate your early instructions.  

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THURSTON

852.01/446: Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, February 14, 1939—9 p. m.
[ Received February 14—6:45 p. m. ]

224. The Government here is now giving close attention to the question of recognition of General Franco. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whom I saw this afternoon, said that although no final decision has yet been reached, their present view is that recognition: (1) should be given quickly, and (2) should not be contingent upon conditions of performance on the part of General Franco. According to all their information there is little doubt that Franco is rapidly approaching the point of effective control of the whole country. It is on this question of fact that the act of recognition would be based and that act is something apart from any question of Franco’s subsequent policies. No useful purpose would be served in delaying this recognition. Moreover, the Under Secretary is of the opinion that his Government would be in a position to exert greater influence over General Franco and his future policy after recognition had been unequivocally granted and an accredited British representative sent to him than if such recognition were delayed in the hope of fulfillment of certain prior and desirable conditions. In the light of these views,

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++By telegram No. 532, February 14, 6 p. m., the Department approved his recommendations.
the Under Secretary said, it is expected that the Cabinet at its meeting tomorrow will examine the whole situation and probably will either authorize the immediate recognition of General Franco or will authorize the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary to effect that recognition, without further reference, at such moment as they may consider most suitable.

According to the Under Secretary, there is, however, a complication. About a week ago Messrs. Negrin and Del Vayo in French territory, communicated to Mr. Stevenson, the British representative formerly at Barcelona, a statement of certain conditions on which the Government would capitulate to General Franco. These conditions were that (1) all foreign troops should be immediately evacuated from Spain, (2) a popular government should be set up acceptable to the country, and (3) there should be no reprisals. These propositions have been discussed here by the Foreign Office with the Spanish Ambassador, Mr. Azcarate. The latter, although apparently without instructions in the matter, has explained that his Government does not mean by a popular government that they necessarily demand a plebiscite but that the Government should be broadly based and acceptable to the majority of Spaniards. With reference to point 3 it has been pointed out to Ambassador Azcarate that the Spanish Government could hardly expect General Franco not to take some action against individuals which might be included in the term “reprisals”. Azcarate explained that they would not expect that individuals who had committed criminal infractions of the penal code should go unpunished, but what they demand is a commitment that there will be no purely political reprisals on former opponents of General Franco. These propositions were sent day before yesterday at the request of the Spanish Government to the British representative at Burgos with a view to obtaining informally the reaction of Franco. A reply has not yet been received. The Spanish Ambassador here has moreover made the request that the British use their good offices towards inducing General Franco to negotiate a settlement with the present Government authorities rather than demand a complete and unconditional surrender. The Under Secretary of State says that this puts them in somewhat of a dilemma as they do not yet visualize what may be done usefully in this connection. He does not know what decision the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary may reach on this point. The Spanish Ambassador's request may however slightly delay British action on recognition. I gather that British policy in these matters is being closely concerted with the French Government.

JOHNSON
Extract From a Memorandum of a Press Conference, February 17, 1939

Mr. Welles said he thought it was desirable for him to refer to an article published today in the Washington Herald with regard to the attitude of this Government on the question of the recognition of the Franco Government in Spain, an article which he said was undoubtedly inadvertently inaccurate. He went on to say that in response to inquiries from representatives of certain other American Republics as to the position of this Government, it was stated that we have been following a policy which we have pursued since the outbreak of the civil war in Spain; that we believe it is primarily a European question and one of more intimate concern to the nations geographically in greater proximity to Spain than the United States and for this reason there was no occasion for any precipitous decision on our part and no decision on the matter had as yet been arrived at by this Government.

A correspondent asked whether any effort had been made to arrive at a sort of common Pan-American stand with regard to Spain. The Under Secretary said that some governments had suggested that the question of recognition might be considered a continental one. This seemed to him somewhat difficult in view of the circumstances which already existed insofar as some of the governments had already accorded recognition to the Government of Franco some time ago and some had done so more recently. Consequently he said this Government felt that it was not a continental question but a matter for each American republic to determine as it saw fit.

Asked what governments were informed of this Government’s attitude, the Under Secretary said that enquiries had been made of us by the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Colombia and that the Government of Peru had informed us of the decision to recognize Franco before it formally announced that action. Asked whether approaches made by most of the countries mentioned had been to propose joint Pan-American action or whether the majority of them simply enquired what our plan was, the Under Secretary said these were rather difficult questions to answer, some of the governments having informed us of their point of view and others having requested ours. With regard to the specific question as to whether they considered it a matter of continental solidarity, some gave us their point of view and others asked for ours.

Asked whether this Government was taking note of the fact that the Franco Government had concluded a cultural pact with Germany, the Under Secretary said that note had been taken of it in the fact

* Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State.
that the Department had received the information of such a pact. Asked whether there had been official notification, Mr. Welles answered in the negative and said he merely had seen it in the press.

A correspondent enquired whether he was correct in the assumption that in the opinion of this Government the doctrine of non-recognition was not involved in the Spanish situation. The Under Secretary replied that if it were agreeable to the correspondent he would defer his reply for further consideration.

852.00/8971: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, February 17, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received February 17—3:20 p. m.]

309. We have inquired of the Counsellor of the Spanish Embassy what truth there was to the story carried in today's press that peace negotiations are being carried on here between President Azana and Franco representatives through the British Ambassador to France. He replied that no negotiations nor conversations of the sort were in progress. He asserted that Azana was not empowered to represent the Government in such matters and said that as he is in France in his private capacity although residing at the Embassy he has neither received nor visited French or other officials (including Phipps\footnote{British Ambassador in France.}) except that he receives Jules Henry. The position of the Government with respect to peace is still, our informant claims, four square with the well-known three points enunciated in Negrin's speech to the Cortes.

The Counsellor said that the Government of Madrid has decided that the President of the Republic must be in Spain and that Del Vayo who is here is making a last effort to persuade him to return; there is, however, little chance that Azana will agree and he will probably soon resign. The President of the Cortes, Martinez Barrio who, though now in Paris, would be willing to go to Spain, would automatically succeed to the Presidency upon Azana's resignation. (Despite the foregoing the fact that Azana has been receiving Jules Henry and that Del Vayo has prolonged his stay in Paris lead many people to believe that conversations regarding the termination of the civil war are in fact taking place and that Azana is a factor in these conversations.)

Our informant stated that one of the purposes in Del Vayo's coming here was to arrange for the emigration to Latin America of 60,000 families, estimated at 200,000 persons, of the 300,000 refugees in
France. Mexico has made a formal offer to take 30,000 families and it is hoped to place others in Colombia, Cuba and Chile. Of the 100,000 refugees remaining in France after such disposal the Spanish Government believes that the majority could be ultimately repatriated.

Bullitt

832.01/474

The British Embassy to the Department of State
AIDE-MÉMOIRE

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are considering the question of granting full recognition to General Franco and are in close consultation with the French Government on the subject. The French Government favour this step in principle but wish first to obtain certain assurances from General Franco. They have sent Monsieur Béard back to Burgos for further discussions in this respect.

2. Meanwhile His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have received from the Spanish Government a communication declaring their willingness to cease hostilities on certain conditions. The British Agent at Burgos has been instructed to communicate this information to General Franco and to make it clear that whilst His Majesty's Government recognize his right to decide what, if any, response to make to this communication they feel its consideration might afford an opening for bringing about a pacific solution.

3. In these circumstances His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have decided

(a) that it is desirable for them to recognize General Franco's Government in the near future,

(b) that if possible such recognition should follow a surrender by the Spanish Government but that if the latter maintain resistance, and negotiations are prolonged, it may be necessary that recognition should precede the cessation of hostilities,

(c) that as regards belligerent rights His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will adhere to the present position that neither side is entitled to exercise these against third parties.

4. The British Agent at Burgos therefore has been instructed to inform the Nationalist authorities of the earnest consideration now being given by His Majesty's Government to the grant of full recognition to General Franco. Such recognition, he will explain, would be facilitated if General Franco were able to accept the terms contained in the Spanish Government's communication regarding the cessation of hostilities and if he would be willing to state publicly that when the fighting is finished he would not permit anything in the way of unauthorized or general political reprisals.
5. The French Government have been informed that whilst His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are in general agreement with their views as regards recognition, His Majesty's Government would prefer full recognition without conditions even if this entailed a short delay in the event of the Spanish Government showing signs of surrendering. If there seemed, however, a prospect of long delay, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would probably decide to proceed with recognition, keeping in the closest touch with the French Government with a view to parallel action.

WASHINGTON, February 18, 1939.

852.00/8972: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, February 18, 1939—noon.
[Received February 18—10:55 a.m.]

319. Jules Henry said to me last night that Negrin and Del Vayo were now ready to accept immediate surrender provided Franco would agree that there should not be executions by way of reprisal. Jules Henry said that the latest news from Burgos indicated that Franco would refuse this proviso and insist on immediate unconditional surrender. The French Government believed that Negrin and his supporters in Valencia and Madrid therefore would fight to the bitter end because surrender would mean firing squads.

Bullitt

852.00/8973: Telegram

The Vice Consul at Valencia (Wallner) to the Secretary of State

VALENCIA, February 18, 1939—1 p.m.
[Received February 18—12:22 p.m.]

18. Advices from Madrid indicate that the Government's resistance policy is receiving strong support only from the Communists and that the desire for peace has increased under the recent cruel bombardments. On the other hand Communist attempts to increase their power have been discouraged by the military authorities in both Madrid and Valencia; their Madrid newspaper has been suppressed and the Popular Front has passed a vote of censure against their policy.

The sudden decentralization of Ministries from Madrid is regarded as a preliminary to the Government's departure. Its prestige is not increasing.
Negrin is believed to be still in Madrid. Public order is good throughout the Republic.

**WALLNER**

852.01/464: Telegram

**The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State**

PARIS, February 20, 1939—9 p.m.

[Received February 20—6:56 p.m.]

331. We asked Rochat today for an informal résumé of the Spanish situation. He said Berard’s second visit to Burgos, which is authorized by the Council of Ministers and is therefore official, constituting *de facto* recognition of the Franco Government, has for its primary purpose intervention looking to the termination of hostilities and a discussion of the humanitarian phase of the Spanish affair. He said that Berard was not empowered to discuss economic or financial questions and that these would be left for the French Ambassador when appointed. He said that no decision had been taken concerning the eventual selection of such an Ambassador and he had no idea who might be chosen. He said that the fact that Baraduc of the Economic Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accompanied Berard should not be misconstrued to mean that economic questions were up for discussion. Baraduc is simply a personal and trusted friend of Berard.

According to Rochat, Azana continues to waver and vacillate. One moment he is ready to resign and the next his sense of loyalty gains the upper hand and he feels that he should resist until some protection for the Loyalists in central Spain is exacted.

Rochat says that the Ministry is disappointed in Franco’s unyielding attitude and he feels that Franco has missed an opportunity to gain world favor by a magnanimous gesture. Rochat points out that the Loyalists in central Spain are trapped and that without some hope of clemency they have no alternative but to drag out hostilities to the bitter end. We inquired as to his estimate of the duration of time and he said that anything from a few hours to 6 weeks. He said of course that he believes the termination of actual hostilities will only mark the beginning of the real struggle in Spain.

**BULLITT**

852.01/475

**The British Embassy to the Department of State**

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

His Majesty’s Embassy have been instructed to explain that, in coming to the conclusions regarding the recognition of General Franco's
Government set out in the Embassy’s *Aide-Mémoire* of February 18th, His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom were influenced by the following considerations:

The decision on the question whether or not to accord full recognition to General Franco turns on the facts of the situation. What His Majesty’s Government have to decide is whether or not General Franco’s Government is the only effective government in Spain. It now seems certain that the establishment of his authority over the whole of Spain is only a matter of a short time and that further resistance could only result in further useless bloodshed. On the other hand the Spanish Government are dispersed and seem to be disunited.

If recognition is justified and called for, it seems that there should be no avoidable delay in according it. The sooner His Majesty’s Government can exert their influence to the full with General Franco, the better; and the more effectively they may be able to counteract German and Italian intrigues.


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*The British Embassy to the Department of State*

**Aide-Mémoire**

His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom have now received a reply from General Franco to the representations recently made to him by the British Agent at Burgos, as explained in paragraph 4 of His Majesty’s Embassy’s *Aide-Mémoire* of February 18th. The following is a summary of General Franco’s reply:

“As the war has been won by the Nationalists the Spanish Government must surrender unconditionally. As already proved, the motives inspiring the Nationalist Government constitute a sure guarantee for all Spain’s other fugitives. The tribunals are restricted to dealing with criminals whose cases fall within the framework of the laws promulgated before July 1936. Spain will not accept foreign intervention calculated to impair her dignity or infringe her sovereignty. Reprisals being alien to the Nationalist Government, the only effect of prolonged resistance will be to postpone the termination of insane resistance and increase the responsibility of their leaders.”

This announcement appears to His Majesty’s Government to be as satisfactory as they could hope for regarding reprisals, which were their chief concern in connexion with their proposed recognition of General Franco.

Señor Negrín requested His Majesty’s Government some days ago to submit to General Franco modified terms of surrender; but the dispersal of the Spanish Government and the diversity of views among
them subsequently rendered it impossible to receive their formal assent to the step which they themselves had asked His Majesty’s Government to take.

In these circumstances, and in view of the above statement by General Franco, the French Government are being informed urgently that His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom are strongly of the opinion that the statement in question affords the best opportunity of according recognition to General Franco and one which should not be lost. The French Government are therefore being informed that His Majesty’s Government wish to announce their recognition at the earliest possible moment and in any case not later than February 24th, and they earnestly trust that the French Government will agree and make a simultaneous announcement.88

WASHINGTON, February 22, 1939.

882.00/8989b : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)89

WASHINGTON, February 24, 1939—5 p. m.

111. I would like to have your report as to what extent the French Government consider that Franco will refrain from executions on the basis of reprisals.

HULL

882.00/8993 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, February 25, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 3:10 p. m.]

364. Your 111, February 24, 5 p. m. Rochat showed Wilson this morning in strict confidence the text of the declaration given Hodgson, the British agent, by General Jordana a week ago. (This is the declaration to which Bonnet referred in the conversation reported in my 334 [354], February 23, 6 p. m.40)

The declaration was made in response to British efforts to obtain assurances that Franco would refrain from political reprisals and

88 On February 23, the Department was advised by the British Embassy that, at the request of the French Government, the British Government had postponed its announcement of the recognition of the Franco government until February 27 (852.01/560).

89 The same, mutatis mutandis, to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom as telegram No. 145, February 24, 6 p. m.

40 Not printed.
would maintain the independence of Spain. [Here follows a summary of General Franco’s declaration similar to the summary contained in the British aide-mémoire of February 22, 1939, printed on page 751.]

Rochat said that the French Government considered that this declaration was the most which could be obtained from Franco under present conditions. The laws in existence in Spain as of July 16, 1936, of course, provide for special military tribunals to try political offenders. It is not, however, the letter of the assurances received which will prove of ultimate importance but the spirit in which the assurances are carried out. The French Government has no way of knowing to what extent Franco will in fact refrain from political reprisals but it considers that the statement that Franco is not moved by a spirit of reprisal is of value and it has no reason to believe that Franco intends to act contrary thereto. An important factor naturally will be the decision of the Loyalist side either to surrender or to provoke further bloodshed by continuing the hopeless struggle.

Daladier said to me a few days ago that a great many people wanted him to insist upon obtaining definite assurances of a political amnesty from Franco before extending recognition. He himself felt that this was absurd and that much the best way to prevent reprisals of a political character would be for France to recognize at once and thereby have an official French representative on the spot to use his influence in behalf of clemency.

It might be added that Rochat stated that the present plan is for the French and British Governments to announce recognition of Franco following the meeting of the French Cabinet scheduled to take place next Monday afternoon. It has not been decided as yet who will be the new French Ambassador to Nationalist Spain.\(^4\)

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852.00/8992 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, February 25, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received February 25—12:15 p. m.]

271. Your 145, February 24, 6 p. m.\(^4\)

Sir Alexander Cadogan \(^4\) informed a member of the Embassy staff this morning that on February 21 General Franco’s Foreign Office handed to the British representative a statement in which it was set

\(^4\) Marshal Pétain became the French Ambassador in Spain on March 24, 1939.

\(^4\) See footnote 39, p. 752.

\(^4\) British Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
forth that the courts of justice would be restricted in judgment of cases brought before them to the application of the laws and procedure of the criminal code as it existed on July 16, 1936. The Foreign Office then requested the British representative to ascertain whether this statement was to be considered as a reply to previous British requests for assurances that there would be no executions on the basis of reprisals; whether the statement given to the British representative had likewise been made public in Burgos; and, if not, whether there were any objection to public use of it being made by the British Government. The reply was that the statement is to be considered as a reply to the British inquiries regarding reprisals; that the statement has not been made public in Burgos; that there is no objection to public use being made of it by the British Government. The Under Secretary pointed out that in the light of this statement and General Franco’s reply to their subsequent inquiries as to its meaning, they must proceed on the assumption that it is his intention that the courts shall exclude judgments of purely reprisal nature. Obviously the carrying out of such a declaration would depend on the good faith of General Franco. The Foreign Office has no information however to indicate that there have been any executions on the basis of reprisals. They have been specifically informed in this sense by their representative at Barcelona who reports that he has been unable to find any authentic cases of reprisal executions. To anyone however who inclines to be suspicious of General Franco’s good faith, Cadogan says, there is obviously a loophole in the fact that the declaration makes no mention of military tribunals or of any law or procedure which might govern their action.

The Foreign Office has not yet availed itself of Franco’s consent to make public use of this statement. It will do so however at the time when recognition of Franco is announced.

Kennedy

882.00/8994: Telegram

The Vice Consul at Valencia (Wallner) to the Secretary of State

Valencia, February 26, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received February 27—7:40 a. m.]

19. During the last week conditions in the Republic have evolved somewhat towards the end which all now admit to be inevitable and believe will be precipitated by France’s and England’s recognition of Franco. Passports are being issued to leading politicians and government officials. The apparent intention to leave the lesser lights behind gives rise to fears of a last minute outbreak led by the Communists, though public order is still excellent.

Wallner
Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] February 27, 1939.

The Spanish Ambassador called on his own request. He proceeded to say that he saw in the newspapers or in press reports that President Azana of Spain had left the country and in effect had ceased to be President. He then said he would like to inquire what would be the attitude of this Government towards the Spanish Government as presided over by Prime Minister Negrin. I inquired whether he knew positively that President Azana had left the Government or whether he had just read about it in the press reports. He said that the letter was all the information he had. I was in the act of indicating that this Government would take notice of the governmental situation left by the departure of President Azana, when the Spanish Ambassador was notified that there was an urgent call for him over the telephone from the Spanish Embassy here in Washington. The Ambassador returned from the telephone later with a penciled memorandum of the purported conversation. He proceeded to say to me that the substance of the message was that he should inquire of this Government as to the interest it might be disposed to take in giving its moral influence against reprisals by General Franco, and he urged the importance and desire of his Government that this Government thus manifest its earnest and strong moral influence. I replied that this Government is not unmindful of this phase and that already it has been giving attention to it.

As we walked to the door the Ambassador said the first stage of the Spanish situation is virtually over but that now the second and most serious stage was just ahead. He referred to the international claims and counterclaims relating to Spain, especially those of Italy and Germany. I inquired as to what, in his opinion, Italy and Germany would demand of Spain. He did not undertake to say, except to indicate that it would be enough, and then he added that General Franco would insist on some rights or jurisdiction in the Gibraltar area and also that of Tangier, and some other unpronounceable place that I never could understand.

The Spanish Ambassador (De los Ríos) to the Secretary of State

No. 143/02

WASHINGTON, February 27, 1939.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: Confirming our conversation of today, I have the honor to communicate to Your Excellency that my Government

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44 The Department was informed by Ambassador Bowers in his telegram No. 587, February 28, 5 p.m., that Azana's resignation had been made public at 1 o'clock (852.001 Azana/25).
has informed His Britannic Majesty’s Government that they are ready to consider the suspension of hostilities if guarantees are given that no reprisals will be taken. My Government has suggested that hostilities be suspended at once, pending the discussion of guarantees regarding reprisals. They have requested the Governments of France and of Great Britain to give them facilities for evacuating persons whose lives might be in danger.

These suggestions have been favorably received by the Governments I have mentioned. My Government has asked me to enlist the support of the Government of the United States so that the Governments of France and Great Britain will fulfill the humanitarian condition on which immediate peace in Spain depends.

I take [etc.]

Fernando de los Ríos

852.01/494 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State*

[Extract]

*Paris, February 28, 1939—10 a.m.*

*Received 1:55 p.m.]*

378. The Secretary of the Treasury informed me yesterday that he would be glad to have information on the present situation. The following conversation which I had last night with Bonnet may be of interest to him.

Bonnet said that Berard had been offered formally the post of French Ambassador in Spain and had refused. He regretted this greatly as Berard had conducted the negotiations with Jordana with the greatest skill. At the outset Jordana had said that Spain had nothing to discuss with France and was not interested in anything but *de jure* recognition. Berard had replied that France would give *de jure* recognition but that in addition to the simple problem of recognition there was the more important problem of restoring the normal close friendship between Spain and France.

Berard had then worked out with Jordana a number of written agreements covering matters of mutual interest such as the return of property of the Spanish State now in France, the return of Spanish refugees now in France, et cetera. Jordana and Berard had signed a written agreement providing that France and Spain should in future live on the terms of “good neighbors”.

Bonnet said that this agreement was couched in vague terms but that it was reinforced by a number of official verbal statements. Jordana had stated officially that the old agreement between France and Spain forbidding fortification of the Balearic Islands was still in force and would remain in force.
(Bonnet added that at the present time there were no Italian forces in any of the Balearics except in Majorca where there were 600 soldiers and 80 airplanes.) Jordana had refused to make any definite promise with regard to the future neutrality of Spain in case of European conflict but had said that the policy of General Franco’s Government remained the same as it had been last September when Franco had assured the British and French Governments that in case of general European war Spain would remain neutral. Jordana had stated further that after 2 years of civil war the desire of the entire Spanish people for peace was overwhelming and that it was ridiculous to imagine that Spain could be drawn into a general European conflict.

These statements coupled with the written “good neighbor” declaration were regarded by Bonnet as equivalent to a promise of neutrality.

Bonnet said, however, that he expected Spain to join the Anti-Comintern Pact. He added that this did not especially disturb him, and indicated in every way a sanguine optimism with regard to future relations between Franco’s Government and France.

I asked him if he did not feel that the Phalangistas might become increasingly powerful and gradually push Spain into an attitude of hostility toward France. He said that on the contrary the new head of the Phalangistas General Serrano Sumer, Franco’s brother-in-law, was a conservative who in reality desired the return of the Monarchy and not a Fascist state.

BULLITT

852.01/493b: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, February 28, 1939—noon.

116. Please see Quinones de Leon at earliest possible opportunity and speaking purely informally tell him that in view of changed conditions in Spain this Government is naturally giving careful consideration to the problem of recognition of the Insurgents as the de jure Government of Spain. You should point out that public opinion in this country has followed developments in the Spanish conflict with intense interest and that both this Government and public opinion would be gratified at receiving indications from the Franco authorities that there would be no policy of reprisal against their opponents in the civil strife. As a second point this Government would desire to receive assurances that the Insurgent authorities are ready to pro-

* Representing Franco at Paris.
tect American nationals and to restore and protect their property in Spain and otherwise to fulfill the obligations and responsibilities incumbent upon a sovereign state under international law and treaties.

Hull

852.00/6024

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

[WASHINGTON,] March 2, 1939.

The Spanish Ambassador called to see me this morning to let me know that he had now reestablished communication with the Loyalist Government in central Spain, and that he had received a long cable last night.

He was instructed to inform this Government that the Loyalist Government was disposed to cease hostilities and to capitulate provided positive assurances were given by the Franco Government that reprisals would not be undertaken. The Loyalist Government stated that up to this time no satisfactory assurances on this question had been received by either the British or French Governments from General Franco, and that the Loyalist Government would be prepared to fight until the last man unless positive guarantees were given that if they surrendered reprisals would not be undertaken. The Ambassador was informed that reprisals on a mass scale were in progress in Barcelona, and that since the capture of that city by the Franco forces, mass executions of between eight hundred to a thousand people a day had been continuing. The Ambassador stated in conclusion that even if guarantees were obtained and the Loyalist Government capitulated, at least 20,000 families from central Spain would have to be evacuated before the surrender was completed. The Ambassador asked that the influence of this Government be exerted so far as might be possible in order that guarantees against reprisals might be obtained from General Franco. I told the Ambassador that the views of this Government on that question had already been made known to representatives of General Franco.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

852.00/6007 : Telegram

The Vice Consul at Valencia (Wallner) to the Secretary of State

VALENCIA, March 6, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 2:40 p. m.]

22. A crisis probably precipitated by the unsuccessful communist attempt to seize the Republican Navy in Cartagena has forced Negrin
and his Ministers to leave Spain. Power is now in the hands of a Council of National Defense headed by General Casado, Commander of the central army, and including Besteiro and other moderates which is expected to follow the realistic policy. Public reaction favorable and order prevails here and in Madrid.

WALLNER

852.00/9018 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

PARIS, March 7, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received March 7—2:05 p. m.]

417. Rochat informed us this morning that the French Consul at Madrid had just reported that the new junta was hopeful of concluding a 20-day armistice with Franco. This would afford an opportunity for those Republican leaders whose activities during the war have compromised them in Franco's eyes to leave Spain; at the termination of the armistice there will be an unconditional surrender by the Republicans.

The Foreign Office's information is that the overthrow of Negrin was precipitated by his efforts to organize the Communists for a fight to the finish. The Republican army leaders had been convinced for some time that it was hopeless to continue the struggle, and they had therefore ousted Negrin when it became evident that he was promoting a Communist coup. Incidentally the Foreign Office has received information from Valencia that the attempted revolt at Cartagena was part of Negrin's plan and was not, as published in the press, instigated by the Nationalists. The Republican fleet which escaped from Cartagena arrived at Bizerta this morning and is being interned.

Bullitt

852.00/9018 : Telegram

The Vice Consul at Valencia (Wallner) to the Secretary of State

VALENCIA, March 7, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received 9:09 p. m.]

23. Workmen's National Defense Council was formed with the adhesion of the army and all political and syndical groups except the Communists; Miaja's assumption of the Presidency assures it of full moral powers to sue for peace.
The principal Communist leaders are dead or in jail after the complete crushing of an attempted coup d'état which apparently assumed serious proportions in Madrid and Alicante as well as Cartagena but of which details are not available because of strict censorship and unsatisfactory telephone communications.

WALLNER

852.00/9025: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

Paris, March 8, 1939—10 p.m.
[Received March 9—11:25 a.m.]

429. Quinones de Leon called on me at 6 o'clock this afternoon. He was extremely tired and seemed very depressed. He referred to the fact that the Duke of Alba had been appointed Spanish Ambassador in London whereas he had not been appointed Spanish Ambassador in Paris and said that it was due to the fact that the Duke of Alba had fought to get the job whereas he had preferred not to be Ambassador in Paris. His attachment was after all to the King. Nevertheless he seemed most disappointed.

He went on to say that he had had a terrible night because Bonnet had got him out of his bed at 4 o'clock this morning to tell him that the Communists in Madrid were assaulting the French Embassy there and that the members of the French Embassy were defending themselves and had asked him if there could not be an immediate entry of Franco's troops to save the French and Spaniards still in the French Embassy in Madrid. He had been up until morning attempting to produce some action by Franco's general headquarters. This morning the news had arrived that General Miaja had overwhelmed the Communists and that the French Embassy was safe.

He then said to me that he had received the message from Burgos for which he had been waiting. The reason the reply had been delayed had been that the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs at Burgos had insisted on leaving his post to take command of troops for the entry into Madrid and the new Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs had had to travel from Bern to Burgos and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had been overwhelmed with work during this period.

The message that he had received was in Spanish of which he would give me a French translation. He then read:

"We cannot admit that there should be conditional recognition; but we reiterate the statements made recently to the British and French Governments in the announcements of policy by General Jordana. (See my telegram No. 364 of February 25, 1 p.m.). The generosity of the Generalissimo and the conduct of the authorities and courts after the occupation of Catalonia constitute a guarantee of equity and justice for all Spaniards not culpable of crimes."
Quinones de Leon then stopped.

I asked what reply he had had with regard to my question in respect of the readiness of the Franco Government to protect the lives and property of Americans and to fulfill the obligations of a Spanish Government under international law and treaties. He replied "that goes without saying." I answered that in so far as the American Government was concerned as indicated by my question to him it did not go without saying and that I should like to have a statement on the subject. He then said that he was authorized to say that "the Spanish Government in reciprocity is fully prepared to protect the lives and property of Americans and to fulfill the normal obligations of a Spanish Government under international law and treaties."

He added that he could give me a statement of his own in addition which would be merely a repetition of words in the announcements of policy by General Jordana referred to above.

I replied that this did not appear to be especially valuable and added that I should like to be entirely sure of the exact words that he on behalf of the Franco Government wished to have transmitted to the Government of the United States. I then wrote out in his presence the statements contained above in quotation marks and Quinones de Leon agreed that this was the accurate text of the communication he was authorized to make.

He then added that "the courts of criminal justice would apply only the laws existing on the 16th of July 1936." I replied that this statement was contained in the announcements of policy of General Jordana but I had been shocked to read in the London Times of Tuesday March 7 the summary of a law on "political responsibilities" signed by General Franco last month designed according to the preamble to punish all persons who contributed by act or omission "to forge Red subversion, maintain it incandescent for more than 2 years and place obstacles in the path of the providential and inevitable triumph of the National movement." (I assume that you have the text of this law.)

I called Quinones de Leon's attention especially to the minute instructions drawn up for the manner in which charges are to be made out and substantiated, and read him the following from the London Times of March 7:

"Charges may result (1) from sentences pronounced by military courts; (2) from denunciations in writing by any person or juridical body; (3) through the initiative of the regional courts. Political responsibilities will have been incurred by all persons who from October 1, 1934 to July 18, 1936 shall have contributed to create or aggravate the subversion of all kinds of which Spain has been victim as well as all who since July 18, 1936 have opposed the National movement in fact or by grave passivity. By virtue of the foregoing definition every-
body whether union or association who had anything to do with the Asturian rising, the Frente Popular or the elections of February 1936 is outlawed. A list of 25 political parties, trade unions and Nationalist groups is given including not only the Communist, Anarchist and Socialist Unions, the Basques and the Catalans, but also the most moderate of the Republican groups. The Freemasons are specially denounced with the exception of those who recanted before July 18, 1936.

The property of parties outlawed is declared forfeit to the state. A detailed list of other cases considered punishable is given including persons who have left governmental Spain and who within 2 months had not entered Nationalist territory.

Three degrees of punishment are established involving (1) depression of office, (2) restriction of liberty including exile to Africa or imprisonment, (3) confiscation of property or fines. There is to be no death penalty for political responsibilities but widespread confiscation of property and possible imprisonment."

I said to Quinones de Leon that I was certain that it would shock American public opinion to learn that "grave passivity" had been made a crime and pointed out that although there was to be no death penalty for "political responsibilities" all other penalties were to be inflicted and every one in the Republican area except active Franco sympathizers was to be placed in the position of a criminal. I asked Quinones de Leon how this law could be reconciled with the statement that the courts of justice would apply only the laws existing on July 16, 1936.

Quinones de Leon said that he was at a loss to reconcile the two documents. They seemed to mean that no one would be shot except on the basis of the laws existing on the 16th of July 1936.

Quinones went on to say that Basteiro, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the present Madrid Junta, had been in touch with Franco throughout the civil war and that he was certain that the surrender of Madrid would be brought about within the next 2 or 3 days. He added that personally he had great confidence in General Franco who was well disposed toward the King and the Monarchy. The Requetes were also in favor of the restoration of the Monarchy. The Phalangistas, however, were most opposed and he did not know how things would work out in Spain. It was obvious that the task of governing Spain now would be a terribly difficult one.

It seems obvious from the foregoing that at the present time in the flush of victory General Franco's Government is not inclined to make any promises worth having with regard to reprisals. I doubt indeed that under present circumstances any promises on this subject are worth having. The reconstruction period after a civil war marked by such extreme brutalities as the Spanish civil war is certain to be darkened by cruelties and persecutions. Moreover, we know from previous experience with the Soviet Government that all
promises of dictatorships after civil war are relatively valueless. The event depends on the character of the dictator.

The British Ambassador in Paris and Daladier and Bonnet seem to believe sincerely that the British and French Ambassadors in Burgos will be able to do much to restrain Phalangist brutality and they have confidence in the personal character of Franco.

**Bullitt**

852.01/325: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, March 10, 1939—noon.

[Received 12:35 p.m.]

448. Quinones de Leon asked to see me this morning and showed me a letter he had just received from General Jordana dated March 6. A translation of the letter would run approximately as follows:

"In reply to your letter of March 1st regarding your conversation with the American Ambassador on the subject of recognition by his Government of the National Government you should inform him that it can in any case, be a question of conditional recognition. It was on this basis and this basis alone that we proceeded with the British and the French Governments.

You may furnish the Ambassador with a copy for purposes of information of the declaration which we gave to the representative of the British Government on February 18, 1939. Signed: Jordana."

Attached to this letter of Quinones de Leon was a copy of the declaration referred to which reads in translation as follows:

"National Spain has won the war and it therefore is incumbent upon those who have been defeated to surrender without conditions.

The patriotism, high mindedness and generosity of the Caudillo, of which he has given so many proofs in the regions which he has liberated as well as the spirit of equity and justice which govern all the acts of the National Government, constitute a firm guarantee for all Spaniards who are not offenders (delincuentes).

The tribunals of justice, applying substantive laws and procedures promulgated prior to the 16th of July 1936, are limited to judging, within the framework of those same laws and procedures, the authors of crimes (delitos).

Spain is not disposed to accept any foreign intervention which could affect her dignity or infringe upon her sovereignty.

If by prolonging a criminal resistance, the Red leaders sacrifice further lives and cause more blood to flow for their sole personal gain, in view of the fact that the conduct of the National Government and of the Caudillo is exempt from spirit of reprisal, they will only succeed in bringing about the complete crushing of this insane resistance and will considerably aggravate their own responsibilities. Burgos, February 18, 1939."
I asked Quinones if he had communicated to Jordana precisely what he had said to me with regard to protection of American lives and property and the readiness of the Franco Government to fulfill the normal obligations of the Spanish Government under international law and treaties. He said that he had communicated this to General Jordana together with his statement to me that, of course, this went without saying.

Quinones went on to say that Bonnet had just telephoned to him this morning to ask for the latest news from Spain and that he had had to reply that he had no authoritative information. It was his personal impression, however, that General Franco was delighted that General Miaja and the Madrid Junta were dealing with the Communists of Madrid, since this would eliminate a serious problem before Franco should take the Madrid and Valencia area.

Quinones stated that the Minister of Agriculture of the Franco Government had passed through Paris yesterday and had said to him that the offensive on Madrid was being prepared for the 16th or 18th this month and that it would be in the nature of a spectacle and nothing more. Quinones explained that he assumed this meant that negotiations with Miaja would have been completed by that time and that there would be no resistance.

I have attempted during the past week to obtain some authentic and certain information with regard to atrocities or reprisals which may have been inflicted by the Franco regime in the Barcelona area. Neither Pascua, the former Spanish Ambassador in Paris, nor members of his staff have been able to give me any information which they consider authoritative evidence.

I have also discussed this matter with Pittaluga whom you will remember as De los Rios' collaborator in Washington. Pittaluga also has no direct information as to atrocities or reprisals.

Bullitt

852.01/525 : Telegram
The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, March 10, 1939—8 p. m.

153. Your 429, March 8, 10 p. m., and 448, March 10, noon. Inasmuch as Quinones de Leon appears to have been laboring under a misconception as to the purpose of our questions, please see him at your early convenience and inform him that you have been requested by your Government to make it very clear to him that no question of "conditional recognition" was involved in the inquiries made of him by instruction of your Government. The inquiry made with reference to the persons and properties of American citizens in Spain
had to do with a question which involves basic principles in the relations between nations of the world, and the inquiry made with regard to humanitarian considerations was responsive to the deep interest taken in this question by the overwhelming body of American public opinion.

I believe that it may be expedient at this juncture to limit yourself to this statement and merely to make the request that such statement be communicated by him to his Government.

**Welles**

852.01/529: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State*

**PARIS, March 11, 1939—6 p.m.**

[Received March 11—3:20 p.m.]

482. Your No. 153, March 10, 8 p.m. I requested Quinones de Leon to call on me at 5:00 o'clock this afternoon and read to him an exceedingly careful paraphrase of your No. 153, March 10, 8 p.m. He replied that he had never labored under any misconception and that it was absurd to consider that he had. He said that he was equally certain that his Government was laboring under no misconception. Indeed he felt so sure of this that he thought it would be ridiculous for him to comply with my request that the statement that I had read should be communicated by him to his Government. I replied that since my Government had requested it, I trusted that he would communicate the statement. He answered that he would do so.

**Bullitt**

123M431/163: Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)*

**WASHINGTON, March 13, 1939—5 p.m.**

161. We have naturally been giving considerable thought to our representation in Spain should we recognize the Franco régime. While a new Ambassador will be appointed and a new Counselor will be designated, it is obvious that considerable time must elapse before they can reach their post. On principle, we do not desire to send into Franco Spain any diplomatic official who has served in Spain during the civil strife. What we are at present considering is to order Matthews 44 to Burgos or Madrid immediately upon recognition, to remain pending the arrival of a new Counselor, after which he will return to his post in Paris. Matthews should start making necessary preparations in order that he may be prepared to leave on the shortest

44 H. Freeman Matthews, First Secretary of Embassy in France.
possible notice after his orders are issued. We hope very much that this will not unduly inconvenience you, and shall undertake to shorten Matthews' absence to the bare minimum.

Welles

852.00/9065a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, March 24, 1939—noon.

196. From the Under Secretary. The Spanish Ambassador here informed me very confidentially yesterday that Besteiro had sent an emissary to Paris 2 days ago and that the latter had communicated with the Ambassador here by telephone. This emissary told the Ambassador that negotiations were now in progress between the Madrid regime and the Franco government and that Besteiro was confident that a peaceful solution would be found. He further stated that the Madrid regime was asking for a month's delay before capitulation took place in order that the Loyalist forces might be peacefully disbanded and in order that certain individuals in Loyalist territory might be afforded an opportunity of escaping before capitulation took place. According to this emissary the feeling was growing rapidly in Franco territory that a peaceful solution should be found and that Italian or German contingents should not be permitted to have a triumphant entry into Madrid.

Any information you can send me in connection with these negotiations would be helpful. Please do not disclose the source of my information. [Welles.]

Hull

852.00/9066 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, March 25, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received March 25—1: 22 p. m.]

567. For the Under Secretary. Your 196, March 24, noon. Charveriat, Director of Political Affairs at the Foreign Office, told Wilson this morning that their information indicates that the negotiations now in progress between the Madrid regime and Franco are progressing satisfactorily and that the surrender of Madrid may be expected within 2 or 3 days. Airplanes from Madrid bearing political leaders of the Madrid regime have already arrived in Algeria. It is not clear whether the surrender of Madrid will necessarily carry with it the surrender of other areas in Spain which have opposed Franco. Charveriat believes it possible that Valencia may surrender with Ma-
drid but it is doubtful regarding Cartagena and considers it possible that there may be some resistance to surrender in certain other areas.

Charveriat expressed the opinion that one of the principal reasons which has led Franco to refrain from attacking Madrid in the hope of negotiating a peaceful surrender, was his determination that there must be no triumphal parade of Italians and Germans through Madrid.

I am seeing Bonnet this afternoon and will report any further information available regarding this matter.

Bullitt

852.00/9101

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] March 27, 1939.

I received a Delegation representing the Washington Friends of Spanish Democracy, which is affiliated with the Medical Bureau and North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. Since the Loyalist Government in Spain split into two factions headed respectively by Negrin who retained the support of the Communists, and by the military Junta under Generals Miaja and Casado, the organizations in America favoring the Spanish Loyalist cause have likewise split. In any event the Delegation this afternoon, headed by Mr. Berrall and Mr. Lamberton, was much exercised by a charge, contained in an article in the New York Times Sunday written by Axelsson, that the military Junta had imprisoned some 10,000 Communists with a view to handing them over to General Franco. They said they had every reason to suppose the report was true and asked that this Government intervene to save their lives.

I replied that from the beginning of the conflict the policy of this Government had been complete non-intervention in the Spanish conflict; that we had not endeavored to make representations on behalf of any group or faction; that we had refused asylum in our Embassy or Consulates to sympathizers of either side; and that despite the occasional disappointment of partisans our officials and our Government had won the respect of all Spaniards for complete impartiality and square dealing. It was by building up this very feeling that we had been so successful in protecting American interests which were our primary concern. We were not unmindful of the dictates of humanity, but we could not become embroiled in Spanish politics. As a matter of fact, the requests of the Delegation today was less a censure of Franco than it was a censure on the present military Junta.
The Delegation said they would be somewhat relieved if they could obtain confirmation as to whether the charges were well founded or not. I told them that I saw no harm in asking the Consul at Valencia to comment on them, even though he was not in Madrid and I doubted whether he would be able to judge more than the local situation. In any event my understanding was that a vast number of Spanish Loyalist leaders had successfully left Spain, for the most part destined for Algiers.

This, according to the Delegation, raised a second question: Whether the United States could supply shipping for Spanish refugees to Latin America. I replied that the matter had not reached serious proportions but that it involved (a) negotiations by someone with the Latin American countries of reception; (b) a selection of those refugees among the many thousands from Spain who would be given first chances at immigration; and (c) far more in the way of financing than I thought they had any idea of (as a matter of fact I learned that at the very time I was receiving this Delegation Mr. Jay Allen was elsewhere in the Department with a Spaniard, Constancia de la Mora, urging that America assume the burden of transporting these Spaniards 4).

The third point the Delegation wished to bring up was an urgent appeal that this Government do not recognize the government of General Franco on the theory that the situation in Spain and the situation in Czechoslovakia were exactly parallel. I replied that they were getting into the realm of high policy and that some two weeks ago the Secretary of State had said that he was studying the matter but that no decision would be made until every angle had been explored.

Pierrepont Moffat

P. S. Some hours after the interview recorded above, the Spanish Embassy notified us that they had officially brought the Axelsson report to the knowledge of their Government, which had authorized them to give a complete denial. In fact, they maintained that they had been concentrating all their efforts in attempting to negotiate for the safety of these very lives, as well as for all human life. I asked Mr. Wendelin to telephone this to Mr. Berrall,—who agreed that in the circumstances we could not question their official statement.

P. M.

4 See memorandum of conversation by the Chief of the Division of the American Republics, March 29, p. 731.
The Vice Consul at Valencia (Wallner) to the Secretary of State

VALENCIA, March 28, 1939—1 p. m.
(Received 2:30 p. m.)

35. Ugarte has just telephoned to report that Madrid was surrendered this morning by the National Defense Council whose members have all departed except Besteiro. The entry of the Nationalist troops is expected this afternoon but the city is already bedecked with Nationalist flags. There are no disorders and all Americans are believed safe.

Valencia quiet.

__________________________
Wallner

852.00/9078: Telegram

The Vice Consul at Valencia (Wallner) to the Secretary of State

VALENCIA, March 28, 1939—5 p. m.
(Received March 29—8:55 a. m.)

36. The National Defense Council is now established in Valencia. I have had a long talk with Colonel Casado who informs me that he has surrendered the whole of Republican territory and that the army has orders to raise the white flag as the Nationalists advance. He believes that the Nationalists plan a gradual occupation and will advance along the coast from the south arriving Valencia in 10 days or 2 weeks. During that time he plans to evacuate with the tacit consent of the Nationalists about 15,000 political and syndical leaders. He is optimistic that the taking over of the entire area will be as bloodless as that of Madrid.

__________________________
Wallner

701.5211/614

Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Eric C. Wendelin of the Division of European Affairs

[WASHINGTON,] March 29, 1939.

Señor Meana* came in to see me today and referring to his conversation yesterday with Mr. Moffat (copy of memorandum thereof attached)** said that he wished to amplify the remarks which he had made at that time. He said that he and his colleagues at the Embassy,

* Custodian of American Embassy premises at Madrid.
** Second Secretary of the Spanish Embassy.
*** Not printed.
including the Ambassador, had discussed their situation and had come to the conclusion that the best course to follow would be to leave the Embassy as soon as the National Defense Council headed by General Miaja should disappear. He felt that at the outside this would occur within three or four days, and added that as a matter of fact he and his colleagues were tentatively planning to leave the Embassy this weekend. Meana said that he wished to inquire bluntly whether this course of action would be satisfactory to the Department and to this Government. He said that if for any reason we should wish them to leave sooner the Ambassador and his staff were prepared to vacate on twenty-four hours' notice.

In explanation of this proposed course of action, Meana said that the Ambassador desired on the one hand to avoid giving the impression of deserting his post so long as the Defense Council continued to function and he could be of assistance in any way to it or to this Government; on the other hand he did not wish to lay himself open to the accusation of obstinately clinging to his post when there was no longer any apparent justification for remaining. In response to my inquiry Meana said that in referring to the National Defense Council he meant specifically General Miaja, Colonel Casado, and Señor Besteiro, and no one else. Besteiro was apparently in Madrid, and therefore eliminated from further consideration. If Miaja and Casado should also eliminate themselves by leaving the country or otherwise, he and the other members of the Embassy would consider that the National Defense Council had disappeared. In that event, the Ambassador would immediately inform us of his departure from the Embassy.81

882.00/9093a: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Vice Consul at Valencia (Wallner)

WASHINGTON, March 30, 1939—5 p. m.

26. Reports are circulating in this country that numerous summary executions are taking place in the territory recently occupied by the forces of General Franco. Please report by telegraph if this is substantiated by such information as you may be able to obtain with respect to Valencia, Madrid and any other localities with which you are in contact. In addition to any specific information in this regard, we should also like to have your considered opinion regarding this

81 On March 30 the Spanish Ambassador informed the Under Secretary of State that he would vacate the Embassy with his staff on March 31 at 12 noon, leaving the Embassy property in the temporary custody of the Ambassadors of Colombia and Mexico (852.01/615).
situation in general, as well as any comment that you may be able to make as to the future attitude of the Franco authorities.

HULL

852.01/673a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs (Jordana)

WASHINGTON, April 1, 1939.

The Government of the United States desires to establish diplomatic relations with Spain and the President is prepared to nominate as Ambassador near the Spanish Government Mr. Alexander W. Weddell, at present Ambassador of the United States to the Argentine Republic. Upon receiving a telegram from Your Excellency that the appointment of Mr. Weddell is acceptable, the Government of the United States is prepared formally to reopen its mission in Spain and to send a Chargé d'Affaires ad interim pending the arrival of the Ambassador. At the same time there will be submitted to the President for his approval the name of the representative whom the Spanish Government may desire to send as Ambassador to Washington.

CORDELL HULL

[A proclamation lifting the arms embargo was signed by President Roosevelt on April 1, 1939; on the same day the Secretary of State announced the revocation of the regulations governing the export of arms to Spain and the regulations governing the solicitation and receiving of contributions for use in Spain. For texts, see Department of State, Press Releases, April 1, 1939, pages 246-247.]

852.01/576 : Telegram

The Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs (Jordana) to the Secretary of State

[Translation]

BURGOS, April 2, 1939.

[Received April 2—5:15 p. m.]

I understand that the telegram which Your Excellency sent to me yesterday signifies full recognition on the part of your republic of the national government as the sole and legitimate one of Spain. As soon as Your Excellency explicitly confirms this to me the request for a placet which you make for the designation of an ambassador will be considered and I shall ask Your Excellency that until the sending
of an ambassador by Spain your Government regard Mr. Cardenas, who up to now has been our unofficial agent in your country, as Chargé d’Affaires of Spain.

JORDANA

852.01/576: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs (Jordana)

WASHINGTON, April 3, 1939.

In reply to Your Excellency’s telegram of April 2nd, I may state that the expressed desire of the Government of the United States to establish diplomatic relations, as well as its request for the agreement of the name of a new Ambassador, carried with it de jure recognition of Your Excellency’s Government as the National Government of Spain. Pending the appointment of a Spanish Ambassador here, this Government is glad as from today to accept Mr. Cardenas as Chargé d’Affaires of Spain.

Pending the receipt of the agreement requested for Mr. Weddell as Ambassador of the United States, I will request Your Excellency to receive Mr. H. Freeman Matthews, at present First Secretary of the Embassy of the United States in Paris, as Chargé d’Affaires ad interim. Mr. Matthews will serve as Chargé d’Affaires ad interim until the arrival of an Ambassador of the United States.

Cordell Hull

701.5211/605

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] April 4, 1939.

Mr. Cardenas called at his own request. He is the present Chargé d’Affaires of Spain pending the appointment of an ambassador by the new government of Franco. He called primarily to pay his respects. I had known him well when he was here as ambassador from his country some years ago. I remarked to him that my people on the border had been through all the horrors of our Civil War and I knew how to sympathize with a people of any country who found themselves in a similar situation; that, therefore, I had visualized

H. Freeman Matthews was designated First Secretary of Embassy in Spain on April 4, 1939, and instructed to proceed to Burgos. Before he departed for Burgos he was informed by the Spanish Embassy in France that because of the overcrowded conditions at Burgos the Spanish Government preferred that the various embassies and legations establish themselves at San Sebastian.

(123M491/166, 169)
the people of Spain as a whole and without reference to the merits or
demerits of the matters in controversy; that I had only thought of
them from the standpoint of deep sympathy for all alike. Mr. Cardenas
then indicated that there were feelings and misunderstandings
existing that would need to be cleared up gradually as time went on.
I said I assumed as much; that I recalled vividly the difficulties of the
reconstruction period following our Civil War. I then emphasized
the statement that fortunately the men who had fought on both sides
in our Civil War had respect for each other’s bravery and for each
other’s honesty of purpose, with the result that many of them came
together from both sides and made a marvelous contribution to the
work of reconstruction. I then added that doubtless this same state
of mind would exist in his country and it would contribute tremendous
ly towards a correspondingly earlier reconstruction for the benefit of the distressed people of Spain; that I wished them every success
in this speedy undertaking. Mr. Cardenas did not comment on this
view but did not take issue. He then said he would like to ascertain
in strictest confidence whom we are recommending to his government
for ambassador. I then, in the same confidence, gave him the name
and a thoroughly favorable account of the record, personality and
standing of the person whom we are proposing to send as ambassador.

C[ordell] H[ull]

852.00/9107: Telegram

The Vice Consul at Valencia (Wallner) to the Secretary of State

Valencia, April 4, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received April 4—4:50 p. m.]

40. Department’s telegram No. 26, March 30, 5 p. m. With the
exception of 21 Communist members of the secret police already im-
prisoned by the National Defense Council who were shot yesterday
morning, no executions are believed yet to have taken place in Valencia.
Genuine efforts are being made to avoid acts of privation [reprisal?].
As the situation develops I shall report further.

Wallner

852.00/9158: Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary
of State

St. Jean de Luz, April 15, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received 7:19 p. m.]

618. Following brought by Matthews to Saint Jean de Luz.

"7, April 14, 11 a.m. My trip to Burgos was interesting. That
overcrowded little capital resembles nothing so much as a general
staff headquarters. Uniforms predominate. The overwhelming majority of course are Spanish but German and Italian military and civil advisers are everywhere, and the deference shown them at the Foreign Office, for instance, was quite apparent.

The period of transition from war to peace, difficult as it would be in any country, is probably more so in Spain than in most. There is much resultant confusion and red tape and administrative delays are long and unavoidable. There is as yet no clearly defined line of policy nor even significant sign posts as far as I could observe. This applies equally to economic, financial, social, and political problems, and is in part a natural result of the differing views of the component parts of Nationalist Spain. Demobilization of four or five classes is expected to start soon. I learned confidentially that orders to that effect had been suddenly withdrawn a few days ago pending clarification of the European situation and also until after the May 2 review. Troops are, however, being returned to their home garrisons and I have been told that several contingents of Moors have already left Spain.

While some arrests are still being made I believe they are on a small scale and the release of minor prisoners continues. American and British correspondents with whom I have talked, several of whom have ‘Left’ sympathies and who had just come to Burgos from Madrid, told me that they have definite knowledge of only three executions in that area since the fall of Madrid and estimate the total of not more than 20 to date. The food situation in Madrid is better and improving every day and I am told that the city is now being cleaned up.

There are persistent rumors of pending important Cabinet changes whereunder Serrano Suner would occupy an even more important role in the government as Premier than he does today and possibly also take over the Foreign Office. The new Cabinet it is rumored will likewise include two more generals and the name of Yague is mentioned. No decision has apparently been reached with respect to the restoration of the monarchy. The inevitable friction between the Phalangists with their advanced program which seems to be a combination of social reform and totalitarian methods of control and the conservative religious Requetes and similar elements is gradually coming to the surface. General Franco is still idolized and his photograph is seen in every window. Nevertheless some doubts seem to exist even among his ardent admirers as to his capacity to administrate the country in peace.[7]

Copy to Paris.

Bowers

83200/9146: Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

Rome, April 18, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received April 18—11:35 a.m.]

141. The British Naval Attaché stated this morning that the British Government had informed the Italian Government on April 6 that


it considered the Mediterranean submarine treaty (the Nyon agreement) was no longer in effect since the Spanish war had ended. He stated that the reason for which the treaty had been made had ceased to exist and for some time England had considered it of no importance.

The British Naval Attaché said further that he had been summoned to the Italian Ministry of Marine on April 14 and was asked if England insisted on the month’s notice and whether April 18 would be a suitable date for final termination of the treaty. He said he was very much astonished and informed the Ministry that due to the intervening week-end there was hardly time to get word from his Government. He was then asked if the 19th would be satisfactory and transmitted this inquiry to his Government. No reply has yet been received from London.

The persistence of rumors regarding the presence in Italy of German troops and officers is so marked and the reports come from such a variety of sources that a measure of credence is attached to them by other missions here. It may well be that German troops have been passing through Italy en route to Italian African possessions and that the greatest possible secrecy is being maintained not only because of possible foreign repercussions but primarily to avoid arousing the Italian people who might resent the presence of many German troops in their own country.

PHILLIPS

852.00/2173: Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

ST. JEAN DE LUZ, April 25, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received 8:44 p. m.]

631. From Matthews:

"No. 25, April 25, 6 p. m. I had a long talk with Gazel yesterday afternoon. He said that the French attitude with respect to Spain is one of ‘considered optimism’. By this he meant that after carefully weighing all the factors involved the French are ‘optimistic’. The various reported troop movements including those in Spanish Morocco have been explained as necessary to facilitate food supplies for the troops in question (he emphasized the general food shortage in Spain) and this explanation seemed well founded. There were to be no troop movements in the region of the Pyrenees of sufficient importance to

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* Counselor of the French Embassy in Spain.*
worry the French. 'And I can assure you that we are well informed on these matters' he added. While the French would have preferred perhaps a somewhat different distribution of troops in Spain they accepted the reasons given as logical (food, return to home regions, et cetera) and felt that in addition as a 'small favor' to Spain's recent allies some movements were made to help German and Italian withdrawal as soon as practicable and their wish to detract attention from the east. He felt that the German fleet maneuvers were along the same line. He confirmed the departure of several thousand Italian legionaries from Spain and active preparation of the German Condor legion (specialists) to depart immediately after the victory parade at Madrid, the date of which is not yet officially set. What interests France more than the presence of the Italian legionaries is their air planes; there are at the present time some 50 in Mallorca and an unknown additional quantity in continental Spain.

Perhaps the most important factor in the French Embassy's optimism was the solemn and categorical assurance given Marshal Pétain and Gazel on Saturday by General Jordana that no secret military or semimilitary commitment has been given by Spain to either Germany or Italy other than what is contained in the published text of the Anti-Comintern Pact. Gazel said that he warned Jordana on the danger that the Germans and Italians might take advantage of Spanish friendship on their presence in Spain to make temporary use of Spanish territory for naval or air bases and referred specifically in this connection to the unauthorized bombing of Minorca by Italian planes during the surrender negotiations on the British war vessel. He said that Marshal Pétain left Jordana in no doubt as to the consequences of such misuse of Spanish territory. Jordana was quite cordial throughout the interview.

Gazel likewise seemed more encouraged that German and Italian influences will progressively diminish and more convinced that the country's present state of exhaustion will constitute an overwhelmingly determinant in favor of Spanish neutrality in the event of a general war.

In spite of Spanish complaints at delays in returning Republican arms and munitions, Gazel said these are in part at least due to Spanish procrastination; for example, a number of Republican planes (most of which are of American manufacture, he added) have been awaiting delivery at Toulouse for some days but no Spanish pilots have arrived yet to take them and the same is true of crews for Spanish fishing boats and merchant ships.

The French Consul at Alicante has at last been released. The daily influx into Spain of refugees, however, continues at 400."

Copy to Paris.

Bowers
The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

St. Jean de Luz, May 1, 1939—7 p.m.
[Received May 1—6:20 p.m.]

635. From Matthews:

36. May 1, 1 p.m. My 30. I returned from Madrid last night. I found the Embassy in excellent condition with exception of the room where the shell hit. It is occupied at present only by Ugarte and his wife and I requested them to continue residing there for another few weeks.

The food situation in Madrid is much better than I had expected. One sees in the markets and stores apparently adequate quantities of vegetables, oranges, bread, meat and plenty of fresh fish. The money situation, however, makes it extremely difficult for the poor to purchase their necessities. One sees thousands of apparently unemployed strolling the streets. The housing shortage is most acute.

Large sections of the city and its poorer suburbs have been completely destroyed and to the newcomer it is indeed a saddening sight (I am told that the damage to Madrid is many fold greater than that of Barcelona). Little or nothing has been done as yet in the way of demolition, new construction, or even clearing away the 6-foot thick stone barricades which line many of the streets. In fact except for the constant coming and going of troops and military trucks life seems rather at a standstill. Arrests continue at the rate of 50 or more daily and the work of depuracion is proceeding slowly and methodically increasing the sense of suspense and uneasiness. Out of some four or five thousand “trials” which have taken place in Madrid since its capture I am told that but 50 death sentences have been handed down and only 7 of these so far approved by Franco and carried out. As to the rumors circulating of other secret summary executions I could find no reasonable basis of credence.

Underneath one senses an extreme bitterness of feeling in Madrid which greatly exceeds that of other regions. For the present it is kept below the surface but its existence does not bode well for the future. The Nationalists firmly believe that there were 75,000 private and official assassinations in Madrid alone. Whether or not the figure is exaggerated is of no importance in the present situation. The fact that it is so unanimously believed makes it difficult to visualize any real reconciliation in the near future with those who on their side have poignant memories of bombing, shelling and starvation.

There is in addition the widespread difference of views among the Nationalists (Phalangists, Requetes, and the military “the fifth column” that stayed in Madrid and those who now come in as victors). The younger officers particularly are enjoying their glory and authority and cannot relish the thought of demobilization and possible search for less congenial employment. While I do not wish to overestimate their influence it is this hot-headed irresponsible element which would relish Spanish participation in a European war and on whom Axis
methods of persuasion would be most strongly concentrated. Spain’s need for peace, however, and growing realization of her economic weaknesses will constitute too great a deterrent I believe to permit those rasher counsels to prevail. [Matthews.]

Copy to Paris.

BOWERS

852.00/3199: Telegram

The Chargé in Spain (Matthews) to the Secretary of State

SAN SEBASTIAN, May 15, 1939—9 a.m.
[Received May 15—7:50 a.m.]

50. I have been invited along with other Chiefs of Mission to attend the victory celebrations. As they are now expected to take place on the 19th and 20th I propose unless otherwise instructed to leave here for Madrid Wednesday noon stopping off at Burgos for discussions at the Foreign Office en route.

Matthews

852.00/9211:

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Spain (Matthews)

No. 575

WASHINGTON, June 8, 1939.

The Secretary of State refers to the penultimate paragraph of telegram No. 631, April 25, 8:00 p.m., from the Ambassador at St. Jean de Luz, which referred to a number of Republican planes, allegedly of American manufacture, reported at that time to be held by the French authorities at Toulouse.

An inquiry addressed by the Embassy in Paris to the appropriate French authorities has elicited the reply that the only aircraft of American manufacture which landed at Toulouse at the time of the retreat of the Spanish Republican army were five Douglas commercial transport planes belonging to the Spanish aviation company Lineas Aéreas Postales Españolas. These planes were exported from the United States to Spain before the civil strife in that country began, two under licenses issued by the Secretary of State in November 1935 and April 1936, and the others prior to November 1935, when the licensing system established by the Neutrality Act first became effective. It would not appear, therefore, that the presence of these planes with the Republican army resulted from any violation of the United States law prohibiting the export of arms, ammunition and implements of war to Spain during the existence of the state of civil strife in that country.
It may be added that the appropriate French authorities have informed the Embassy in Paris that these planes have been returned to the Spanish authorities.

352.0022/59 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Chile (Trueblood) to the Secretary of State*

SANTIAGO, June 15, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received 5:35 p. m.]

108. At a meeting called by the Foreign Minister this morning of the Chiefs of Missions of the American Republics accredited here, Señor Ortega explained the situation created by the Spanish Government's refusal to recognize the right of asylum affecting 17 Republican Spaniards now lodged in Chilean Embassy in Madrid. In addition to refusing to allow these persons (none of whom the Minister said was guilty of civil crimes) safe conduct to leave Spain, the Spanish Government has declined to accept a Chilean Ambassador until the issue is settled. In view of the impasse thus created and in view of the fact that in the Chilean Government's opinion a juridical question only is involved, the Foreign Minister stated he had decided to place the matter before the representatives of the American Republics, the great majority of which endorse the principle of asylum on both legal and humanitarian grounds. He therefore hoped that the other Republics would see their way to make clear in a friendly way to the Spanish Government their spirit of continental solidarity in regard to this problem.

Representatives of Guatemala, Bolivia, Dominican Republic and Argentina spoke briefly and expressed their personal sympathy with Chile's position.

A memorandum setting forth the above was handed each diplomatic representative with the request that the matter be brought to the attention of their respective governments. The text and translation will be sent by next air mail leaving here June 18.\(^{55a}\)

Immediately following meeting the Acting Chief of the Diplomatic Section explained to me that while his Government was thoroughly aware of our Government's attitude regarding asylum they had not wished to leave us out of their collective consultation. He pointed out that Cuba and Mexico had been included although they did not have diplomatic relations with the new Spanish Government. He said that his Government hoped I would cable my Government regarding the matter which I agreed to do and added that the Chilean Ambassador in Washington has also received appropriate instructions.

\(^{55a}\) Not printed.
The Embassy feels that anything we could properly do to assist in clearing up the present unsatisfactory situation would be desirable. In connection with this matter see Embassy's despatch No. 708, June 2, page 3.

TRUEBLOOD

352.0022/60: Telegram

The Chargé in Chile (Trueblood) to the Secretary of State

SANTIAGO, June 17, 1939—noon.
[Received 2:20 p.m.]

110. I was called to the Foreign Office this morning and given by Acting Chief of Diplomatic Section the following memorandum:

"Does the United States Government believe that it will be possible for it to cooperate in connection with Chile's démarche regarding the Madrid asilados? In case of an affirmative answer, could the Washington Government make a démarche before the Madrid Government in this regard, and support the Chilean initiative through the intermediary of its missions in America?"

He said that replies were slow in coming in due to need for consulting Presidents in various countries.

A well informed official of the Foreign Office with whom I spoke yesterday emphasized the fact that the Foreign Minister considered inclusion of the United States in this consultation as an act of special deference. He added that he thought the real motive for Spain's intransigence in the present case was lack of desire to maintain relations with the Popular Front Government here.

TRUEBLOOD

352.0022/60: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)

WASHINGTON, June 20, 1939—7 p.m.

36. The Chilean Government has informed this Government of the requests it has made of the Governments of the other American republics for support in the controversy it is now having with the Spanish Government with regard to the question of political refugees in the Chilean Embassy in Madrid. It has informed this Government that it fully recognizes that the Government of the United States cannot officially support its thesis with regard to the giving of asylum in diplomatic missions to political refugees because of the consistent

* Not printed.
policy which this Government has pursued over a period of many years in this regard, but it has nevertheless asked for the interposition of our friendly good offices for the purpose of furthering a satisfactory solution of the dispute which has arisen between Chile and Spain.

The Chilean Government has been informed, through the Chilean Ambassador in Washington, that this Government as it anticipated, did not feel it possible to make representations to the Spanish Government in support of a policy with regard to the giving of asylum in diplomatic missions which this Government has consistently refused to support in the past, but that if there were anything which the American Embassy in Madrid could appropriately do within the limitations described to indicate the hope of the Government of the United States that a friendly solution of the difficulties which have arisen might be found, it would be instructed accordingly. The question is consequently left to your discretion. If you feel that any useful purpose would be served by expressing the hope of the United States that a friendly solution of this problem may be found, you are instructed to express such hope in the name of your Government informally and orally.

HULL

352.0022/60: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Chile (Trueblood)

WASHINGTON, June 20, 1939—7 p. m.

94. Your 110, June 17, noon. As the result of a conversation held with the Chilean Ambassador this morning, the following instructions have been sent to the American Ambassador in Spain.

[Here follows text of telegram No. 36, June 20, 1939, 7 p. m., to the Ambassador in Spain, printed supra.]

The Ambassador made no reference to any desire on the part of his Government that the Government of the United States support the Chilean initiative through the intermediary of its missions in the other American republics. You may inform the Foreign Office orally of the substance of the instructions sent to the American Ambassador to Spain and advise the Foreign Office, with regard to the second sentence in the memorandum given you by the Foreign Office as quoted in your telegram under reference, that inasmuch as the Government of the United States has consistently refused to adopt the policy with regard to the giving of refuge to political refugees in diplomatic missions which has been followed by many of the other American republics, and as was officially made known by the Government of the United States at both the Habana and Montevideo Confer-
ences, this Government is unable, much to its regret, to comply with
the request made by the Chilean Government that it support the initia-
tive of the latter through the missions of the United States in the
other American republics. You may state that this Government
greatly appreciates the friendly courtesy shown it by the Chilean
Government with regard to this question, but that it cannot now
officially support a policy which it has itself over a period of many
years refused to adopt.

HULL

352.0022/61: Telegram

The Chargé in Chile (Trueblood) to the Secretary of State

SANTIAGO, June 21, 1939—3 p.m.
[Received 6:44 p.m.]

112. At noon I outlined orally our Government’s position as set
forth in the Department’s telegram No. 94 of June 20, 7 p.m. to
Acting Chief of Diplomatic Section of Foreign Office, who expressed
the Chilean Government’s appreciation of our desire to be helpful.
He reiterated the fact that they fully understood our Government’s
limitations in the present case. He added, however, that his Govern-
ment very sincerely hoped that the discretionary authority granted
the American Ambassador in Madrid would in fact be exercised (refer-
ence last sentence section 1 of the Department’s telegram No. 94). He
referred again to his Government’s belief that this is an opportunity
for displaying continental solidarity. He said that everything was
proceeding satisfactorily (Chile is particularly elated over the Ar-
gentine response) despite unexpected delays in several countries and
attempts on the part of Spanish diplomatic representative in some
countries (notably Central America) to obstruct the Chilean démarche.
The Spanish Government’s attitude he said continues to be com-
pletely intransigent.

TRUEBLOOD

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State
(Welles)

[WASHINGTON,] August 7, 1939.

The Spanish Chargé d’Affaires called to see me this afternoon by
instruction of his Government. He said that his Government had been

* For correspondence concerning the Sixth International Conference of Ameri-
can States, held at Habana, January 16—February 20, 1928, see Foreign Rela-
tions, 1928, vol. iii, pp. 527 ff. For correspondence concerning the Seventh Inter-
national Conference of American States, held at Montevideo, December 3—26, 1933,
see ibid., 1933, vol. iv, pp. 1 ff.
informed that the Government of Chile was once more taking steps in order to obtain the active support of all of the American Republics in behalf of the contention of Chile that under the rules of diplomatic asylum which should be accorded political refugees the present Government of Spain had no right to demand of the Chilean Chargé d’Affaires in Madrid the surrender to the judicial authorities of Spain of the eighteen political refugees now sheltered in the Chilean Embassy. The Spanish Government had likewise heard that the Chilean Government was endeavoring to obtain the consent of the United States Government to mediate in the dispute which had arisen between the Spanish Government and the Chilean Government, and it desired this Government to be informed in the most friendly manner that the Spanish Government would not find it possible to accept mediation in this question on the part of any other Government since it believed that it was entirely a question involving the national sovereignty of Spain.

I told the Chargé d’Affaires that I had discussed this question with the Spanish Ambassador some six weeks prior to the departure of the latter from the United States, and I had explained to him at that time that the United States Government had made it clear at the Inter-American Conferences of 1928 and of 1933 that it could not subscribe to inter-American conventions providing for the right of diplomatic asylum since this Government did not acknowledge such right within the United States and since this Government had further refused to authorize its diplomatic representatives in foreign countries to extend the right of asylum to refugees who sought shelter within American embassies and legations. I said that in consequence of this traditional practice on the part of the United States, this Government had stated, when it had been approached by the Government of Chile some two months ago on this subject, that it could not support the position of the Government of Chile and that, for the same reason, it would find it impossible to make any representations to the Spanish Government in the matter.

I stated that I was somewhat surprised by this message delivered to me today by the Spanish Chargé d’Affaires as I had taken it for granted, since I had heard nothing further on the matter from the Chilean Government for at least six weeks, that the question had been amicably settled through direct negotiations between Chile and Spain. The Chargé d’Affaires replied that he was equally surprised upon receiving this message from his Government since he likewise had taken it for granted that the situation had been adjusted.

Señor de Silva said that the Spanish Under Secretary of State, Señor Barcenas, had spoken to him about the matter before the Chargé’s departure from Spain and had given him to understand
that while some of the refugees in the Chilean Embassy were writers and intellectuals against whom the present Spanish Government had nothing, there were one or two of the individuals who had taken refuge who were accused of criminal acts and that it was these latter that the Spanish Government felt it necessary to submit to the courts of trial. I told the Spanish Chargé that as he undoubtedly knew, the repercussions of this incident had been very considerable throughout the American continent and that I regretted, therefore, the fact that the matter had not been settled in a satisfactory way.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

352.0022/74: Telegram

The Chargé in Chile (Frost) to the Secretary of State

SANTIAGO, August 9, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received 6:11 p. m.]

123. Referring to the Department's telegram No. 94, of June 20, 7 p. m., the Foreign Minister last evening summoned the Chiefs of Mission representing all American Republics and in impressive round table assembly made a brief statement, and caused to be read aloud a lengthy report from the Chilean Chargé at Madrid, respecting the intransigent and truculent attitude of the Spanish Foreign Office on the question of the political refugees now under asylum in the Chilean Embassy there. He then handed us an extensive printed memorandum summarizing the facts and principles as seen by Chile and also the following suggestions (verbatim translation):

"The American Governments should give telegraphic instructions to their diplomatic representatives in Spain that they jointly manifest directly to General Franco the pleasure with which they would view the granting by the Burgos government of safe conducts with the guaranties necessary for leaving the country to those persons who are at present in the Chilean Embassy at Madrid and who sought refuge there by virtue of an eminently American principle, that of political asylum. The American Governments should express their confidence that the Burgos government will wish to solve in this manner its controversy with Chile, as a demonstration of its desire to maintain the ties of traditional friendship which have ever united Spain and the American countries."

After listening to Senor Ortega's remarks and the reading of the report of the Chilean Chargé d'Affaires, and after receiving the two memoranda above mentioned, the four senior Ambassadors present spoke briefly but with great gravity promising to urge the acceptance by their governments of the suggestions in view of the importance and
sacredness of the principle involved. As the meeting adjourned many of the other diplomatic representatives gave similar informal assurances to the Foreign Minister.

Comment: It would appear that Chile is likely to be successful in securing this joint protest at Madrid, and that attitude in the matter is commanding solid support; so that the Franco government will find its relations with all of Latin America compromised unless it makes an early adjustment.

The Assistant Chief of the Diplomatic Section emphasized to me privately that in view of fact that all of the Latin American nations are acting in accord his Ministry has felt that the American Government should be consulted and informed, since Chile and the other Governments should not wish to seem to leave us on the outside. The Foreign Minister informed me that he quite comprehends the attitude of the United States, and highly appreciates the instructions already given to the American Ambassador to Spain. I understand 10 days or more are likely to elapse before arrangements can be completed for the formal protest to General Franco.

Frost

352.0022/75 : Telegram

The Chargé in Chile (Frost) to the Secretary of State

SANTIAGO, August 12, 1939—11 a. m. [Received 2:07 p. m.]

124. Reference my 123, August 9, 3 p. m. Chile has received favorable telegraphic replies from Panama, Cuba, Venezuela, Uruguay, Guatemala, Salvador, Bolivia, Ecuador and Paraguay, with oral assurances from Argentina and Brazil. Publications here of Chilean memorandum have evoked universal popular approval including that of Rightists. New Franco Cabinet contains four Ministers who either received asylum in Chilean Embassy at Madrid or have personal friendship here. Accordingly there is some hope that Franco may forestall joint protest plan by allowing present asilados to leave Spain without committing his Government on international law aspect.38 Private remarks to me by British Ambassador and German Chargé indicate both are intensely interested.

Frost

38 In October the Ambassador in Chile reported that 4 of the 14 political refugees still in the Chilean Embassy in Spain were to be permitted to leave Spain; and again in May 1940 he reported that the difficulties were well on the way to a friendly solution and that the Chilean Ambassador would leave shortly to assume charge of the Embassy in Spain.
Memorandum of Conversation, by the Adviser on Political Relations (Dunn)

[WASHINGTON,] January 30, 1939.

The French Ambassador came in this afternoon and presented the attached note, a translation of which I am also attaching. As will be seen, the French Government desires to know the form in which this Government would be able to participate in assistance to the alleviation of the sufferings of the Spanish refugees now pouring across the French frontier.

I communicated immediately with Mr. Norman Davis, Chairman of the American Red Cross, to ascertain what steps had been taken by the Red Cross with regard to this situation. Based upon information from Mr. Davis, I told the French Ambassador that the Secretary General of the League of Red Cross Societies, of which Mr. Norman Davis is President, had asked his approval for an appeal to be made to the National Red Cross Societies, members of the League, to give assistance to the French Red Cross in this Spanish refugee situation. Mr. Davis has given his approval of such an appeal, and authorized me to state that the American Red Cross would view with the most sympathetic attitude any appeal from the League of Red Cross Societies or from the French Red Cross for assistance for these refugees. Mr. Davis authorized me to say that possibly the most expeditious contribution the American Red Cross could make would be the sending of foodstuffs or wheat, that there were some difficulties to be overcome in arranging for the transportation and delivery of such a contribution, but that the American Red Cross would gladly undertake to solve those difficulties in order to be of as much help as it could in the circumstances.

After telling the Ambassador of what had been done and what might be done by the American Red Cross, I pointed out to him that there were no funds at the disposal of this Government for participation in this Spanish refugee emergency, and that it would not be possible for this Government to allocate any funds to that purpose in the absence of an express appropriation for the purpose by Congress. I further mentioned that it usually took some little time for such an appropriation to be considered and authorized, and that in view of the emergency nature of the work to be undertaken, it would seem highly

* Continued from Foreign Relations, 1938, vol. i, pp. 364–383. See also ante, pp. 729–748 passim.
* * Not printed.
advisable for any approach along these lines to be made directly from the French Red Cross to the American Red Cross Society, as it was possible in certain circumstances for the Government to facilitate the furnishing of wheat to the American Red Cross for purposes of this kind. I explained to the Ambassador that I made this suggestion because the American Government was most anxious to be of any assistance it could in alleviating the suffering of these refugees, but as no funds were available to it for relief purposes outside of this country, I felt that this Government's contribution could best be arranged through the action and direction of the American Red Cross Society.

With regard to the question of admitting into this country a certain number of Spanish refugees, I explained to the Ambassador that the admission of aliens into this country was, of course, regulated by our immigration laws, and it would not be possible to waive any of the requirements of those laws without the specific authority of Congress. I also informed the Ambassador that the annual quota of immigrant visas permitted to be issued to Spaniards was 252, and that at this time a much larger number of applications for visas had been received from Spaniards. I felt, therefore, that the question of admitting any of these refugees to this country was a difficult one, and would not appear to be within the possibilities of consideration as an immediate measure of relieving the difficulties of the situation.

The Ambassador thanked me for this information, and stated that he would inform his Government accordingly.

JAMES CLEMENT DUNN

852.48/363a: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, February 1, 1939—7 p.m.

63. Please telegraph what arrangements the French Government has made with regard to the entrance into France of Spanish refugees, the approximate number already permitted to enter, and the estimate of the further number which will be permitted entry.

HULL

852.48/364: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, January [February] 2, 1939—5 p.m.
[Received 6:12 p.m.]

190. Your 63, February 1, 7 p.m. We are informed by the Foreign Office that while the Franco-Spanish frontier is closed to refugees in
practice it is wide open and since the fall of Barcelona upwards of 60,000 refugees have been permitted to enter France from Catalonia. The frontier is closed because France does not wish to encourage the entrance of a large number of Spanish refugees who could be provided for in Spain. For obvious reasons with the presence in France of some 3,500,000 foreigners including almost 100,000 refugees from Central Europe the French authorities do not wish to further complicate a difficult problem. Of the 60,000 admitted it is estimated that from 45,000 to 50,000 are women and children. In addition to the latter old and wounded men have been and are being admitted together with a certain number of male refugees of military age whose lives are considered menaced because of political reasons. An undetermined number have entered clandestinely.

It is also estimated that there remain on the Spanish side of the frontier approximately 500,000 persons who would cross to France if permitted. During the past 3 days about 8,000 persons daily have crossed into France. The French are exerting themselves to stem the tide and to cooperate with the Figueras authorities in persuading the population to remain in Spain.

The French also plan to cooperate with the Spanish authorities in feeding the destitute in the frontier area.

Frontier control is in the hands of the Ministry of the Interior and the military authorities and General Falgade, the commanding officer of the Pyrenees-Orientales district who has charge of 50,000 troops, has detailed approximately 10,000 men to assist in the reception of the refugees and also in preventing a disorderly influx. The transport of the refugees to various French departments removed from the frontier is organized and we understand that there is no important congestion on the French side of the line. The bulk of the refugees are being housed in available public buildings of one sort or another such as schools and colleges and in private properties placed at the disposal of the government or requisitioned for the purpose, monasteries convents, et cetera.

The problem is one of course which carries with it a burden of expense to the French Government. For that reason we are informed the Government would welcome contributions of foodstuffs for use in the nourishment of the refugees. We are informed by the Acting Agricultural Attaché that he has received a telegraphic inquiry from his department desiring to know whether the French Government would welcome donations of foodstuffs. That question is answered in the affirmative and it is also understood from our conversations with the responsible officer of the Foreign Office that there should be no difficulty concerning the free entry of such material into France.
The French authorities are exercising great care in respect of sanitation and the necessary steps are being taken to prevent the spread of contagion.

The utter confusion and panic which have existed in eastern Catalonia over a period of days has brought to hundreds of innocent people particularly women, children, and the infirm untold privation and suffering. Children have been frozen to death and many have died of hardship and want. Still others have gone insane and have fallen ill from the terrors and the fatigue of the exodus. I am informed by the representative of the American Friends Service Committee which is active in the distribution of foodstuffs that the work of organizing the lodging and feeding of refugees in France is progressing very satisfactorily and that the Government is assisted by a number of private relief organizations. France, of course, is making an important contribution to alleviate their suffering and extend them hospitality. I feel strongly that the situation is one which should appeal to American charity and that any contribution which we may be able to make to relieve these unfortunates will be fully justified.

Bullitt

852.45/378: Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

St. Jean de Luz, February 13, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received February 13—11:30 a. m.]

578. Ernestina Fleishmann, niece of Sam Untermyer, married to a Spaniard, escaped from refugee camp and is now in Paris. She and others describe treatment as atrocious with shelter for but a few in cattle sheds. Franco agents are permitted by the French to go among the refugees attacking the Spanish Government and urging the soldiers to go to Franco territory where they are promised food, clothing and money. Among these are the Americans released by the Government and awaiting evacuation when Barcelona fell. If, as I understand it, money is available for their repatriation I suggest that their release for that purpose be requested of the French Government. In view of the character of this contest suggest that some one representing us may well visit this camp to report on what is transpiring. Will go myself if instructed.

2. Viscount Momblas took me aside at Egyptian Legation last night to discuss effect of fall of Barcelona on the flour distribution

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* Presumably Samuel Untermyer, New York lawyer.
* Representing Franco's Foreign Office at St. Jean de Luz.
there. He says conditions are very bad and that help is needed and asks if the portion allotted for that region will be sent under changed conditions. He assumed it will be since the distribution was non-political. I expressed gratification on hearing him admit it was nonpolitical, in view of the fact that the Franco press had attacked us for sending flour to Loyalist territory while suppressing the fact that flour was sent to Franco territory far in excess of the proportionate needs. He apologized for that.

I asked him if Franco would give a guarantee of safety to ships taking flour for Loyalist territory into Loyalist ports.

He implied this could be arranged if the flour meant originally for Barcelona continues to be sent.

I suggested that this be discussed with proper agency and I be informed of the intentions under the new conditions and in the event the flour goes to Barcelona I be permitted to say that this is conditioned on guarantee from Franco that there will be no interference with the shipments intended for the starving children of Madrid and Valencia. We are in position to demand and receive this assurance. Would appreciate an early reply.

BOWERS

852.48/378: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France

WASHINGTON, February 13, 1939—7 p.m.

B—478. Your 578, February 13, 1 p.m., has been read with interest. We would not consider it appropriate even to ask the French Government to permit one of our officials to inspect their camps.

Suggest you repeat passage dealing with release of American citizens to the Embassy in Paris, which in turn can take up the matter of their repatriation with representative in Paris of the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

The second section of your telegram dealing with relief shipments has been referred to the American Red Cross.64

HULL

64 By telegram No. B—479, February 15, 7 p.m., the Secretary of State informed the Ambassador that a contribution of 750,000 French francs had been cabled by the American Red Cross on February 13 to the French Red Cross Society for Spanish refugee relief (852.48/336).
SPAIN

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

[Extract]

[WASHINGTON,] March 27, 1939.

The Spanish Ambassador called to see me this afternoon.

The Ambassador asked most earnestly whether this Government would not permit American warships in the Mediterrane an to take to some French port refugees from Loyalist territory who were trying to flee from Spain in order to save their lives. I told the Ambassador that I would be very glad to take the matter up again, but that as he knew, we had felt it necessary to adhere to a rigid policy of not permitting our warships to be used as a place of refuge by other than American nationals and the nationals of some of the other American republics.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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852.48/420a: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, March 28, 1939—7 p.m.

211. Department is advised that groups representing Spanish Loyalist Government are endeavoring to arrange for ships to evacuate Spanish refugees principally from Valencia and Alicante. They fear such ships might be taken by the warships under control of General Franco unless assistance were given them by French and British Navy patrols so as to assure that they would not be captured or sunk. Kindly inquire of the Foreign Office whether the government contemplates assisting ships bearing refugees to escape.

This also sent to London.\(^6\)

HULL

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832.48/430

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of the American Republics (Duggan)

[WASHINGTON,] March 29, 1939.

Sra. de la Mora came to call at the suggestion of Mr. Leland Stowe, correspondent of the Herald-Tribune. Sra. de la Mora informed

\(^6\) As telegram No. 216, March 28, 7 p.m.
me that she had been acting as press liaison for the Foreign Office in Spain with the foreign correspondents practically throughout the war. Recently the Negrín Government sent her to the United States to perform certain commissions. One of her assignments has been to endeavor to find ways and means of assisting Spanish Loyalist refugees, particularly those in France, to find new homes. Sra. de la Mora thought that in as much as most of the Spanish refugees were peasant farmers, the objection entertained by many of the American countries to receiving refugees would be overcome since there would be no question about selected refugee farmers remaining on the soil.

I told Señora de la Mora that practically all of the other American countries were requiring that refugees bring with them a rather substantial sum of money, and inquired whether funds had been raised to supply immigrants with sufficient funds to meet the immigration regulations of countries requiring the deposit of a guarantee. She replied that the furnishing of guarantee funds would be a problem because there were no rich citizens of Spanish descent or connection in the United States who would give large sums in the way that certain German-Jewish families had done.

Señora de la Mora stated that the Mexican Government had indicated its preparedness to accept 50,000 Spanish refugees. She stated that Señor Bassols, the Mexican Minister to Germany [France?], who at present is in Mexico City, was expected to arrive in New York City on April 7 with more information about the Mexican offer.

Señora de la Mora stated that if the Mexican offer was a bona fide one, the next problem to be overcome would be the transportation of the refugees from Spain to Mexico. She ventured the thought that both the French and the British Governments might contribute something toward the transportation of refugees if the United States were to make a contribution.

In the ensuing discussion Señora de la Mora was advised that it would be futile for this Government to give detailed consideration to the question of transporting the refugees until the Mexican Government had presented a fully developed plan, and even then the extent to which this Government might be able to assist would probably prove disappointing since in no case could it involve a cash contribution. While expressing disappointment, Sra. de la Mora stated her belief that if there was some way in which the Department could show an interest in raising the funds for the transportation
of refugees, such action would be extremely helpful in aiding private organizations in securing contributions.

Señora de la Mora gave her name and address as follows:

Constancia de la Mora,
Care of Jay Allen,
21 Washington Square,
New York City.
Gramercy 72091

882.49/422: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, March 29, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received 2:11 p. m.]

589. Your 211, March 28, 7 p. m. Foreign Office advises French Government does not contemplate convoying or protecting ships of foreign registry bearing refugees from Central Spain. Our informant stated that it was the belief here that the British view is identical with the French.

Foreign Office states the question has not been raised with it officially thus far. Recently the Military Junta at Madrid inquired through French Consul whether French Government would cooperate in the evacuation of some 10,000 persons from Central Spain destined for Mexico via Algeria, the evacuation to be by British vessels. An informal reply was made through Consul that the French would be glad to cooperate but could not understand the necessity of disembarkation of such refugees in Algeria and that the question would seem to lie between Great Britain and Mexico. The Military Junta did not press the question further. The Foreign Office suggested that were it found necessary the question raised by the Department could be taken up with the Franco authorities by the French Government on humanitarian grounds requesting the Franco authorities not to interfere with the departure of such refugees.

During the course of our conversation it was also learned that the Franco authorities are still accepting the return of but an insignificant number, approximately 300 daily, of the Spanish refugees now in France. It is hoped in a few days to increase this number to 6,000 or 7,000 daily. It was stated that the French Government has offered to assume the responsibility of feeding the refugees temporarily after their return to Spain, this because the Franco authorities, among other reasons, have been reluctant to accept large numbers of the refugees on account of the shortage of food and supplies.

BULLITT
The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

London, March 29, 1939—8 p.m.

[Received March 29—4:45 p.m.]

416. Your 216, March 28, 7 p.m. Inquiry has been made at the Foreign Office which has promised early reply.

An official invited attention to the Prime Minister’s statement on March 8 in the House of Commons in reply to the question whether in view of action by the British Fleet at the beginning of the Civil War in rescuing refugees from various Spanish ports who were in danger from the government side, the Prime Minister would see that the fleet is now employed on similar humanitarian work in rescuing persons who are in danger from General Franco’s side.

The Prime Minister replied that the Government was not prepared to act without the concurrence of the Spanish Government, but that in the event of an agreement being reached between the latter and some responsible authority on the Republican side for the safeguarding and evacuation of refugees, prisoners and others, the Government would be prepared to consider assisting in the execution of the agreement, if asked to do so, and if satisfied that its assistance was required for humanitarian reasons.

Referring to the Prime Minister’s first statement above, the official said that General Franco had been asked for his concurrence and refused and that the British had therefore stood on the Prime Minister’s statement as a whole. He said it had been their view that it would be out of the question for British men-of-war to enter Spanish territorial waters to protect refugee ships without the consent of the Spanish Government, and that convoy would in any case be futile if the refugees had no certain destination known to be willing to admit them.

Kennedy

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852.48/426 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

London, March 30, 1939—7 p.m.

[Received March 30—3:46 p.m.]

423. My 416, March 29, 8 p.m. Following our inquiry the Foreign Office requested the Spanish Chargé d’Affaires to call and asked him to inquire again of General Franco whether he would be prepared to

*See footnote 65, p. 791.
allow the evacuation of refugees. The Chargé d'Affaires said that he would be glad to transmit the inquiry but expressed as his personal opinion that General Franco could not, in the face of public opinion in Spain, give his consent to the evacuation of political refugees. The officials here have little hope that General Franco will modify his previous stand and, with all Spanish ports now in his hands, they think it more unlikely than ever that he would give his consent for this purpose. They will inform us of the reply from Burgos.

The Foreign Office points out that the British Navy, of course, has standing instructions when in Spanish ports where there is trouble, not to refuse admission to the ships to individuals who request it and who are apparently in danger of their lives. The Foreign Office also confirms reports that a considerable number of refugees were taken on board British men-of-war yesterday and today under these circumstances. These instructions to the navy, however, are quite apart from any question of giving protection to private ships entering Spanish waters for the purpose of removing refugees.

\[852.00/9144\]

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

\[WASHINGTON,\] April 7, 1939.

Mr. Hamilton Fish Armstrong 67 telephoned me from New York this afternoon. He said he had been lunching with the Mexican Ambassador at Paris, who was returning to his post duly instructed with regard to the admission to Mexico of Spanish refugees. These will include all those who cannot return to Spain for political reasons, the decision in each case to be made by a group of Spanish Republican officials of various shades, acting under the auspices of the Mexican Embassy in Paris. The numbers will probably run between 40,000 and 50,000.

When these refugees reach Mexico it will cost about $5,000,000 to place them, and various groups are supplying the necessary funds, land, equipment, et cetera. Thus the remaining problem is transportation. Part of the transportation will probably be British; there is a committee of Parliamentarians trying to arrange matters with a British Line running to Mexico. The rest of the transportation, the Ambassador hopes, will be American.

Mr. Armstrong asked whether I thought the Red Cross could undertake this through the Maritime Commission, or at least supervise it. I replied that my understanding was to the effect that Mr. Davis felt

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67 Editor, Foreign Affairs.
that resettlement was not a Red Cross function, and that it would be impossible to take up one refugee resettlement problem without being willing to assist in all. However, I could not speak for Mr. Davis, and thought that whether or not the Red Cross could appear in the picture, Mr. Davis could undoubtedly give some helpful advice.

Mr. Armstrong added that he was most interested in the Spanish refugees, not only for humanitarian reasons, but because the President’s Advisory Committee was being severely criticized because it was helping only Jews or Catholics. Besides, he felt that it would be greatly to our national interest to have these Spanish refugees in territory contiguous to us.

The Mexican Ambassador to France said that he had not had time to tell Mr. Daniels* about his new instructions as the final decisions had only been made a few hours before he left.

I told Mr. Armstrong that I would at once call this conversation to the attention of the interested officers of the Department, and hoped that he would keep in touch with us.

PIERREFONT MOFFAT

852.48/437: Telegram

The Chargé in Spain (Matthews) to the Secretary of State

SAN SEBASTIAN via PARIS, April 26, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received April 27—6:35 a. m.]

32. I learn that some three million bushels of wheat contributed by our Government to the American Red Cross are about to be shipped to Spain for distribution to the needy by the Auxilio Social in cooperation with the American Friends Organization; and that American business concerns with interests in Spain are being asked to defray the expenses of transportation. If the foregoing is correct I wonder if it would not be possible for us to utilize the opportunity afforded by this humanitarian action to help correct certain widespread misunderstandings existing here with regard to previous food shipments to Spain during the war and to help in some small measure to bring about the needed improvement in relations between Spain and the United States—an improvement which seems desirable for a number of obvious reasons. What I have in mind is the transmission and publication of some formal and carefully phrased communication from the Department to the Spanish Government either through Cardenas or through me. If this seems at all feasible given the origin of the proposed shipment I respectfully venture to suggest that the Department give it careful consideration.

* Josephus Daniels, American Ambassador in Mexico.
(In this connection the British Ambassador went to Bilbao yesterday and “delivered” with appropriate ceremony a shipment of 500 tons of foodstuff “contributed” by the British Government. This morning’s press also headlines “foodstuff and coal sent by Germany and Italy continue to arrive”.)

Matthews

852.48/437: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Spain (Matthews)

WASHINGTON, April 28, 1939—4 p.m.

3. Your 32, April 26, 3 p.m. For your information wheat sent to Spain by American Red Cross has been purchased from the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation and has not been contributed outright by this Government. We are now informed by the Red Cross that the American Friends Service Committee contemplates acquiring in similar manner approximately 300,000 bushels of wheat for shipment to Spain. Red Cross understands that Friends Committee has sufficient funds to purchase wheat but before completing transaction requires additional funds to cover cost of transportation. For this purpose Friends Committee has apparently approached American firms having business interests in Spain for contributions.

We appreciate the motives behind your suggestion and trust that you may be able to make use of this information advantageously in your conversations with the Spanish authorities. In view of all the circumstances we do not, however, feel that any public statement by us would be desirable.

Hull

852.48/444: Telegram

The Chargé in Spain (Matthews) to the Secretary of State

SANT SEBASTIAN via PARIS, May 13, 1939—11 a.m.
[Received 1:15 p.m.]

49. My telegram No. 32, April 26, 3 p.m., last paragraph, and the Department’s telegram No. 3, February [April] 28, 4 p.m. As of possible interest the British Consul told me that a whole train load of the foodstuffs contributed by the British Government for Spanish relief left Bilbao on April 27 ostensibly for Madrid and that incredible as it might seem neither the Spanish authorities or British officials as yet have been able to find where either the train or its contents now is. It has definitely not reached Madrid.
I have been told by representatives of the American Friends Service Committee that they have been given so little say in distribution of present food stocks and have received so little cooperation from the Auxilio Social that they are considering abandoning their work in Spain. A number of their representatives have already left the country.

MATTHEWS

SS2.48/436: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 30, 1939.
[Received September 30—10:15 p. m.]

2268. For Bishop Francis J. McConnell, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York City. Your September 25, regarding Spanish refugees in France. Competent French authorities inform me that at the beginning of the war there remained approximately 82,500 Spanish militiamen and 100,000 old men, women and children. Spanish Government circularized all refugees inviting them to return to Spain giving assurance that if repatriated they would have nothing to fear if they were not guilty of crime. Up to the present it does not appear that a large number of these refugees have elected to return to Spain. A considerable number of the civilians apparently are members of the families of the soldiers now in the concentration camps. The French Government has decided to repatriate all Spanish refugee children whose parents are now in Spain. All adults are repatriated if they express the desire to return. Of the 82,500 militiamen 42,000 are now in two concentration camps, 16,000 are employed in agriculture or industry and are thus self-supporting, and 24,500 are engaged in public works projects.

According to the Foreign Office there is no doubt but that the Spanish refugees are still in need even though the French Government is making every effort as it has in the past to assure them living conditions as favorable as possible.

BULLITT

*Chairman, Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign.
III. Representations to the Spanish Nationalist Government for the Release of American Citizens Held as Prisoners

852.2221/1446: Telegram

The Consul at Vigo (Graves) to the Secretary of State

Vigo, January 30, 1939—8 p.m.
[Received January 30—6 p.m.]

157. Increasing difficulty is being experienced in obtaining release from military service of bona fide American citizens. Local military authorities state that they have now been instructed that persons basing foreign citizenship on naturalization must submit evidence that they or their parents had permission from the Spanish Government to expatriate themselves. This provision is stated to be retroactive. There are two cases involving such acquired citizenship now pending and repeated efforts during the past 2 months to obtain release of these young men from military service have thus far been fruitless. It is respectfully requested that permission be granted to take up such cases by letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For the information of the Department a circular letter to all consulates informs them that future telegraphic requests for permission to leave Spain made on behalf of their nationals must be addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Graves

852.2221/1446: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consul at Vigo (Graves)

Washington, February 7, 1939—7 p.m.

3. You are authorized to communicate on any consular matter, upon consular stationery, with appropriate officials at Burgos, without however addressing Minister or Ministry of Foreign Affairs as such. In other words, letters should be addressed, for example, to “General Francisco Gomez Jordana, Burgos”.

With reference to the subject of your telegram, you should point out increasing difficulty being experienced in obtaining release of American citizens from military service; that under Spanish law it has not heretofore been required that Spaniards obtain permission from Spanish Government to expatriate themselves; that any provision making such a requirement retroactive is unreasonable; that upon naturalization of aliens in the United States, except derivatively, allegiance to any foreign sovereign must be renounced, and that after naturalization

For previous correspondence regarding protection of Americans in Spain, see Foreign Relations, 1938, vol. i, pp. 263 ff.
of aliens in the United States they are considered by this Government to have status of citizens of the United States solely. You should therefore urge immediate release from military service of all American citizens within the categories in which you have heretofore been authorized to extend full protection. Report to the Department by cable the results of your efforts in pending cases.

Hull

862.2221/1462a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France

WASHINGTON, February 8, 1939—7 p. m.

B-477. We understand that some weeks ago the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade asked the Spanish Ambassador here if the Spanish Government would request initiation of negotiations for the exchange of foreign prisoners on both sides. We have today received a note from the Spanish Ambassador stating that he has been authorized to state that his Government is willing that diplomatic representations to this end be undertaken by us.

We realize, of course, that you have been in touch with developments in connection with the possible release of American prisoners held by General Franco. We are transmitting this information for your comment whether anything practical can now be done in the direction indicated in the Spanish Ambassador’s note, in the light of the developments in the situation since the suggestion was originally made some weeks ago.

Hull

852.2221/1463 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

ST. JEAN DE LUZ, February 9, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received February 9—3:10 p. m.]

576. Your B-477, February 8, 7 p. m. The Ambassador’s statement seems incredible. For months I have acted as intermediary in the exchange of prisoners and dealt with the Government through the Foreign Minister \(^7\) and Giralt \(^8\) in charge of that work. Months ago Del Vayo assured me they would gladly exchange Italian Legionnaires

\(^7\) Not printed.
\(^8\) Julio Alvear del Vayo.
\(^8\) Spanish Minister without Portfolio.
for the Americans. Some as you know were thus exchanged. Del Vayo assured me the Government was ready to continue this process.

Negotiations were begun some weeks ago with Marquis de Rialp, the Franco Commissioner, since in the light of Del Vayo's positive assurances I assumed that our problem was with the Franco people exclusively. When the matter first was broached, De Rialp expressed complete willingness provided the Italians had not made other arrangements about their men. When the Italian Ambassador wrote me he was urging our exchange I informed De Rialp that I knew this to be true. He promised to act. After many days he came here and said he had been so swamped he had not yet taken the matter up but would at once. Since then I have reminded him and asked a report. Have been expecting to see him any minute.

Under these circumstances I am at a loss to learn from the Ambassador that we are expecting to negotiate with his Government on something on which there has been an agreement for months. Suggest you call De los Rios and frankly tell him of my report and request an explanation.

Bowers

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] February 16, 1939.

Mr. Truelle, Counselor of the French Embassy, telephoned to say that the Ambassador was in receipt of a telegram from the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade protesting against the detention in refugee camps of some sixty American volunteers from Spain. He asked if I knew the organization. I replied yes, that they had assumed charge of the repatriation of the American volunteers. Naturally these men having enlisted against the policies of this Government, we could do nothing to repatriate them. The Friends had taken over this work and done a good job. Furthermore, I said that while I understood the confusion that must exist along the border, nevertheless the sooner these men were returned the better it would be. There was always the risk of incidents, recrimination, and publicity while they remained abroad. He said he would recommend that his government do something about it.

Pierrepont Moffat
The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

No. 1671

ST. JEAN DE LUZ, FEBRUARY 16, 1939.
[Received February 24.]

SIR: I have the honor to report that, with the fall of Catalonia, a large number of prisoners held by the Government, including a large number of Italians, were released. This leaves us with a much smaller number of foreign prisoners held by the Loyalists on which to draw for the exchange of the Americans. There are, or until recently were, a large number of Italian legionnaires in the Valencia-Madrid section. I am assured this morning by the Marques de Rialp, the Franco agent in the exchange of prisoners, that he will inform me within a few days of the disposition of the Italians, and will be ready to act. With this assurance I shall get in contact with the Government at Madrid which has always assured me of its willingness to exchange the Italians for the Americans and which has acted on that assurance in the past.

We cannot agree to an exchange of Americans for the Spaniards in the various legations and embassies in Madrid, since, under the agreement, the foreigners are returned to their homes and the Spaniards may remain in Spain. This, at any rate, is a matter for the Spanish Government to decide. I merely mean that it would be most tactless for us to suggest such an exchange.

Respectfully yours,

CLAUDE G. BOWERS

5852.2221/1505: Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

ST. JEAN DE LUZ, FEBRUARY 28, 1939—1 P. M.
[Received 2:55 p. m.]

586. Marquis de Rialp has finally informed me that he is ready to deliver the 81 American prisoners at the frontier as soon as the Loyalists agree to an exchange. The situation of the Spanish Government is such just now as to make this difficult of realization but I am asking Del Vayo in Paris to transmit the proposition to Negrín.²

BOWERS

² Spanish Prime Minister.
The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

St. Jean de Luz, March 2, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received March 2—10:41 a. m.]

589. My telegram No. 586, February 28, 1 p. m. Del Vayo telegraphs from Madrid:

"The Spanish Government is pleased to give Your Excellency the fullest assurances and facilities for the realization of the exchange referred to in your telegram of today. We shall have the prisoners at the disposition of an American ship which should come to get them at Alicante, requesting that you advise us beforehand of its arrival."

Since exchange proposition comes from De Rialp no doubt on suggestion of Italian Embassy assurances regarding ship can be secured from Burgos. Would like to see these Americans out and hope boat can be sent from Villefranche. International Red Cross notified and asks to be informed when boat will arrive.

Bowers

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France

Washington, March 2, 1939—8 p. m.

B-488. Your 589, March 2, 1 p. m. We do not fully understand your telegram since it appears that it is proposed that an American naval vessel be used to transport Italian prisoners in the hands of the Spanish Government from Alicante to some other place. If this is, in fact, the case you should make it clear that this Government cannot authorize the use of American naval vessels for the transportation of Italian combatants from Spain. In this connection it would seem that arrangements might be made between the two sides in Spain, either directly or through some interested organization such as the International Red Cross, for the transportation of Italian prisoners of war from Spain, especially in view of your indication that assurances regarding the ship would probably be given by the Burgos authorities.

Hull
The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in Spain (Thurston),"\nThen in France

WASHINGTON, March 14, 1939—8 p. m.
B-492. Reference Department's telegram B-488, March 2, 8 p. m.
The announcement in the press some days ago that arrangements had
been completed for the exchange of the American prisoners in the
hands of General Franco has led to many inquiries. It would be
helpful in replying to these inquiries if you could ascertain, perhaps
through the representative of the International Red Cross or other
organization interested in facilitating the exchange of prisoners,
whether it has been possible to effect any practical arrangements with
respect to these Americans. We realize, of course, that the current
developments in Spain may have created serious difficulties in this
connection.

Welles

The Chargé in Spain (Thurston), Then in France, to the Secretary
of State

ST. JEAN DE LUZ, March 18, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received March 18—11:45 a. m.]
597. Department's [B-]492, March 14, 8 p. m. The "arrangement"
for the exchange of American prisoners held by Franco for Italian
prisoners held by the Government is merely an agreement by each side
to effect the reciprocal release of those prisoners. It is quite simple
for the Franco regime to do this, as the prisoners it holds can be
brought to the French frontier at any time and turned over to some
responsible agency. The position with respect to the Government
however is quite otherwise. The prisoners it holds must be em-
barked at seaport. I doubt very much whether the International
Red Cross is taking any steps to provide such transportation, or that
the Government is either—under present circumstances. As we can-
not provide transportation the exchange will not be consummated
unless some other agency intervenes.

The indicated agency for this task is of course the so-called Friends
of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and I would suggest that the sub-
ject be discussed with them. They might be able to work out an

"Ambassador Bowers had been called to Washington for consultation and was
absent from St. Jean de Luz from March 3 to April 15, leaving Mr. Thurston
in charge.
arrangement with Sherover whereunder one of his ships could convey the Italians to Marseille. Both parties named however probably would reject such a suggestion. The alternative is to await the end of hostilities, following which it is to be assumed that Franco will be disposed to relinquish the Americans.

THURSTON

852.2221/1534 : Telegram

The Chargé in Spain (Thurston), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

ST. JEAN DE LUZ, March 20, 1939—10 a. m.
[Received 11:55 a. m.]

601. Embassy's 597, March 18, 8 p. m. In response to an inquiry addressed to Wallner regarding the possibility of arrangements being made at Valencia for the removal of the Italian prisoners, I have received from him the following telegram:

"19. March 18, noon. Your March 15, 11 a. m., apparently concerns a proposed exchange under the auspices of the International Red Cross of 170-odd Italians against an equal number of International Brigade prisoners in which 41 Americans are included. The Negrin Government suspended all exchanges late in February and the International Red Cross delegate in Madrid has asked the consent of the National Defense Council to the departure of the Italians. If the Council agrees the Italians will be carried to Palma de Mallorca by British naval vessel."

I am informing Wallner that the exchange affects 81 Americans, in order that he may so advise the International Red Cross delegate in Madrid to the end that if necessary the number of Italians be increased to balance this figure.

THURSTON

852.2221/1574a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, April 4, 1939—8 p. m.

234. Department's 233, April 4, 7 p. m. For Matthews. As soon as possible after your arrival in Spain it is desired that you take up

Miles M. Sherover, president of the Hanover Sales Corp., who had been acting for the Spanish Government as fiscal and purchasing agent in the United States.

Vice Consul at Valencia.

Not printed; it transmitted the designation of H. Freeman Matthews as First Secretary of Embassy in Spain and the information that General Jordana, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at Burgos, had been requested to receive Matthews as Chargé d'Affaires ad interim (123M431/166).
with the appropriate authorities the question of the release of the American prisoners held by General Franco. Thurston reported on April 2 that he had discussed this matter with the Marquis de Rialp, who expressed the opinion that these Americans would be released in accordance with the original program, which contemplated the reciprocal release of Italian prisoners in the hands of the Loyalist authorities, even though it had not been possible to carry it out before final occupation of the country by Franco. Rialp appeared to believe that this would be done as an indication of the friendly attitude of the Nationalist Government, and promised Thurston that he would do everything possible to obtain such action.

It is suggested that you consult with Thurston by telephone before proceeding to Spain, with a view to taking such action thereafter as may be practicable and feasible to obtain the release of these Americans.

HULL

852.2221/1580 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

St. Jean de Luz, April 20, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received April 20—4:50 p.m.]

627. From Matthews:

"19. April 20, 11 a. m. My telegram No. 12 of April 17, 1 p. m. The question of the prisoners’ release is one which seems to become more confused. The Marques de Rialp still tells me that he ‘thinks’ they will be released this week as does the representative here of the International Red Cross. I am inclined to fear, however, that at least a further few days will elapse before they are finally taken to the border.

1. Rialp in whose hands the problem rests is either by nature or intent, I am not yet sure which, extremely vague. Furthermore, because of the transport question, etc., he seems for the present unwilling in spite of all efforts of persuasion to let our prisoners go until arrangements have been completed for those of other nationalities now in San Sebastian. He says that all is ready for the Danes; that the Swedish Minister has been away in Madrid and only returns here today, whereupon clearance for the Swedish prisoners, he hopes, will be promptly made (I shall call upon my Swedish colleague at the earliest possible moment); that so far the Cuban Consul at Biarritz with whom he has been dealing ‘has not yet answered to his letter’

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*Telegram No. 607, not printed.
**Not printed.
concerning the Cuban prisoners he presumes because he has not yet heard from his Government. I am proceeding to Saint Jean de Luz this morning and will endeavor to communicate with the Cuban Consul. Rialp has also mentioned to me twice how he could not understand why Cuba had not yet recognized this government—a factor which may well enter into this matter.

2. Personal animosity between Rialp and the International Red Cross representatives who have in the past handled the mechanics of the exchange of prisoners is admitted.

3. The British still have about 20 prisoners scattered about Spain none of whom are in San Sebastian. They are naturally insisting that these be released immediately. The British Embassy takes the position that the British arranged for the release of the 167 Italian prisoners held by the Loyalist Government and that inasmuch as there were then only some 60 British prisoners they were glad to make up the remainder of this man-for-man exchange with Americans, that now, however, they are insisting with the Italian Embassy that since their ships saved the lives of the Italian prisoners it is up to the Italians to see that the other side of the bargain is carried out and the British prisoners promptly released. The Italian Embassy according to the British says that the Spanish Government has an 'agreement with the Chilean and Cuban Governments' with respect to their prisoners (no Chileans are now in San Sebastian). While the British say they would prefer to have all our prisoners included and the Cubans and Chileans omitted, they made it clear that they are naturally in any event going to insist upon the release of their own nationals. Just how far the Italian Embassy really does come into the picture I am not yet sure, but Rialp did vaguely mention its 'interest' in the matter. I understand that before approaching the British, the Italians through the Red Cross and Rialp made urgent appeals for American ships to take off from Alicante their nationals who were prisoners and whose lives they feared were in imminent danger. I fully comprehend the Department's weighty reasons for not complying with this request. We can hardly expect, however, in view thereof that Italian influence here will be exerted in favor of the prompt release of American prisoners.

4. It would seem of course entirely logical now the war is over that the Spanish Government would be glad to release all foreign prisoners of war (not tried or convicted on other counts) immediately. Such is apparently far from the case, however, and I sense a desire on the part of the authorities to take their own good time on this and other questions. This applies particularly to those whom they feel declined to help them—at the very least—in their hour of need.

I have gone into this question at length because I feel the Department should have the full picture in weighing future developments. I shall keep after the question as far as the dictates of good judgment will permit and shall keep the Department informed. If it appears desirable to discuss the question at Burgos again I shall immediately go there.[1]"

Copy to Paris.  

Bowers
Memorandum of Conversations, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] April 21, 1939.

Bob Murphy \(^{a}\) telephoned me from the Embassy in Paris to say that it now appeared that the 81 American prisoners would be released from Spain tomorrow. The Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade which had guaranteed to us their repatriation, had suddenly informed Mr. Murphy that they were "broke". If their transportation expenses out of France could not be guaranteed, the French would refuse to admit these men and they might be returned to Spanish prisons for an additional three or four months.

I asked how the Friends could have gone "broke" when as recently as a week or ten days ago they had ample funds. Mr. Murphy said that they had had to pay up large sums in advance for the maintenance of the 120 aliens who were waiting at Le Havre for their papers to be in order. In other words, they were penalizing the Americans for the benefit of the aliens. Mr. Murphy agreed that this was true, but said that the tragedy of not getting them out of Spain would be so great that every effort must be made to induce the Friends to obtain and provide the funds by tomorrow morning. He suggested that there might be one or two "angels" that would help. For instance, Mr. Robert Strauss had expressed interest and likewise Mr. Bernard Baruch. As I understood Mr. Murphy, at first, he was suggesting that we contact these individuals. It later became clear, however, that he was merely suggesting that the Department urge the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to make these contacts this very afternoon. I told Mr. Murphy that we would get in touch with the Friends without delay.

Mr. Dunn \(^{b}\) who has been dealing with this organization, telephoned. Mr. McKelvey White was out but he spoke to Mr. John Gates. Gates replied that he knew the story,—was that minute expecting a call from his Paris representative,—and that they could obtain the funds. He promised to telephone back later in the afternoon.

At about four Mr. McKelvey White, the President, telephoned back to Mr. Dunn that they had enough funds provided the men were not delayed in France owing to troubles in documentation. He understood that the government had no money to meet these expenses and agreed to telegraph the Paris agent at once.

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\(^{a}\) First Secretary of Embassy and Consul at Paris.

\(^{b}\) James Clement Dunn, Adviser on Political Relations.
Mr. Wendelin\textsuperscript{83} then took up with Mrs. Shipley\textsuperscript{84} the question of documentation and found that the papers of 68 out of the 81 were in order, but that 13 were still in doubt but most of these were Puerto Ricans. They agreed to get off a telegram tomorrow morning which would speed the documentation and facilitate their immediate transshipment.

\underline{Pierrepoint Moffat}

\textit{852.2221/1590: Telegram}

\textbf{The Chargé in Spain (Matthews) to the Secretary of State}

\textbf{San Sebastian via Paris, April 21, 1939—1 p. m.}

[Received April 22—6:30 a. m.]

20. My telegram No. 19, April 20, 11 a. m.
1. The Cuban Consul has received authorization to accept responsibility for the five Cuban prisoners. That fact I communicated to Marquis de Rialp last evening. He then indicated that it might be impossible to arrange transportation, et cetera, immediately.

I telephoned him again this morning. He then frankly told me of the position taken by the British and the Italians as reported in numbered paragraph 3 of my telegram No. 19. He stated that in view of British insistence and the fact that it was the British who actually took off the Italian prisoners and in view of the further fact that the exchange agreed upon was strictly on a man-for-man basis the number of prisoners of other nationalities must accordingly be reduced. He said that therefore the number of Americans who will be permitted to leave is 71 instead of 81. He asked me especially to explain to the Department that while he personally believed, also, foreign prisoners would be released in the relatively near future he could get no guarantee with respect to the remaining 11 Americans. He stated furthermore that this completed his part in the arrangements for the exchange of prisoners.

Feeling that rather than delay further indefinitely the departure of the 71 prisoners and seeing that further demands for the release of the entire 81 would produce such delay, I insisted that the 71 in question be released immediately and he has promised definitely that they will be taken to the frontier at 10 o’clock tomorrow morning.\textsuperscript{85} I de-

\textsuperscript{83} Eric C. Wendelin, of the Division of European Affairs.
\textsuperscript{84} Ruth B. Shipley, Chief of the Passport Division.
\textsuperscript{85} In his telegram No. 22, April 22, 3 p. m., the Chargé reported that the 71 Americans had been released and sent across the French border (852.2221/1592).
clined of course to give any indication as to which 71 should be selected for release.

I shall take up the question of the remaining 10 with the authorities at Burgos next week.

MATTHEWS

832.2221/1621: Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Bowers), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

ST. JEAN DE LUZ, MAY 1, 1939—6 p.m.

[Received May 1—3:55 p.m.]

634. From Matthews:

33. MY 20, APRIL 25, 8 p.m. 86

I was very cordially received by Barcenas, the Under Secretary of State, at Burgos, Thursday morning. I said that quite frankly I was interested in doing all I could to improve relations between our two countries; that for this reason I was most anxious that public opinion in my country should have a better understanding of "the new Spain." I then explained the great interest at home in the question of American prisoners of war and the Department's position with respect thereto. I said that I felt that the prompt release of the 10 remaining Americans against whom no charges are pending (and who have now been brought back to Burgos where they say incidentally they are better fed) would constitute a gesture which would be much appreciated in the United States. (Possibly Cardenas 87 might issue a statement when the release is effected.) I believe that Barcenas was impressed with this reasoning and at any rate he promised to do all he could to obtain the prisoners' early release. It is quite obvious, however, that the matter is not primarily in the hands of the Foreign Office. It is also quite obvious that resentment is still strong over the attitude of public opinion in the United States with respect to the Nationalists and at our "delay" in extending recognition. (For instance, when I entered his office Barcenas said with a smile when I told him I was enjoying Spain "you see we are not the terrible people you thought us in the United States. Frankly, you have never understood our cause, et cetera."

I feel that for the present the method of approach which I took is the one most likely to produce early results. If the delay is long the Department may then give consideration to different tactics. It would be difficult to exaggerate, however, the existing feeling of self-assurance in Nationalist Spain today, especially in military circles. With that feeling goes the extremely bitter thought that Spain's "rebirth" was accomplished to say the least without the aid of the United States and the cost thereof in Spanish lives greatly increased by the brigades of which our unfortunate prisoners were members. [Matthews.]

Copy to Paris.

BOWERS

86 Not printed.
87 Juan Francisco de Cárdenas, Spanish Chargé at Washington.
852.2221/1631: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, May 10, 1939—7 p. m.

10. For Matthews:

Your 45, May 8, 11 a. m. It is desired that inquiry be made of the appropriate authorities with a view to ascertaining the actual status of all cases of American citizens still under imprisonment in Spain, and that efforts be made to obtain their release. Consuls at Seville, Malaga, Vigo, and Barcelona have been instructed to transmit to you all data in their possession regarding cases of American citizens under imprisonment in their districts, since it appears that no action can be taken locally toward effecting their release. It is requested that a consolidated list of the names of all American citizens known to be under imprisonment in Spain be prepared for submission to the Department as soon as possible after receiving the foregoing data from the Consuls. The list should include the full names of the persons mentioned, reference to passport or citizenship records, and a summary of the present status of each case.

Hull

852.2221/1645: Telegram

The Chargé in Spain (Matthews) to the Secretary of State

ST. JEAN DE LUZ [sic], May 16, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received 7:05 p. m.]

54. Department's telegram No. 9 [10], May 10, 7 p. m. I formally requested full information concerning all American prisoners of war in Spain and likewise again asked for their early release. I also propose to discuss the matter again with Under Secretary Barcenas at Burgos tomorrow.

I sent Crain to Burgos yesterday to interview the prisoners personally and to obtain as much data as possible to substantiate their American nationality. He was permitted by the prison authorities to talk to the prisoners for about an hour and to make such notes as he desired. He found them in reasonably good health and spirits and states that they did not show signs of undernourishment though they expressed some complaint at the prison fare. I have sent them some cigarettes and a small sum of money (for which they expressed their appreciation) to enable them to purchase additional foodstuffs and other necessities which they are in general permitted to buy at the prison canteen. They are permitted to spend their days in a large

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*Not printed.
*Note No. 50, dated May 13, to the Foreign Minister at Burgos, not printed.
*Third Secretary of Embassy in Spain.
open air enclosure some ten or more acres in extent without any very strict surveillance. Crain explained to them the efforts which the Department and the Embassy are making and will continue to make to arrange their release. He indicated, however, that we could make no promise as to date and this they seemed to understand. Their only specific request was for money, soap and underclothing. If their friends and relatives in the United States arrange to transmit funds therefor through the Department the Embassy can make the desired purchases and/or transmit the money to the prisoners. As he was leaving the prison, commander volunteered the personal opinion to Crain that the prisoners there at San Pedro de Cardena "would soon be released" and the prisoners themselves seem to feel that the concentration camp was about to be closed.

[Here is omitted data regarding individual prisoners.]

This preliminary report will be supplemented as soon as more complete data is available. Copy to Paris.

MATTHEWS

852.2221/1651: Telegram

The Chargé in Spain (Matthews) to the Secretary of State

SAN SEBASTIAN, May 22, 1939—1 p.m.

[Received May 23—7:18 a.m.]

56. My telegram Number 54, May 16, 5 p.m. I again took up with Under Secretary Barcenas at Burgos on May 17 the question of the release of American prisoners of war still held in Spain. I again expressed the strong hope that their release could be arranged in the very near future and pointed out that the civil war had terminated almost two months ago. Barcenas concurred fully as to the desirability of granting them their freedom at an early date and promised to take the matter up personally with General Franco as soon as he saw him following the Madrid victory celebrations. He said that he believed the question would be settled "very soon" but again expressed his inability to make any promise to this effect.

MATTHEWS

862.2221/1682: Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

SAN SEBASTIAN, via PARIS, June 22, 1939—9 p.m.

[Received June 23—7:30 a.m.]

88. Embassy's telegram 86, June 20, 7 p.m. In my conversation today with the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Burgos I also spoke at

88 Not printed.
some length of American citizens still under imprisonment in Spain. I told the Minister that the number of these I understood to be limited, that their release would seem to mean little to his Government, while such a gracious gesture would have favorable repercussion in the United States. I added that their further detention meant continuous pressure from relatives and others in the United States and offered a fruitful cause of irritation, and from this latter standpoint gave the matter an importance in the relations of the two countries which a problem so easily solved did not merit.

I also pointed out that the Embassy’s note of May 23 [13], requesting names, whereabouts and release of prisoners remained unanswered and that this was regrettable; that if, as had been intimated to me (by the Under Secretary) the difficulty arose in the military branch of his Government he, as diplomatist and soldier speaking both [apparent omission] arrange matters; I followed this up by asking him flatly if he would not give the whole subject his personal attention.

The Minister replied by stating that he would give immediate consideration to the matters I brought up, although declaring that any prisoners under condemnation for offenses were in a different category, concluding by remarking that he “hoped for” an early solution of the difficulty.

Weddell

852.2221/1704a : Telegram

_The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)_

WASHINGTO, July 26, 1939—7 p. m.

63. Your 136, July 25, 3 p. m., last paragraph. David McKelvey White, National Chairman of the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in New York, has advised Department that he hopes to be able within 2 or 3 days to deposit sufficient funds with Department to cover cost of repatriation of volunteers who may be released by Spanish authorities. Upon receipt of funds you will be advised and Embassy in Paris will be authorized to draw drafts and make necessary arrangements for transportation of men from frontier at Hendaye.

Hull

**Note printed.**

**Post, p. 841.**
The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

SAN SEBASTIAN, August 14, 1939—6 p.m.
[Received August 14—3:35 p.m.]

154. Embassy has received a note from the Foreign Office to the effect that orders have been issued to collect the American prisoners in a jail San Sebastian from which point they will be delivered to the Embassy representative on the International Bridge at Irun. The Embassy has not been informed as to when the prisoners will be brought to San Sebastian or their names but will inform Paris as soon as details are available.

Weddell

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)

WASHINGTON, August 18, 1939—6 p.m.

73. Embassy at Paris urges that individual certificates of identity and registration be issued to American prisoners released by Spanish authorities prior to their departure from Spain, in order to avoid possibility that any of them may prove unable to qualify for reentry into the United States after their arrival in France, such as was the case with a number of aliens included in group released last April. Since only persons whose American citizenship has been established on the basis of the Department’s telegram No. 67 of August 2, 8 p.m. are now in question, it would not appear that such a contingency could arise in the present instance. Nevertheless it is essential that everything possible be done to expedite return of these American citizens once they are released, and you are therefore authorized to issue individual certificates of identity and registration to them before their departure from Spain valid only for travel to the United States. Since the men in question are being assembled at San Sebastian, it would seem that this could be done without difficulty as soon as the identity of the persons to be released has been established on the basis of the information in your possession.

The documents should be turned over to a representative of Paris Embassy for delivery to Consul at port of embarkation.

Welles

* Not printed.
The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

SAN SEBASTIAN, August 24, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received 11:25 a. m.]

159. Referring to my telegram Number 157, August 22, 5 p. m., in calling on the new Minister of Foreign Affairs at Burgos yesterday I took occasion to point out that only 11 prisoners had been sent here for repatriation although I knew of the presence in Spanish prisons of at least 8 others notwithstanding that General Franco had told me that all prisoners of war would be released and that I hoped these 8 men would be placed at my disposition.

I remarked further that there were perhaps other Americans held by the military authorities but of this I could not be certain as my requests for a full list had been fruitless. To this latter statement the Minister instantly responded by sending for the Sub-Secretary and directing that the appropriate official in the Ministry of War be immediately communicated with and declaring that he would endeavor to meet my wishes in this respect at the earliest possible moment.

The Minister then remarked that while not fully conversant with the matter it might be that the 8 prisoners to which I referred were charged with crimes. I replied that the promise of Franco to release the prisoners had been unconditional and that I accepted this declaration and promise as all inclusive since the pardoning power lay entirely with the Chief of the Spanish State. This point seemed to impress the Minister who repeated the argument to the Sub-Secretary in my presence and promised me a prompt reply to my verbal request for the release of the remaining prisoners. I left in his hands a note listing the 8 prisoners referred to above; meanwhile preparations have been completed to send into France tomorrow morning the 11 prisoners now here.

WEDDELL

The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

SAN SEBASTIAN, September 4, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received September 5—7:05 a. m.]

177. Referring to my 159, August 24, 11 a. m., I inquired of the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Burgos today what decision had been

*Not printed; it reported that 11 American prisoners of war who had been confined at the concentration camp at San Pedro de Cardena had arrived at San Sebastian (852.2221/1717).
reached regarding our remaining prisoners of war. I recalled that General Franco had assured me that all our prisoners would be liberated and I urged that those still in custody be released without further delay. The Minister replied that he was having the dossiers of the prisoners examined and that he would let me have a reply to my démarche within a few days. He stated that it was possible that some of these men were under sentence to which I again stated it was my understanding that even if this were true it was the intention of the Generalissimo to exercise executive clemency and release them all. The Minister, however, while not committing himself definitely clearly gave me the impression that there is little hope for the time being of securing the release of those under sentence.

**Weddell**

852.2221/1749 : Telegram

**The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State**

**Madrid, November 4, 1939—noon.**

[Received 7: 40 p. m.]

220. Referring to my No. 195, September 22, 5 p. m., during a recent conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs concerning our prisoners of war the Minister said to me textually:

"We have some 80,000 prisoners of war to be tried for offenses; there is frightful congestion in the military tribunals. I beg you to be patient."

To this I replied by pointing out that I had been patient; that at the end of 6 months I was still ignorant, despite repeated efforts, of what the 8 American prisoners were accused or if they were accused of anything. I repeated my former statements to the effect that these prisoners were of no importance to Spain and constituted points of irritation in my country; that I had understood the Caudillo to promise me all my prisoners but up to date only 11 had been released.

Following this the Minister instructed the Under Secretary to follow up the matter.

Since the above interview the Embassy has been in almost daily contact with the Foreign Office and the present status of the matter

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*However, on September 12 the Ambassador was informed that the Minister for Foreign Affairs was unable to give him a reply on account of General Franco’s absence in Galicia.*

*Not printed; it conveyed information from the Minister for Foreign Affairs that no decision would be taken regarding American prisoners of war until the government moved to Madrid (852.2221/1736).*
is that the military officer in charge of prisoners has been discussing the matter with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. I regret to say however that in spite of my many representations there does not appear to be any disposition to release the prisoners prior to their cases having been tried.

Our remaining prisoners were all visited recently by a member of the Embassy staff and although they are apparently being well treated they are suffering from lack of warm clothing. I am personally purchasing warm clothing for them and will make certain that it reaches them within the next few days.

I will of course continue my efforts to expedite this matter.

WEDDELL

882.2221/1751

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

[WASHINGTON,] November 7, 1939.

The Spanish Ambassador called to see me this afternoon. I said to the Ambassador that I wanted to have a very frank conversation with him and that I wished to emphasize very vigorously my serious dissatisfaction by reason of the fact that the Spanish Government had not as yet released eight American citizens, prisoners of the Spanish Government who had been captured fighting on the side of the Loyalist Government during the civil war. I gave the Ambassador the following summary of what had transpired in connection with this matter:

[Here is omitted the summary of efforts from May 13 to November 4, reported in telegrams printed ante.]

In conclusion I said to the Ambassador that, as he well knew, the Department of State had gone out of its way during recent months to evidence in every practicable way its desire to cooperate in a friendly manner with the Spanish Government and to pave the way for the creation of those cordial relations between the two countries in which both the Ambassador and I were so deeply interested. I said, however, that in this case, notwithstanding the formal assurances given both by General Franco and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, four months had elapsed without any sign of interest on the part of the Spanish Government in releasing these prisoners. I said I felt that this attitude on the part of the Spanish Government was inexplicable. The Ambassador would readily appreciate, I remarked, what harm it would do to relations between our two countries if these facts were ventilated in the American press, and such a possibility was of course
great. On the other hand, I said, what possible benefit to the Spanish Government derived in keeping these men in prison for this long a period. I said I felt it consequently indispensable to good relations between the two countries that the Spanish Government immediately make good the assurances previously given and turn over these remaining eight prisoners to our Ambassador on the French frontier.

I also took occasion to express my great dissatisfaction at the failure of the Spanish Government to take any satisfactory action with regard to American citizens held in jail in Spain for alleged offenses, not of a military character, and I likewise expressed my particular concern by reason of the failure of the Spanish Government as yet to work out any satisfactory solution of the problems of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company in Spain.

The Ambassador stated that he agreed with me 100 percent in what I had said, and that if I would send him a memorandum covering the data which I had relayed to him he would immediately telegraph his Government and follow up such a telegram with a most emphatic despatch urging that preferential attention be given to a prompt and satisfactory solution of all of these questions.

I expressed my appreciation of the Ambassador's attitude and said I hoped his representations would bring early results.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

852.2221/1759

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

[WASHINGTON,] November 29, 1939.

The Spanish Ambassador called to see me this morning. The Ambassador said that he was very much disquieted and disappointed by his inability so far to obtain action from his own Government providing for the release of the remaining American prisoners of war in Spain. He said that in accordance with his promise to me he had cabled his Government and had written fully urging that this action be taken immediately since the retention of the American prisoners in Spanish prisons was of no benefit whatever to the Spanish Government and naturally and inevitably created a very bad impression in the United States. He stated that in reply to his cable his Government had telegraphed saying that the assurances given to Ambassador Weddell last summer had covered solely those prisoners who are not awaiting trial and that no assurances had been given to Mr. Weddell covering the American prisoners against whom charges are pending and who are awaiting trial. I told him that Ambassador Weddell had cabled textually the assurances given him at the time by General
Franco and by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and that there was no indication whatever that in these assurances any distinction had been made between any categories of American prisoners. The Ambassador said that he fully shared my own opinion, and that he was doing everything within his power to obtain a favorable decision.

The Ambassador said he had received a telegram from the Spanish Minister of Commerce asking what terms could be obtained here for the purchase by the Spanish Government of 200,000 tons of wheat. I told the Ambassador that I would be glad to consult the Secretary of Agriculture and other authorities of the Government and let him know what the situation might be.

The Ambassador spoke with great apprehension and disquiet regarding the European situation. He said that, while naturally any sympathy that had previously existed in Spain for Germany had immediately ceased upon the announcement of the German-Russian alliance, he nevertheless feared that Russian and German propagandists in Spain were utilizing Red Spanish elements who had entered the Falange after the end of the civil war in order to spread dis-sension and to try and obtain from the Spanish Government some attitude favorable to Germany. The Ambassador stated that it was inconceivable that his Government could ever undertake a policy of friendship with Germany under existing circumstances, and that he was confident, after his own contacts with Spain last autumn, that the Spanish Government would maintain an attitude of rigid neutrality and would try and work out satisfactory economic agreements with France and Great Britain. He was extremely depressed as to the economic situation in Spain which he said was naturally deteriorating on account of the war situation and which made it easier for propagandists to stir up malcontents.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

852.2221/1755 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Wedell) to the Secretary of State

MADRID, December 1, 1939—6 p. m.  
[Received December 1—5:17 a. m.]

242. My 220, November 4, noon. On November 27 I again took up the question of our remaining prisoners of war with Barcenas. He agreed entirely with my arguments as to the desirability of releasing the prisoners stating that both the Minister and himself had done everything possible to this end. He added however that “although I suppose the prisoners will sometime be released neither the Min-
ister nor I have been able to achieve this even though we are 100 percent in accordance with your views”.

In view of the apparent inability of the Foreign Office to take effective action I requested the Military Attaché to take up the matter with the Chief of Staff of the Spanish Army, which he did yesterday. The Military Attaché furnished the Chief of Staff with a complete list showing the places of confinement and the status of each prisoner as far as the Embassy records show. The Chief of Staff promised to investigate the matter and inform the Military Attaché as soon as possible.

Representations to the Spanish Government regarding American Interests in the Spanish National Telephone Company

852.75 National Telephone Co./253: Telegram

The Chargé in Spain (Matthews) to the Secretary of State

San Sebastian via St. Jean de Luz, May 11, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received May 12—9:12 a. m.]

47. I feel that the time has come when I should lay before the Department the attitude of the Spanish Government toward the interests of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation and towards Colonel Sosthenes Behn personally. The implications behind this attitude I believe can hardly be viewed with optimism by that concern and a situation in some way similar to that which arose in 1931 may be in the making.

Early in March Colonel Behn filed with Quinones de Leon an application for permission to enter Spain. That application has not yet been acted upon (though one for another American in his company filed simultaneously was granted 10 days ago). The representatives of his company in Spain were then orally and informally advised by the Nationalist authorities that he should expect no favorable reply until recognition of their Government by the United States (It is my belief that this statement was largely a mere excuse which was intended to and did serve to forestall further efforts for the time being to obtain Colonel Behn’s entry permit.) Following recognition and my arrival here, the company’s representatives under the direction of Caldwell vigorously renewed their efforts through many sources

* President of the Corporation.
* Representing Franco in France until April 1939.
* Fred Caldwell, Madrid manager of the company.
to invoke action. As I have been doing in the case of other Americans desiring to enter or leave Spain and in accordance with the procedure suggested to me on my first visit to Burgos, I addressed a *note verbale* to the Foreign Office on April 15 requesting that Colonel Behn, an American citizen with important business interests in Spain requiring his personal attention, be permitted to enter the country. The company’s representatives ascertained that the Colonel’s case was a special one receiving the Government’s careful attention and was not merely the usual case of routine delay. On April 27, having received no reply to my note, I discussed the matter with the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs at Burgos. Barcenas confirmed to me the strong character of Behn’s application and the fact that there was opposition in Government circles to granting it. He added that Behn had been “maladroit” in implying at the time of his application that once in Spain he might be able to hasten our recognition of the National Government, an implication which seriously offended Spanish pride and sensibilities. (I subsequently discussed this point with Colonel Behn and am inclined to believe that this unfortunate approach was due in part at least to overzealousness on the part of Quinones de Leon at the time of forwarding the application.) Barcenas added that there was also certain resentment against the Telephone Company’s attitude during the war and mentioned that Colonel Behn had “twice gone to Barcelona.” The Under Secretary while making it clear that the matter “was not in his hands” said that the question was to come before a Cabinet meeting the following day on the basis of my note and that he was hopeful that he would be able to give me a favorable reply thereafter. I waited a further 10 days and on May 6th sent a carefully worded and extremely polite personal letter to Barcenas reminding him of our conversation and inquiring as to the status of the case. I added that if the Government did not feel that it could act favorably on the application I should appreciate being informed of that attitude and the reason therefor, as I naturally felt that I should communicate the facts to my Government. I have, to date, received no reply to that letter. On May 7, a representative of the company saw Colonel Ungria, Chief of the Spanish Police and Military Intelligence, with whom he is on the closest personal terms. Ungria, who enjoys an excellent reputation, who is high up in Government counsels and who is a loyal friend of Behn, told this representative in confidence after earlier investigation that there was nothing further he could do on the case and that “it was now up to Washington”.

The steps which I have taken on Colonel Behn’s behalf have been on my own initiative. I have, however, informed him thereof and have consistently urged him to be patient. I do not believe, however, that
I can in fairness ask him any longer to refrain from taking the matter up with the Department and I presume the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation officials will shortly call at Washington to explain the company’s position during the war and request the Department’s assistance.

Of more importance than the personal inconvenience to Colonel Behn is the question of the Spanish Government’s motives and intentions. It has seemed clear to me from the outset that behind the refusal to let Colonel Behn into the country probably lay far reaching intentions affecting the future position of the International Telephone and Telegraph interests in Spain. Colonel Behn was quite a figure here and I suppose that stories of his influence and of persuasion must be almost legendary. It is but logical, therefore, that if the Government or certain members thereof have plans for the future of the Telefónica which are prejudicial to the company’s existing contracts they should feel that these plans may best be matured with Colonel Behn outside of Spain and the company’s interests here in less competent or authoritative hands. Given the intensely nationalistic feeling of “the new Spain” and their ambitious program of reform it is but natural to suppose that they must cherish the thought of “freeing” the country from the “foreign monopoly which controls their vital communication system”. Just how far they may intend to go or what means they may intend to apply I do not know and I doubt if they have as yet formulated any definite program in this respect. In fact I have no real tangible evidence that they harbor any such designs whatever. Since the fall of Madrid however they have permitted no Americans or other foreign officials of the Telefónica to have anything whatsoever to do with the company’s operation or administration. They orally stated when they first [omission?] requested Caldwell and his associates to leave the building immediately after [apparent omission] curtly that it was merely “pending recognition by the United States”. Following our recognition they stated that the Government’s operation of the Telephone Company would continue “during the existence of a state of war”. It is perhaps significant that on the other hand no effort has been made to interfere in any way with the operation of the company’s manufacturing subsidiary, the Standard Electrónica de España, which is in no sense a public utility. (There is though apparently a tendency to place orders for needed material with other concerns rather than entirely with that company as was heretofore the case for certain types of equipment.) There has also apparently been some criticism in the Government of the existing contract between the Telefónica and the International Telephone and Telegraph Company of Spain whereunder the former pays the latter
4½ percent its gross revenues or approximately 60 [omission?] pesetas per annum (based on the first 6 months of 1936).

It is only fair to say that at first neither Colonel Behn nor his representatives here were inclined to share my views as to the Government’s intentions.

They were reluctant to believe that this Government could contemplate any serious measures against the company and were more inclined to attribute the refusal to admit Colonel Behn to the general scramble for jobs and intrigues now going on within the company’s Spanish personnel under the guise of “depuración” and particularly to the desire of the Government’s appointed manager to retain his position of authority. (The latter a man named Mestre formerly managed the company’s small Canary Islands plant where he developed a close and loyal friendship for General Franco which after the war broke out resulted in his being given control of the Telephone Corporation in Nationalist Spain.) I think now however that Colonel Behn is coming to agree with me on the motives behind his exclusion and is coming to realize the unpopularity of the Telefonica and the resentment in Nationalist Spain of its failure to do more “to help their cause in the hour of need”.

The question of how much foreign, especially German, influence may have to do with the matter of course comes to mind. Behn and his associates are inclined to think that the “critical internal situation” may be a factor in the Government’s desire to retain administrative control of the company. Personally I am much inclined to doubt this (and Ungria said the idea was “childish”) for the simple reason that if war broke out the Government could immediately resume administration of the company without difficulty. On the other hand it seems probable that the Germans for their own end may have encouraged the Spanish Phalangists in their nationalistic ambitions with respect to the company particularly, as the opposition to Colonel Behn’s entry appears to lie primarily with Serrano Suner ² and Colonel Fuset (Judge Advocate of the army and close personal adviser to General Franco). I think, however, the real motives behind the Government’s attitude at present arises first from an intention to restrict the rights or privileges hitherto enjoyed by the company (refraining from even toying with the idea of Government acquisition of the telephone system) and secondly from definite animosity against the company for its “failure to help in the war”.

I have given this lengthy background to prepare the Department for the company’s call upon it and to request such further instructions

² Spanish Minister of Interior.
as it may care to send me. If it desires to press the issue of Colonel Behn's entry as I believe it should, it may wish to discuss the matter with Cardenas simultaneously with such further representations as it may wish me to make.

Copy to Paris.

MATTHEWS

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1939—6 p. m.

11. Your 47, May 11, 10 a.m. Mr. Frank Page of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation discussed the matter of Colonel Behn's application with us yesterday and requested that we do everything possible to assist in obtaining permission for him to enter Spain. The steps which you have taken thus far in this connection are approved and you are authorized to take whatever further action you believe may be advisable under the circumstances to facilitate issuance of the necessary permit. We assume that in doing so you will consult with Colonel Behn.

It is noted from your telegram that in your letter of May 6 to Barcenas you asked to be given the reason for delaying Colonel Behn's permission to enter Spain. As the Department is at a loss to understand the attitude of the Spanish Government in this matter we wish you to continue to endeavor to ascertain the reason for the delay.

We shall appreciate information as to whether Americans connected with the Telephone Company are receiving treatment different from that accorded others. We should also like to know whether difficulties in obtaining permission to enter Spain still exist with reference to all nationalities, as reported in your no. 34 of May 1, noon, and if so what action may have been taken by other Governments on behalf of their nationals.

HULL

ST. JEAN DE LUZ [sic], May 21, 1939—9 p.m.

[Received May 23—12:11 p.m.]

55. My telegram No. 47, May 11 and Department's telegram No. 11, May 16, 6 p.m. At his request I called on Under Secretary Barcenas on Wednesday en route to Madrid. He said that he had not answered

* Not printed.
my letter concerning Colonel Behn because of the reference therein to his confidential statement to me that the question of his entry into Spain was to come before a Cabinet meeting. (He confirmed that it had been discussed therein.) Inasmuch as this statement had been made personally and off the record he did not feel that he could make a reply in writing. He went on to say in friendly fashion that he personally would do all he could to facilitate the entry into Spain of Colonel Behn and hoped for support in this from Ambassador Cardenas on his early return here on a visit. For the present however he could only strongly counsel patience on the part of Colonel Behn and urge the company to cease its efforts through many sources to force the issue. He emphasized the feelings in some quarters (he was not specific) that while Colonel Behn had visited Republican Spain several times during the war he had never once come near the Nationalist side; that if he had waited this long to get in touch with this Government there would seem to be no reason for urgency in his coming to Spain now. Barcenas then referred to the newly authorized visa procedure (my telegram No. 53, May 16, noon 4) and read me extracts from confidential instructions to Spanish consulates to refuse visas to “officials, executives and technicians” of companies with interests in Spain which during the war had cooperated with the Republican Government “particularly if these executives and technicians had made no effort to get in touch with or cooperate with” the Nationalist Government. Barcenas said that in spite of these instructions Colonel Behn might of course inadvertently be granted a visa and be permitted to enter Spain; that in such case the situation “might become embarrassing” and he felt that Colonel Behn would in any case wish to enter Spain “by the front door”.

I pointed out that Behn as president of a concern with very important investments in Spain was naturally desirous of giving these his personal attention and that if permitted to come in he could presumably satisfactorily explain the position which his company had taken during the war. Barcenas replied that the company was well represented here by Mr. Caldwell and others of its American staff who could deal with such questions as might arise and reiterated the unwisdom of pressing the matter now. I inquired whether some other high official of the company would be permitted to enter Spain in the interim (Colonel Behn had mentioned to me the possibility of sending Mr. Stockton if it appeared that the existent animosity was against him rather than against the company) and Barcenas advised that no such request should be made.

I asked what in addition to what he had told me really lay behind Colonel Behn’s exclusion. He said “Frankly I do not know. If I did I would tell you.”

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4 Not printed.
I am still convinced that the motives behind and sources of the opposition to Colonel Behn's admittance are as set forth in my telegram 47 (Barcenas would not admit—he may not know that any plans of Government policy vis-à-vis the company are in progress). Whatever the propriety and legality of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company's position in Spain during the war the fact remains that there is much bitterness against them here for their cooperation with the Republican Government and their failure to do more to help the "cause of Nationalist Spain". I believe that the full force of this bitterness is not yet fully realized by Colonel Behn or his officials here. Caldwell has now for the first time learned from Mestre, present head of the Telefonica under Government administration, that during the latter's conversation with General Franco several weeks ago in which he claimed to have pleaded for Behn's entry the General replied "it cannot be permitted" and himself added that during continuation of "the state of war" the Telephone Company must remain in the hands of the Government. I also learned that a fortnight ago from two separate sources, namely General Jordana as Vice President of the Council of Ministers and the Minister of Finance, the Government asked the company for copies of the contracts between the Compania Telefonica Nacional de Espana and the International Telephone and Telegraph Company de Espana as well as those between the former and the Government. The company has confirmation that these are being carefully studied. Furthermore by a law published on May 12 through appointive powers on the boards of directors of three Spanish privately owned railways the Government has assumed control thereof pending preparation of "a permanent statute".

While those railways have owed the Government large sums of money since the 1920's and their case is not therefore parallel to that of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company, this action might well be considered a straw in the wind indicating the trend of future governmental policy with respect to public service corporations. (I wish respectfully to refer to the last sentence of the penultimate paragraph of my telegram No. 47.)

There is a question in my mind (and apparently Caldwell is beginning to feel somewhat the same way) whether unless the Department wishes to make a serious issue of this question it would not better serve the company's interests as well as our own to exercise considerable patience as suggested by Barcenas on the logical wisdom of Behn's entry into Spain. I believe that it would certainly be advisable for the company to cease its "pressure activities" on various fronts and I am so informing both Behn and Caldwell.
In specific reply to the second paragraph of the Department's tele-
gram No. 11, with the exception of Colonel Behn I believe Americans
of the Telephone Company are receiving and will continue to receive
the same treatment accorded others as regards entry into the country.
(As previously reported they are permitted to take no part in the
company's administration during continuance of "the state of war").
I believe that the difficulties and delays in obtaining permission to
enter Spain previously reported have continued with respect to all
nationalities; the action taken by other governments on behalf of
their nationals has been similar to that which I have followed, though
the French went so far as to threaten at one time to exclude all Span-
iards from France and the British to impose rigid visa requirements
if the situation was not remedied. Unquestionably the continued
pressure from governments has been largely responsible for the adop-
ton of the new visa procedure reported in my telegram 53, May 16,
noon. It remains to be seen how this new procedure will work out
in practice.

Copy to Paris.

MATTHEWS

652.1115/15½

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] May 29, 1939.

The Spanish Ambassador called to see me this morning at my re-
quest. I commenced the conversation by asking the Ambassador what
the situation might be with regard to his negotiations with the Export-
Import Bank for the facilitation of credits to the Spanish Cotton
Syndicate for the purchase of American cotton amounting to 300,000
bales. The Ambassador said that he had heard nothing further from
the Export-Import Bank in the matter in the last few days and that
he was beginning to get very concerned lest this Government was not
anxious to conclude these negotiations. I told the Ambassador that I
had just spoken with Mr. Pierson ⁶ on the telephone and that Mr.
Pierson had told me that he was trying to locate the Ambassador in
order to have an immediate interview with him and that I would con-
sequently send word to Mr. Pierson that the Ambassador would call
to see him after leaving the Department of State.

The Ambassador said he was very glad to know this since the mat-
ter in his opinion was one of very vital importance to the Spanish
Government itself and one which would have a very great bearing

upon that betterment of relations between the Spanish Government and the United States which he had so much at heart. He told me that his Government was confronted with financial difficulties which made it absolutely imperative that it obtain at least a two years credit for the purchase of the 300,000 bales of American cotton desired. I told the Ambassador that while of course I was not familiar with the details which had been discussed by officials of the Export-Import Bank and the Spanish Embassy, I did know that it was difficult for these officials to understand why the Spanish Government should be able to pay for cotton from other cotton producing countries on ninety day terms and yet insisted that they could only pay for American cotton on two year terms. The Ambassador replied that he understood that his Government had only purchased from other sources some fifty thousand bales and that this quantity would have been purchased in the United States if our own officials had been able to assure him that there was that amount of cotton available in the free market here. He admitted readily, however, that his Government should have informed him of these purchases made from other sources and expressed his regret that they had not.

I then said to the Ambassador that I was very anxious that this cotton transaction be concluded promptly on terms satisfactory to both sides and that I was sure he had already gained the impression that this Government desired to do what it could to smooth the way for a resumption of friendly and advantageous relations between the two countries. In view of that situation, I said, I had asked him to come in this morning in order to talk with him in complete frankness with regard to the situation that apparently was developing in connection with the treatment by the Spanish Government of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company. I said that in March Colonel Behn, the President of the Company, then in Paris had requested permission to visit Spain in order to discuss with the members of the Spanish Government the many questions that had arisen with regard to the Company’s properties in Spain. At that time he had been informed that permission would not be accorded until after recognition had been granted by the United States to the Spanish Government. I said that recognition had been accorded soon thereafter, but that during the eight weeks that had subsequently elapsed the Spanish Government had made it very clear that it had no present intention of granting Colonel Behn the right of entering Spain for the purpose indicated. I said I wished to make the position of this Government very clear and that was that Colonel Behn was a reputable American citizen representing the American owners of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company which Company in turn held properties valued at a very great amount in Spain. I said
that this Government had every intention of upholding the legal rights of these American investments in Spain with exactly as much decision and exactly as much interest as it had in the past and that it could not admit that a refusal to admit Colonel Behn to enter Spain for a legitimate purpose in representation of these American interests was consistent with accepted international practice or with the ordinary standards of international equity.

Furthermore, I said I could not help but be disturbed by the apparent lack of candor on the part of the Spanish Government in approaching the problem presented by the interests of the Company in Spain. I said that all of this doubt and uncertainty and ground for suspicion which now existed with regard to this matter could be promptly cleared up if Colonel Behn were permitted to enter Spain without further delay to discuss with the appropriate Spanish authorities in a frank and friendly manner the matter in which the Company was interested and if the Spanish Government were then prepared to state unequivocally its intention of respecting fully, in accordance with the accepted standards of international law and practice, the legitimate and legal rights of this Company. I said that just as I was interested in doing what I appropriately could in furthering the successful conclusion of the cotton transaction, I trusted that the Ambassador would do what he could in clearing up the problem which I had outlined to him.

I stated that I wished to request that he communicate to his Government what I had just stated to him and I informed him that similar instructions had been sent by telegraph to Ambassador Weddell so that the latter might take the matter up also immediately after presenting his letters of credence.

The Ambassador said that he would make every effort to press for a satisfactory solution of the matter I had mentioned. He said that he would do so not only because of his recognition that the matter was one which had great importance in the eyes of this Government and on the part of public opinion in the United States, but also because of his personal conviction that what was asked was fair and reasonable and in the best interests of Spain. The Ambassador said, however, that he had not been aware of the incidents involved in the delay in granting Colonel Behn the right to enter Spain. I asked the Ambassador if he had any personal objection to Colonel Behn or if he knew of any reason why Colonel Behn should not be permitted to enter Spain. The Ambassador replied that on the contrary he believed Colonel Behn to be an extremely able man, an excellent "diplomat," and one against whom no legitimate question could be raised by the Spanish authorities. I said to the Ambassador that I was well aware that the criticism had been made by some of the Franco authorities
that Colonel Behn had not permitted the Company to give any assistance to the Franco side during the civil war. I said, however, that Colonel Behn had not permitted the Company to give aid to the Loyalist government either and that it seemed to me that he had taken the only proper attitude for a representative of a foreign company doing business in Spain during a time of civil war, namely, to give assistance to neither side.

I could find no sign of prejudice against the Company or against Colonel Behn on the part of the Ambassador. He was exceedingly frank and outspoken in his statement that he felt the Company’s properties should be respected and that Colonel Behn should be permitted to enter Spain without further delay.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

852.75 National Telephone Co./265: Telegram
The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, May 29, 1939—2 p. m.

383. For Ambassador Weddell: Continued refusal of the Spanish authorities to permit Colonel Behn to enter the country cannot fail to give rise to the suspicion that the Spanish Government’s attitude toward the International Telephone and Telegraph Company, toward its huge investments in Spain, and toward its contractual rights lacks frankness. The desire of Colonel Behn to protect the American rights and interests involved, to establish personal dealings with the Spanish authorities, and to negotiate claims and counterclaims rising out of the civil strife is entirely legitimate and merits our full support. When Colonel Behn first applied for permission in March, the intimation was given to him that his application would not be acted on favorably prior to recognition of the Nationalist Government by the United States. But after recognition when the American Chargé d’Affaires took up the matter with the Under Secretary of State, the latter advanced a series of reasons in justification for continued refusal which frankly we have found unconvincing. (See Matthews’ telegrams 47 and 55.)5a

The present attitude of the Spanish Government is the less understandable in that it has adopted an intransigent attitude toward a large American interest at the very moment when it is asking the Government of the United States to extend it favors in the form of credits for purchases of needed raw materials.

5a Ante, pp. 820 and 824.
I feel that you should make it abundantly clear that this Government intends to uphold the legal rights of American business interests in Spain with as much emphasis as in the past. More immediately, this Government considers that the refusal to admit Colonel Behn is inconsistent with international practice and equity if for no other reason than that it deprives him of the opportunity to deal with the appropriate Spanish officials with regard to the interests he represents.

We are informing Cardenas in this sense and trust that you will take the first appropriate opportunity after you have presented your letters to set forth the position of the United States on these points.

Welles

852.75 National Telephone Co./269

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)

WASHINGTON, June 2, 1939.

Sir: Reference is had to the Department’s telegram no. 383 of May 29, 2 p.m. via the Embassy at Paris, regarding the attitude of the Spanish Government in refusing permission to Colonel Sosthenes Behn, President of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, to enter Spain for the purpose of representing American interests in the National Telephone Company of Spain (Compañía Telefónica Nacional de España).

As stated in the Department’s telegram under reference, the present attitude of the Spanish Government indicates at the least a lack of frankness. Such an attitude is bound to give rise to the suspicion that some action prejudicial to the rights of the National Telephone Company of Spain, and consequently to the American interests represented therein, may be under consideration. Under the circumstances it would seem highly desirable that the attitude of the Spanish Government toward the National Telephone Company should be clarified as soon as possible. To this end it would be helpful if the Spanish Government were to make a statement of its intention to respect fully the rights of the National Telephone Company of Spain legally acquired under the terms of its contract with the Spanish State.

You are authorized in your discretion and in such manner as you may deem advisable to bring the position of this Government with respect to the protection of American business interests in Spain to the attention of the Spanish Government, with a view to eliciting assurances along the lines indicated.

There is enclosed for your confidential information a memorandum of a conversation at the Department on May 29, 1939, between the
Under Secretary and the Spanish Ambassador on the general subject of the relations between the Spanish Government and the National Telephone Company of Spain, in which the position of this Government with respect to the American interests involved is set forth. There is also enclosed for background information a memorandum prepared in the Department summarizing the position of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation in Spain. Further information on the subject will be found in the files of the Embassy.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:

SUMNER WELLES

632.1115/21

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Adviser on International Economic Affairs (Feis)

[WASHINGTON,] June 12, 1939.

The Spanish Ambassador called upon Mr. Welles to discuss the possible financing of cotton sales to Spain. I was present.

The Ambassador related the course of his recent dealings with Mr. Jesse Jones. He said that at a previous meeting with Jones, it had been indicated to him that the Export-Import Bank would be willing to enter into the financing arrangements for 300,000 bales of cotton for Spain on the following terms; that the credit for 150,000 bales should be a two-year credit, that the credit for the other 150,000 bales should be on an amortized scale under which the Spanish Government would begin paying for each shipment three months after shipment. The Ambassador said that in his most recent talk with Mr. Jones he had come with his Government's counter proposal, to wit, 180,000 bales on the two-year basis and 120,000 bales on the amortized basis.

He related that now Mr. Jones had brought to the front the question of the suits of the Spanish Government against the Treasury arising out of the purchases of Spanish silver, saying that the Treasury still was taking a firm position in the matter and asking the Ambassador whether the Spanish Government would be willing to drop these suits if this financing deal was consummated. The Ambassador had replied that this was a political matter which he felt could only

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7. Not printed.
9. Suits instituted by the Spanish Nationalist Government in June 1938 to recover some 15,000,000 ounces of silver acquired in 1938 by the United States Treasury from the Spanish Republican Government. The suits were dismissed by the New York Federal Court July 14, 1939.
properly be discussed with the State Department. The discussion seems to have come to a halt on this point—though the Ambassador said that Mr. Jones had put forward another possibility, to wit, that the discussion for the moment be limited to the possible financing of 50,000 bales of cotton on arrangements similar to those summarized above.

Mr. Welles said that he wished to repeat what he already said to the Ambassador, that it was the President's decision that the question of the silver suits should not be brought forward in connection with this matter of cotton financing. He told the Ambassador that he would again discuss this with the President on the President's return, and endeavor to get it finally clarified and would then get in touch with the Ambassador again. The Ambassador expressed satisfaction.

Mr. Welles then said that he wished to repeat those general reflections and ideas which he had already expressed to the Ambassador on the matter of the relationships between Spain and the United States. The Department was interested in this Spanish financing as a step towards the renewal and resumption of normal and satisfactory commercial and economic relationships between the two countries, and that if we undertook it it would be on the supposition that the Spanish Government shared the same wish and purpose, and that accordingly it would grant to American property in Spain and other American interests the same friendly and cooperative consideration which had been received in the past. The Ambassador said that he understood this and had presented this attitude to his Government.

I interjected myself into the conversation for the purpose of underlining a little bit further the idea expressed by the Under Secretary. I said that perhaps what Mr. Welles had in mind were preoccupations similar to those which I knew were in the minds of various people in the Department, including the Secretary, to wit, that the refusal of the Spanish Government to admit Colonel Behn into Spain so that he could deal with his Company's affairs was creating apprehension lest it signify an intention on the part of the Spanish Government to create difficulties for that Company. I stated that the Ambassador would realize that if this Government undertook this financing and then shortly afterwards the Spanish Government used its power or influence adversely to affect American property interests in Spain, or in Latin America, our action in financing this cotton sale would obviously be subject to criticism. The Ambassador stated he understood our feeling in the matter and had advised his Government of it. He expressed a conjecture as to whether the difficulties put in the way of Mr. Behn's entry might be of a personal character rather than indicative of any policy in regard to the country. He referred to certain stories—the truth or significance of which he said he had no way of
knowing—to the effect that Behn and other officials of the Telephone Company had been on congenial terms with officers of the Republican Spanish Government and that the Telephone Company had been of use in bombardment activity. Mr. Welles clearly expressed the view that the Telephone Company had handled itself completely properly, dealing as any American Company would have had to deal in the circumstances with both sides, and in an impartial fashion.

The conversation ended with an understanding that Mr. Welles would communicate again with the Ambassador.

852.75 National Telephone Co./278: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State*

SAN SEBASTIAN via PARIS, June 22, 1939—8 p. m.  
[Received June 23—9:34 a. m.]

87. Department's unnumbered mail instruction of June 2d and telegraphic instruction No. 383 May 29, 2 p. m. In conversation today in Burgos with Minister of Foreign Affairs I brought out the arguments and statements contained in the above instructions emphasizing the seeming lack of frankness on the part of the Spanish Government. I remarked that Spain could hardly be afraid of an individual of Behn's merited position in the financial world even though bearing a military title, and emphasized the intention of our Government to uphold legal rights of Americans in Spain as in the past. To his remark that Behn "had not been to see them" during the war I observed that he was not a Spanish citizen and that as far as I could learn his entire neutrality in the recent conflict had been correct. I also called attention to the inconsistent attitude of the Spanish Government in excluding an American citizen while pressing for cotton credits.

The Minister interrupted me here to begin a monologue on how vital it was to Spain to have this cotton in order to start spindles in Catalonia.

To this I observed that while there was no apparent relation between the two subjects yet one could sharply react on the other as was apparent in this case. To this he seemed to assent.

I then urged on the Minister to have his Government clarify its position regarding the Telephone Company and what it would do about Behn, and asked him if he would not give me a statement that I might be fully informed. He replied that he would do this in a few days (en estos días) but a little later rather qualified his promise by saying that naturally this memorandum would be "in the language of diplomacy".
In conclusion the Minister said that he was hopeful of favorable action on the Behn case "adjusted" but could say nothing definite now. I remarked that Behn had already been waiting permission since March, and that the whole subject was "inexplicable" to me and to my Government.

In our conversation the Minister showed a distinctly reserved attitude and either because [became?] mute or else endeavored to initiate a new subject when pressed especially when I endeavored unsuccessfully to extract from him the reason for Behn's exclusion. (From various colleagues I learn that this evasive attitude is the one usually resorted to by this official.)

**Weddell**

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862.76 National Telephone Co./275: Telegram

**The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)**

**WASHINGTON, July 1, 1939—3 p.m.**

46. Your 87, June 22, 8 p.m. For your information and background, the Under Secretary saw the Spanish Ambassador in Washington on June 28.* Cárdenas was perplexed and disturbed by the long delay in the course of the negotiations which he has undertaken with the Export-Import Bank for the facilitation of credits to the Spanish cotton syndicate for the purchase of 300,000 bales of American cotton. He read a telegram from his Government stating that as a result of this delay Spanish textile industry was largely paralyzed and directing him to report by telegraph the reasons for the delay. His Government further informed him that if the reasons for the delay could be solved by action on the part of the Spanish Government such action would be taken, but if they were insuperable the Government would be obliged to modify drastically its policy with regard to cotton purchases. The Ambassador said he was much discouraged because he sincerely believed that the success of this negotiation would be a practical demonstration to the moderates of the present Spanish Government that the United States was willing to cooperate with it and that it would not be necessary for them to throw themselves completely into the arms of Germany and Italy. In his judgment the granting of the cotton credit would have an influence on Spanish policy altogether incommensurate with the intrinsic importance of the cotton deal.

The Under Secretary told the Ambassador that while it was impossible at this stage to explain to him in detail the reasons for the delay, certain obstacles had arisen which could only be surmounted

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* Memorandum of conversation not printed.
by the President himself. He said, however, that the Ambassador could not overlook or ignore the great importance of the statements he had made to the Ambassador upon repeated occasions as to the lack of confidence which existed generally in Washington with regard to the policy which his Government would pursue with regard to legitimate American interests in Spain. He said that reports had reached him that the element in the Spanish Government which represented the Falange were determined to pursue a policy of nationalization and that if this policy included the confiscation of the properties of the American Telephone Company as well as other legitimate American investments in Spain, there would, of course, be little logical reason why this Government should proceed with the granting of credits to a government which intended to confiscate American properties. He urged him once more to obtain a categorical statement from his Government with regard to American interests in Spain along the lines he had previously indicated, including the pressing need for permission to be granted to Colonel Behn to enter Spain in connection with the telephone properties and he said that if such assurance were forthcoming the impression created here would necessarily be exceedingly beneficial.

As stated in the Department’s telegram 383 of May 29, 2 p. m. to you via Paris, the Department felt that the Spanish authorities’ attitude towards the International Telephone and Telegraph Company lacked frankness. The statements of the Foreign Minister reported in your 87 of June 22, 8 p. m., make the Spanish position in the matter even more confusing. If upon receipt of this telegram you have heard nothing further on the subject from the Spanish, you are requested to seek a convenient opportunity to broach again to the Minister of Foreign Affairs the subject of a declaration of the Spanish Government’s attitude towards American interests in Spain, including Colonel Behn’s admission to that country.

HULL

852.75 National Telephone Co./274: Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

SAN SEBASTIAN via PARIS, July 3, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received July 4—9:18 a. m.]

104. The Department’s 46, July 1, 3 p. m. On June 30 I sent a letter to Jordana reminding him of the memorandum he promised me on June 22 reported in my telegram 87, June 22, 8 p. m. I have had no word from him as yet and frankly fear his lack of power to do anything regarding the case of Colonel Behn or the Telephone Company. Consequently if I receive nothing from Jordana by the end
of this week and unless the Department perceives objection I intend to make a formal request to see Franco as soon as possible to discuss these matters.  

Weddell

852.75 National Telephone Co./277: Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

San Sebastian via Paris, July 9, 1939—noon.
[Received July 10—9:45 a.m.]

112. I today talked in St. Jean de Luz with Behn who has just returned from Berlin. All he heard on this visit makes him feel that war is expected and will probably break out in August. He also learned while in Berlin from Siemens Halske and other and semiofficial sources that German influences are back of his exclusion from Spain, that the Spanish Government is now discussing with the German Government the installation of a telephone-telegraph network, German technicians and German material to be employed therein and that he is not wanted in Spain until all arrangements have been concluded.

The desire to forestall this general plan and to arrive in Spain before the outbreak of a general European conflict make him anxious to enter promptly.

Behn states he is immediately returning to Berlin “to see Goering” and feels that in his discussions with German authorities concerning his interests in other countries, Rumania for example, he would be embarrassed were he to assert their helplessness in the matter of entry into Spain since they would probably seize on this to bargain and this he wished to avoid, the seeming implication of his remarks being that he might be forced to do this. He added that Siemens Halske told him that on account of their cartel arrangements with his company they are not sympathetic to the policy of their Government in Spain in this matter but were powerless.

I told Behn of the interest of our Government in his cause and of my intention to interview the Chief of the State on the subject for which, as for the Embassy’s previous efforts, he expressed lively gratitude, but reiterated his uneasiness lest such an arrangement as outlined above be concluded between Spain and Germany or that a war break out or both before he was admitted, a situation which he would deplore.

Weddell

*In telegram No. 48, July 5, 6 p.m., the Department expressed approval of the Ambassador’s idea to go to Franco direct, but suggested that he make formal request without waiting until the end of the week (852.75 National Telephone Co./276).*
The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

SAN SEBASTIAN via PARIS, July 20, 1939—9 p.m.
[Received July 21—6:35 a.m.]

128. I saw Behn in St. Jean de Luz yesterday evening. He has just returned from Berlin where he did not see either Goering or the Minister of Posts, the former being absent and the latter he was informed being “disinclined to see him” although his informants said this could be arranged if he insisted.

Behn was informed by highly reliable sources in Berlin that the commission which went from Germany to Spain last January to study the consolidation of telegraph and telephone lines, etcetera, had submitted its report which was now under study in the Spanish Ministry of the Interior and that an early decision was anticipated.

Behn expressed a growing uneasiness lest a decree issue defining and restating relations between Government and company which would inter alia eliminate all Americans from the management.

Weddell

The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

SAN SEBASTIAN via PARIS, July 20, 1939—10 p.m.
[Received July 21—10:20 a.m.]

129. Scotten saw Barcenas Monday and again today and discussed at length the question of Behn’s return to Spain as well as the release of the American prisoners. During the first conversation Barcenas although personally friendly was cool and noncommittal regarding both questions. When Scotten asked him what had happened to the Ambassador’s request for a list of the prisoners he replied that the military did not want to furnish one. Barcenas stated he had spoken to the Minister of the Interior the previous week regarding Behn and had been told not to meddle with such matters. Scotten thereupon said he wondered whether the Spanish Government was fully cognizant of the great importance which our Government attached to the return of Colonel Behn to Spain. He explained to Barcenas the tenor of the conversation between Mr. Welles and Cardenas as outlined in the Department’s 46, July 1, 3 p.m. and inquired whether Cardenas had not fully informed his Government regarding the conversation. Barcenas replied that Cardenas had merely telegraphed the general hope of our Government that American interests here

22 Robert M. Scotten, Counselor of Embassy in Spain.
would be fully protected! He added that perhaps Cardenas had been afraid to report this conversation fully! Scotten thereupon stressed the fact that the connection between the permission for Behn to return to Spain and the granting of the cotton credits had become increasingly close and added that although not speaking officially he felt that should permission be granted for Behn to return to Spain it could not help but facilitate the granting of the cotton credits.

Today Barcenas opened the conversation by stating “I think I can say that if you can arrange for the cotton credits, the Generalissimo will not only agree for Behn to return but will authorize the release of your prisoners.” Scotten inquired whether he could take this as an official statement to which Barcenas replied: “No, but that is my personal impression. I think however that it would be useful for your Ambassador to see General Jordana next week and I will telephone you on Monday regarding the time. I hope that you will meet us halfway regarding these matters so that we can settle them all at once.”

Scotten received the impression that, although Barcenas claimed to be speaking unofficially, he had nevertheless discussed these matters with Jordana and that the latter may very possibly make a definite proposal to me along these lines when I see him next week.

While I can readily understand and share the general reluctance of the Department to enter into a bargain to obtain what we regard as our indubitable right, nevertheless, from the tenor of the Department’s 46 July 1, 3 p.m. the question of the cotton credits and Colonel Behn’s return to Spain appear to be linked together. If this be true and if the Department will authorize me to accept the proposition mentioned unofficially to Scotten by Barcenas in case Jordana does broach it officially and gives definite assurances it will be carried out I feel we have an opportunity to settle at least two of our outstanding questions with the Spanish Government.

I would appreciate the Department’s instructions by Monday if possible as I may be asked to proceed to Burgos on Tuesday.

Weddell

852.75 National Telephone Co./281: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)

WASHINGTON, July 22, 1939—1 p.m.

61. Your 129, June [July] 20, 10 p.m., and 131, July 21, noon. It is believed that the opportunity which you will be afforded of talking with General Franco on July 24 will be exceedingly useful.

Latter not printed.
You should, of course, make it clear that this Government cannot consent, directly or indirectly, to bargain for the release of the American prisoners, for the entrance of Colonel Behn into Spain, nor for fair and equitable treatment of American interests in Spain on the basis of a conclusion of the cotton credits requested by the Spanish Government, or any other basis. You should say that when this Government was approached by representatives of the Spanish Government with a view to obtaining credits for the purchase of American cotton, this Government expressed its willingness to give favorable consideration to the proposal because of the fact that normal and friendly relations existed between the two Governments and because of its belief that if an agreement were found possible, such agreement would be of value to the commercial interests of the two nations. It assumed that the Spanish Government was animated by the same desire and that the Spanish Government would be willing to signify this desire in a practical manner by expediting the release of the American prisoners still under the jurisdiction of the Spanish authorities, by granting Colonel Behn permission without further delay to enter Spain in order to attend to legitimate interests of his company, and, finally, that the Spanish Government would be willing to give assurances that fair and equitable treatment would be accorded all American interests in Spain in accordance with the generally accepted principles of international law.

You may further state that you are informed that the Export-Import Bank has reached an agreement in principle with the Spanish Ambassador in Washington covering the conclusion of credits for the purchase of American cotton, and that without recognizing that any question of *quid pro quo* is involved your Government is sure that the Spanish Government, in the same friendly spirit by which your Government is guided, will undertake immediately a favorable solution of the three questions in which this Government is interested, as indicated above.

For your information, the Spanish Ambassador has informed me that he is specifically authorized by his Government, upon the conclusion of the cotton credit negotiation, to state upon a reciprocal basis that the Spanish Government intends to give fair and equitable treatment to American interests in Spain in accordance with the generally recognized principles of international law and with those governing the friendly relations between the two nations.

For your further information, I am informed by the President of the Export-Import Bank that the following are the bases of the understanding reached by the Spanish Ambassador and by the Export-Import Bank for the cotton credit: 13

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13 Announcement of the arrangement was made by the president of the Export-Import Bank on August 7, 1939.
“Credits will be provided for the purchase of 250,000 bales of cotton to be delivered in approximately equal monthly installments over a 1-year period. The procedure will be as follows:

In connection with each shipment shippers draw series of eight sight drafts on Banco Espagnol de Credito or Banco Hispano Americano payable at 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27 months respectively with instructions to present for acceptance on arrival of steamer carrying merchandise. Documents to be surrendered against acceptance of Bank and endorsement of Ministry of Commerce and Industry. General condition precedent to be a communication from Spanish Exchange Control agreeing to register acceptances as presented and to furnish dollars to cover acceptances at respective maturities.

Each of the first four drafts to represent 10% of the price and each of the last four, 15% of the price of the cotton. Interest at the rate of 3 1/2% per annum.

The arrangement is subject to written assurances from the Spanish Ambassador in the name of his Government that

1) the cotton shall be exclusively for domestic use in Spain; and
2) payments for the cotton will be made according to the terms of the agreement and that no claims will be asserted by the Spanish Government, the Bank of Spain or any Spanish financial or other interests against such payments for any reason resulting from the acquisition by the Government of the United States during 1938 of silver of Spanish origin.”

A prompt and satisfactory solution by the Spanish Government of the questions in which this Government is primarily interested will of course be most helpful in establishing friendly relationship between the two countries.

HULL

852.75 National Telephone Co./283: Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

San Sebastian via Paris, July 25, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received July 26—10:40 a. m.]

136. Department’s 61, July 22, 1 p. m. I was cordially received yesterday afternoon at Burgos by Franco with whom I went over the points brought out in the Department’s telegram under reference.

Franco said that as regards Behn he thought the matter of his entrance would be favorably settled “in a day or so,” that he knew him and had a good opinion of him but that he had been denounced by various people and that it had been necessary to investigate these denunciations. Franco added that however the investigations “had been delayed too long”.

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Franco then stated with reference to the American prisoners of war that he thought there was no objection now existing to their prompt release.

To all the foregoing I countered that while I was gratified yet he had given me nothing of a definite character.

Franco replied to this by saying that the Minister for Foreign Affairs was fully informed and that I should see him. I thereupon requested him to arrange an interview for me with Jordana and this very day; this he said he would do and instructed his secretary accordingly.

I went immediately to call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs. As I began to go over the same ground as with his chief he interrupted me to say that he was fully informed as he had just been talking by telephone with Franco. I again urged the point that I be given some definite statement on the questions at issue to which he replied "the American prisoners are at your disposition; where do you wish them delivered?" I said that I would promptly consult my Government and inform him.

Referring to Behn, the Minister said that his "activities" had been under investigation by their secret police and that a report had been promised him last week which in view of Franco's statements would doubtless be a favorable one; that he would endeavor to expedite this report and would try to communicate with me later in the evening wishing to clinch matters. I then called on the Under Secretary who as I entered remarked "I congratulate you on your victory", adding after a pause "and I also congratulate myself a little" adding that he had always been a partisan of the idea of Behn's prompt entry. I said I was glad but that I really had nothing definite concerning his entry but that the Foreign Office had told me he would try to let me know that night; the Under Secretary remarked that he too would do his best.

About 10:30 the Under Secretary called at my hotel saying he came to inform me that I was authorized to inform my Government that Behn would be permitted to enter the country and that the Spanish Consul at Hendaye was being instructed to issue him a visa any day after Thursday the 27th. I am today informing Behn of this.

As I desire to liquidate the matter of the prisoners as soon as possible I would appreciate a reply to my telegram 124, July 17, 5 p. m., and information regarding payment of their transportation subsistence from the time they cross the frontier (presumably at Irun). Although I will endeavor to secure the release of as many as possible the Government may well refuse to release some who have been sentenced on account of specific charges. For this reason I suggest that

*Not printed.*
the Department inform me as to the amount I can use for each individual rather than a lump sum to cover an indefinite number. If the Department prefers these funds could be placed at the disposition of the Consulate at Bordeaux and an officer of that Consulate be instructed to receive the prisoners at the frontier and handle their transportation et cetera from that point.

Weddell

852.75 National Telephone Co./296

The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

No. 154

San Sebastian, September 26, 1939.

[Received October 24.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's telegram No. 155, August 23 [22], 3 p. m., regarding the situation of the Telephone Company, and to report certain interesting developments which have occurred recently as regards the relations between the Telephone Company and the Spanish Government.

As reported in the telegram under reference, in spite of the physical presence of Colonel Behn in his office in the Telephone Building in Madrid and the fact that he has been allowed to attend meetings, etc., the management of the Company has not in fact been returned to the majority stockholders of the Spanish Company, that is to say, the International Telephone and Telegraph group. The Spanish authorities have been maintaining entire control of the operations of the company, and Colonel Behn and his American collaborators have been given practically no say in its management. While Colonel Behn has seen the Minister for Foreign Affairs on two occasions and endeavored to impress upon him the desirability of returning the management of the company to the American group, his representations have met with evasive replies on the part of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and no real progress appears to have been made.

On September 21st, however, Colonel Behn called at the Embassy and explained that he had seen the Minister of Finance at Madrid and, what was more important, the Minister of Commerce and Industry at Bilbao. He stated that he had informed the Minister of Commerce that providing the Government would turn over the management of the company to him—in other words, place it in the same status it occupied before the Spanish Civil War—he was prepared to take certain measures which would be of distinct benefit to Spain. These measures would consist of expanding the production capacity of the manufacturing plants owned by the I. T. & T. at Madrid and San-

22 Not printed.
tander to the extent of quadruplicating the number of employees in the Madrid plant and practically doubling the employees at the Santander plant. This would involve a great increase in the exportation of products from these plants resulting not only in benefit to Spanish labor but to an improvement in the foreign exchange situation of Spain. Colonel Behn stated that he had discussed this matter at some length with the Minister of Commerce, who appeared to be greatly interested in the proposition, and that he had left a complete memorandum with him dealing with the subject.

I should add parenthetically that Colonel Behn explained to me confidentially that should he receive the cooperation of the Spanish authorities it is his intention to bring certain equipment from the Paris factory of the I. T. & T., principally consisting of dies, to Madrid and utilize the Madrid plant for supplying the needs of the I. T. & T. throughout Latin America. He explained that the Paris factory of the I. T. & T. is now devoted wholly to supplying war materials to the French Government.

Colonel Behn informed me that the Minister of Commerce had stated that he would proceed to Madrid on September 23rd and would present this matter to General Franco and that it would in all probability be discussed at the meeting of the Council of Ministers to be held at Burgos on September 25th. Behn was extremely anxious that, without in any way sponsoring his proposition, the Embassy should indicate to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs the interest of the American Government in the obtaining of an equitable settlement of this problem. As I had planned to leave San Sebastián the morning of September 23rd for a motor trip to Vigo, Salamanca and Madrid, lasting approximately one week, and as it was consequently necessary for Mr. Scotten to remain in San Sebastián, I requested Mr. Ackerman, the Commercial Attaché, to proceed to Burgos and explain to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs my hope for an equitable arrangement of the problem of the Telephone Company. Mr. Ackerman consequently called upon Señor Bárceñas, the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, on September 22nd, and explained these matters to him. Señor Bárceñas explained at the outset that Colonel Behn had already discussed the matter with him and that he and the Minister for Foreign Affairs were very much interested in an arrangement of the difficulties of the Spanish company and that Colonel Behn kept him informed of all the developments. Bárceñas added that he, and he believed he was expressing the viewpoint of the Minister, was convinced that a settlement of the difficulties was in the best interest of Spain as well as the United States. He added that his interest led him to keep in close touch with Colonel Behn and that he would advise, as he has advised in the past, that this matter be handled tactfully
and that efforts be made to avoid too much or too sudden pressure. He indicated that he was inclined to think there was strong opposition in certain parts of the Government and he thought it might be a question of personalities. Although Mr. Ackerman attempted to draw him out on this point, Señor Bárcenas would not elaborate on this statement further but merely indicated that tact was essential and that progress must be made slowly.

As Señor Bárcenas appeared to be fully aware of the proposed arrangement for increasing manufacturing in the Spanish plants of the I. T. & T., Mr. Ackerman did not go into the details regarding this matter but stated that the American Ambassador wished the Minister to know of his personal interest and the deep interest of the Government of the United States that an equitable arrangement be made at the earliest possible moment, so that the Minister could convey this statement to the Cabinet when it met on September 25th. Bárcenas replied that he would immediately bring this to the attention of the Minister and he was glad to have this statement so that the Minister might be aware of it when the subject was discussed at the Cabinet meeting.

Colonel Behn is entirely satisfied with the action taken by the Embassy and is hopeful that it will produce the results he desires. However, he explained that his proposal to the Spanish Government is his last trump and if it does not produce results he is at somewhat of a loss to know what further action to take. He has not been able to see Serrano Suñer since his return to Spain on July 30th, and he explained that unless he is able to see him in the very near future in order to discuss the affairs of the Telephone Company, he will probably request the Embassy to arrange this interview for him.

Respectfully yours,

Robert M. Scotten
Counselor of Embassy

852.75 National Telephone Co./294 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

San Sebastian, October 2, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received 8 p. m.]

202. Referring to my No. 155, August 12 [22], 3 p. m., although Behn has been actively at work in endeavoring to adjust the status of the Telephone Company with the Government his efforts have not been satisfactory as yet. The Department will be apprised in detail

* Not printed.
of the situation upon the receipt of my despatch No. 154 dated September 26.

On September 29 during a visit to Madrid I was approached by the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs who told me the Government would shortly make a decision regarding this matter and he strongly advised me to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs and re-emphasize my Government's interest in the attainment of an equitable solution. I accordingly called on the Minister for Foreign Affairs on September 30 and went over the whole matter. I stressed our Government's generous attitude towards Spain recalling that for example while we could have used the cotton credits as a bargaining point we had not done so. I called the Minister's attention however to the fact that before many months the present cotton credits would be exhausted, that the United States would be perhaps the only source of supply and that without equitable treatment of American interests the Spanish Government could not without rather poor grace solicit further help from us. The Minister appeared to assent and asked me what I thought constituted equitable treatment of the Telephone Company to which I replied that the management of the company be where it belonged, namely, in the hands of the majority of the stockholders, in a word that it be master in its own house. The Minister again assented and stated that he would do all he could to promote Colonel Behn's desires and that he was optimistic of favorable results. He explained that the long delay in settling the affairs of the company appeared to have been provoked by certain minor officials of the company who were ex-soldiers who feared to lose their places if the management were returned to Behn. The Minister then informed me that the whole situation has been referred for final decision to the Sub-Secretary of the Presidencia who will make his report on October 3. The Minister hoped that this report would be satisfactory to the Telephone Company.

Weddell

852.75 National Telephone Co./295

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[Washington,] October 18, 1939.

During the course of a conversation this afternoon with the Spanish Ambassador, I asked him what progress he had been able to report concerning the International Telephone and Telegraph Company in Spain. He said that he had made quite an effort on behalf of the Company when he was in Burgos. The situation, however, was about
as follows. The contract between the Company and the Spanish subsidiary was so onerous that it would have to be modified. It contained provisions regarding management, earnings and gold payments, which, in effect, meant that all Spain was working for the benefit of the Company.

The whole business had been started in the wrong order. The Spanish State, instead of giving the concession to the Spanish Company, which, in turn, could make terms with the I. T. and T., had given the concession to the I. T. and T., which had then been able to impose its terms on the Spanish Company. The Company was undoubtedly unpopular throughout Spain, as despite the protestations of complete neutrality on the part of Colonel Behn, the public at large felt that he had been a little too favorable to the Loyalist side. Cárdenas said that a great deal of this was not Colonel Behn’s fault, but having remained so long in Madrid in 1936, having had to entertain Loyalist generals, having had to see the telephone building used for artillery spotting, et cetera, the impression could not be lightly destroyed.

With this background, Cárdenas found two points of view in existence in Spain. He had taken the position that the Spanish Government must come to an amicable understanding with the Company for the modification of the contract or it would lose all support in the United States. He had spoken even with Franco personally. For my confidential information and not to be repeated to Colonel Behn or Mr. Page, he found considerable personal feeling against Colonel Behn on the part of Franco. This apparently had resulted from a promise Colonel Behn had made to Franco as far back as 1934 that if ever Spain needed help he would be prepared to give it; Franco felt that Colonel Behn’s unfavorable reception of one or two messages he had sent him during the hostilities was tantamount to a breach of this personal promise. On the other hand, Cárdenas did not feel that General Franco would allow this personal feeling to color his judgment, and there were four officials in Spain—the Under Secretary of the Foreign Office, the Secretary of the Presidencia, the Minister of Finance, and the Vice Minister of Finance—all of whom were in favor of coming to an amicable understanding with the Company.

Mr. Cárdenas knew that the matter had dragged on a long time, but said he had done as much as he could without destroying his influence by being considered “more American than the Americans”. He said that Mr. Page was going to call on him in a day or two and I told him that he could talk to Mr. Page frankly and freely, as he was in the immediate personal entourage of Colonel Behn, and enjoyed his complete confidence.

Pierrepont Moffat
The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

Madrid, November 19, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received 8:50 p. m.]

232. My telegram No. 202, October 2, 3 p. m. Colonel Behn informs me that there has been no change in the relations between the Government and the Telephone Company since his arrival here on July 30. He has talked with the former and present Ministers for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, the Sub-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the Sub-Secretary of the Presidency. While the attitude of these officials appears to be friendly, he had been told that the final decision rests with the Minister of the Interior. Although Behn has made every possible effort since July 30 to see the Minister of the Interior, he has not succeeded and was informed only yesterday that the Minister of the Interior refuses to see him at the present time. Behn has now requested through the Sub-Secretary of the Presidency either an interview with General Franco or that he designate a committee of three or four Cabinet Ministers to receive Behn and discuss the basic question of the Telephone Company with him. He expects an answer on November 23 to this request. Behn states, and I concur, that this is the final effort which he is able to make on his own behalf to straighten out this highly unsatisfactory situation through friendly negotiations. He adds that if this last effort fails he sees no possible alternative except to request diplomatic intervention on the part of our Government either through the Spanish Ambassador in Washington or through this Embassy.

I am convinced that Behn evidenced not only patience but that he has acted with tact and discretion and that he has met with the maximum of procrastination and evasiveness on the part of the Spanish officials. The refusal of the Minister of Interior even to receive him and discuss the basic question cannot I believe be explained on any grounds other than the intention of this Government to retain the control and management of the Spanish Telephone Company and to ignore the legal rights of the majority stockholders, namely, the International Telephone and Telegraph Company.

I will report next week the results of Behn’s démarche through the Sub-Secretary of the Presidency together with my suggestions for possible action by the Department.

In the meantime Behn informs me that he has received confidential advices that Ambassador Cardenas has asked to see Warren Pierson, president of the Import-Export Bank. Although the Embassy has received no official intimations that the Spanish Government is seeking credits in the United States, the visit of Cardenas to Pierson may well be for that purpose. If this be true, I venture to suggest that the
Department request Pierson to make no commitments whatsoever pending a final solution of this telephone question or at least pending a further report from me in line with the above.

**Weddell**

852.75 National Telephone Co./301: Telegram

_The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State_

**MADRID,** November 30, 1939—noon.

[Received 11:49 p.m.]

241. My 232, November 19, 9 a.m. Colonel Behn informs me he was received last evening by Serrano Suner and conversed with him for over 1 hour. The interview was most cordial and Colonel Behn is much encouraged. Suner opened the conversation by stating that although he had previously been opposed to the contract between the Telephone Company and the Government he had since examined it and considers it entirely practical and that it adequately protects the interests of the Government. He added that Behn could rest assured that the American interests in the company would be respected.

From this point the conversation led to a question of personalities in the management of the company. Suner assured Behn that the Americans will be reinstated with the exception of one or two whose cases will be jointly examined by Behn and Suner. Behn insisted on his right of appointing Spanish officials in superior posts in the company and this inevitably led to a discussion of Mestre, the general manager. This matter was left for further discussion. While Behn insisted on his right to appoint officials in the high posts he assured Suner that he had no intention of appointing any person who has not the entire confidence of Franco and Suner. Suner promised to receive Behn again within the next few days at which time they will settle and attempt to settle not only the question of the Americans referred to above but the high Spanish officials in the company.

While Behn does not consider that this interview is conclusive as regards settling the difficulties of the Telephone Company, he is more hopeful than at any time since his arrival in Spain on July 30.

**Weddell**

852.75 National Telephone Co./303: Telegram

_The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State_

**MADRID,** December 14, 1939—7 p.m.

[Received December 15—6:30 a.m.]

252. Although as stated in my 240 [241], November 30, 10:00 a.m. [noon], Serrano Suner promised to receive Behn again within a few
days he only received him last evening, the interview lasting only a few minutes. Behn states that Suner's previous cordial attitude had completely changed and the interview was most unsatisfactory. Suner refused to discuss the question of reinstating the Americans, stating that he could do nothing until he received a report from the bureau which was investigating their previous activities in Spain. He also refused to discuss the question of the Spanish officials of the company. He gave Behn the distinct assurance that he has no desire or intention to arrive at a settlement of the status of the Telephone Company.

Behn is convinced that Suner was annoyed at having to receive him and had only done so on account of direct orders to this effect from Franco which in turn resulted from the personal intervention of Colonel Galarza, the Sub-Secretary of the Presidency, who has been very helpful to Behn and seems favorably disposed toward the interests of the Telephone Company.

Suner gave Behn a vague promise that he would see him again during the course of this week but refused to fix a time for the interview. Behn feels that he must wait until the end of the week to see whether Suner will receive him or not.

If Suner does not receive him Behn then feels his only recourse is to ask me to approach the Minister for Foreign Affairs and request that General Franco receive him. I told him I would be glad to do this whenever he requested it.

Behn is convinced that all of the other members of the Cabinet are favorably disposed and that the principal stumbling block lies in the fact that Suner on several occasions previously had stated publicly that the American employees of the company would never again be allowed to have any say in its management and he is now loath to take any decisive action which would place him in a position of having to retract these statements.

In the course of our conversation Behn informed me that he has learned on indisputable authority that the Spanish Army needs various supplies badly and is contemplating in the near future requesting through the Spanish Ambassador in Washington that the Export-Import Bank arrange to extend credits in order to enable Spain to make these purchases. If this be true, I venture to repeat the suggestion made in my telegram 232, November 19, 9 a.m., that the Department request Pierson to make no commitments whatsoever pending a final solution of the telephone question or at least pending a further report from me.
The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)

WASHINGTON, December 18, 1939—6 p. m.

19. We have sent paraphrases of your telegrams nos. 232 and 252 dated respectively November 19, 9 a. m. and December 14, 7 p. m. to Pierson for his information. Cardenas has made no approach to Export-Import Bank since the cotton credit, but it is obvious that the treatment accorded legitimate American enterprise in Spain will always be an important factor in any consideration given to requests of this kind. We approve your actions in helping Behn and trust that both Franco and Serrano Suñer appreciate the importance we attach to a friendly solution of the telephone company’s difficulties.

Hull

The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

MADRID, December 22, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received December 23—3:15 a. m.]

258. Referring to the Embassy’s No. 245, December 4, 6 p. m.17
1. Behn informs me that on December 18, during a conversation with Colonel Galarza, the Sub-Secretary of the Presidency, he informed the latter of his intention to place the matter of the Telephone Company’s situation with this Embassy. Colonel Galarza advised him before doing so to see the Minister of Finance which he did the same evening. The Minister of Finance at first expressed sympathy with the case of the Telephone Company and then expressed himself as being bitterly disappointed at the failure of the United States Government to expedite the question of coinage for the Spanish Government mentioned in the telegram under reference. The Minister of Finance added that he had hoped and expected to have the contract for this coinage signed by January 1st to permit him to make a public announcement to this effect. He explained that this would have had a very good effect politically and that furthermore the Spanish Government expected to make a large profit from this seignorage which could be shown in the next budget. He added that as regards the Telephone Company the various Ministers of the Cabinet had different opinions.

\^Not printed; it concerned an undertaking by the United States Mint to supply a large amount of coinage for the account of the Spanish Government (852.515/70).
and that he looked to Colonel Behn to furnish him with “arguments” which he might use in sponsoring the case of the Telephone Company with the other Ministers. Behn inferred by this that the Minister was requesting him to use his influence with this Embassy to expedite action on the coinage of the money for Spain.

Behn considers the Minister’s remarks to be in the nature of blackmail, his inference being that unless the American Government makes this coinage available to the Spanish Government the Minister rests with the case of the Telephone Company.

Behn stated emphatically that he believes the Spanish Government is greatly in need of this coinage and that although the Minister of Finance stated the Government was “disposed” to pay for it when the conditions of payment are actually discussed Behn believes the Government will ask for credits. Behn has calculated roughly that this coinage will cost the Spanish Government somewhere in the neighborhood of 8 million dollars and he feels that putting the deal through would be another favor granted by our Government to the Spanish Government similar to the cotton credits. Behn considers the attitude of this Government as regards the Telephone Company and all other American interests here to be one of “horse trading” and he urged that the Department make it clear to the Spanish Government that no consideration will be given to the sale of the coins to Spain until the status of the Telephone Company is definitely settled. He believes that Spain cannot obtain these coins elsewhere and that if used as a trading proposition we have a powerful lever on the Spanish Government.

I informed Behn that up to the present the question of payment for the coinage had not been discussed and that if the Spanish Government was disposed to pay cash for the coins I doubted whether the Department would use this question for bargaining purposes. On the other hand I felt that should the Spanish Government request the extension of a credit to pay for the coinage the Department might be disposed to make the return of the management of the Telephone Company to its rightful owners a sine qua non. Behn reiterated however that even if the Spanish Government was disposed to pay for the coins their supply to the Spanish Government was still in the nature of a great favor extended by our Government and he urged that we should refrain even from doing this prior to the solution of the Telephone Company’s difficulties. I promised Behn that I would place this whole matter before the Department exactly as he had explained it to me for its consideration and comment.

Weddell
The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

MADRID, December 22, 1939—noon.
[Received December 23—3:20 a.m.]

259. Department’s 19, December 18, 6 p.m. Colonel Behn now informs me that he has been advised by Colonel Galarza, Sub-Secretary of the Presidency, not to attempt to see General Franco as the latter has consistently refused to take any part in administrative matters pertaining to the Government and would most certainly not receive him even though the request were made through this Embassy.

Colonel Behn has asked me to abstain from making this request but feels, and I concur, that the time has now come when the only hope of a solution of the telephone matter lies in the presentation of an emphatic note to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. If the Department concurs I suggest I be authorized to submit the following note:

“Excellency: Acting under instructions from my Government I have the honor to recall a conversation which I had with Your Excellency at Burgos on September 29 during which I stressed my Government’s interest in attainment of an equitable solution of the status of the management of the National Telephone Company of Spain (Compañía Telefónica Nacional de España). At that time Your Excellency seemed to agree with my view that equitable treatment of the American interests in the company would consist in returning the management to its majority stockholders.

I regret to inform you that since my conversation no progress appears to have been made in this matter notwithstanding the fact that for more than 4 months the representative of the American majority stockholders, Colonel Sothebines Behn, has patiently endeavored to reach a settlement with the various Spanish authorities to whom he has been successively referred. My Government directs me therefore to express to Your Excellency its deep concern at this situation and to express its hope that in view of the Spanish Government’s previous assurances of its desire to treat American interests in Spain justly and equitably the Spanish Government will give its early attention to the question of a settlement of the status of the management of the Telephone Company which will fully protect the American interests involved.

I avail myself, et cetera.”

Behn left today for France. He says he will promptly return when his presence is required.

Weddell
The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

MADRID, December 22, 1939—4 p.m.
[Received 11:38 p.m.]

260. The matters discussed in the Consulate General’s telegram of December 20, 4 p.m., to the Department have not been mentioned to the Embassy by any member of the Spanish Government. I am unable to account for this curious method of approaching our Government on an important matter and I will of course take no action whatsoever prior to its being brought to my attention through the proper channels. Parenthetically, my views as to the extension of credits to Spain as expressed in the Embassy’s 232, November 19, 9 a.m., and 252, December 14, 7 p.m., are further strengthened by the situation portrayed in my telegram 258, December 22, 11 a.m., and 259, December 22, noon.

Repeated to Consul General.

Weddell

The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Barcelona (Bucknell)

WASHINGTON, December 23, 1939—1 p.m.

68. Your 72, December 20, 4 p.m. It is not clear to us whether in making this approach the Spanish authorities are interested in obtaining private loans or credits in the United States or desire to obtain credits through American governmental agencies as in the case of the cotton credits made available through the Export-Import Bank last July.

If private loans or credits are desired no reason is perceived why negotiations to that end cannot be initiated by the Spanish authorities through private banking channels in the usual manner. The Department knows of no legal prohibitions or restrictions upon the extension of private American loans or credits to Spain. There is no requirement or customary procedure whereby the consent and approval of this Government must be asked.

It may be observed that the prospect of obtaining a loan or credits through agencies of this Government, if this is what the Spanish authorities have in mind, at least in anything like the amount mentioned, is believed to be slight, and is certainly not improved by the

18 Not printed. In this telegram the Consul General at Barcelona reported that the Civil Governor at Barcelona, after a conversation with Serrano Suñer, Spanish Minister of the Interior, had approached him as to the possibility of a loan for essential foodstuffs and raw materials in the amount of approximately $100,000,000 (852.51/468).

19a Not printed.
uncooperative attitude which those authorities have shown with respect to the treatment of American interests in Spain since the extension of the cotton credit.

Repeat to Embassy.

HULL

852.51/469 : Telegram

The Consul General at Barcelona (Bucknell) to the Secretary of State

BARCELONA, December 24, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received 11:25 p. m.]

73. Department's 68, December 23, 1 p. m. While I have refrained from any discussion of the matter with the Spanish authorities since receiving your telegram, my impression is that while they would be interested in a loan or credits through a governmental agency if other means failed, they would prefer to obtain private loans and credits in the United States. In this connection, however, it is thought that, in view of the amount of American capital already "frozen" in Spain, the present treatment of American interests in this country and the multitude of existing barriers to free exchange and trade, that they might hesitate to initiate negotiations for the desired loan or credits through private banking channels in the United States, unless they had received some prior assurances of at least the indirect assistance and the tacit approval of the United States Government in this regard. It may also be possible that the Spanish authorities in making the present approach may have anticipated the necessity of including an effort to put government relations on a more satisfactory basis with any negotiations they may be able to undertake with American financial interests, private or governmental. In this connection see last paragraph my telegram No. 55, October 8, 11 a. m.¹⁹

Please instruct me by telegraph whether or not I am to bring the views set forth in your telegram to the attention of the Civil Governor.

Repeated to the Embassy.

Bucknell

ⁱ⁹Not printed.
channels. Referring to Consulate General’s telegram number 73 of December 24, 10 p. m. to the Department, please inform Bucknell that views set forth in Department’s telegram number 68 of December 23, 1 p. m. to Barcelona should not be brought to the attention of Civil Governor unless in your discretion you later decide that this would be desirable and so instruct him.

HULL

252.75 National Telephone Co./395 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Spain (Weddell)

WASHINGTON, December 28, 1939—6 p. m.

26. Your 258, December 22, 11 a. m. and 259, December 22, noon. The delay of which Minister of Finance complains has been due to necessity of obtaining information from the American Company which would supply the nickel blanks to the mint. An estimate by this Company has in turn been delayed because of its inability to obtain price quotations on the nickel which would have to be imported from Canada. The mint has now furnished us with an estimate of the cost of the work which would be done by it. By far the greater part of the total cost, however, will be represented by the cost of the nickel and the preparation therefrom of the blanks by the American manufacturer. We are informed that the manufacturer is expected to submit an estimate of these costs in a few days. The Department, therefore, hopes to be able to transmit detailed information on this subject for the Minister of Finance very shortly.

You are authorized to submit the note proposed in your no. 259 to the Minister of State. If you believe it advisable you should present the note personally to the Minister and take the occasion to emphasize that at the very moment that the Spanish Government is requesting our cooperation on various matters of importance to it, it is showing no disposition to accord to American interests in Spain the treatment to which they are entitled, specifically in the case of the telephone company and of the American prisoners still under detention.

HULL