

NETHERLANDS

INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES IN PROVIDING RELIEF SUPPLIES FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE NETHERLANDS

840.50/1-645 : Airgram

*The Ambassador to the Netherlands Government in Exile
(Hornbeck) to the Secretary of State*

LONDON, January 6, 1945.

[Received January 13—1 p. m.]

Netherlands Series A-4. Reference Department's telegram No. 9872, November 23, 6 p. m. to London Embassy.¹ In a note of January 1, 1945, the Netherlands Government welcomes the proposed exchange of views regarding the transfer of responsibility for civilian supplies but would "before replying to the specific suggestion made, like to draw attention to the following facts".

"1. It is with growing concern that the Netherlands Government have observed that during the period in which full responsibility for the supply of the primary needs of the civilian population of the liberated part of the Netherlands rested with SHAEF,² it apparently was not possible for SHAEF to meet the requirements of the situation.

2. The Netherlands Government are well aware of the fact that the unhappy conditions, notably with regard to food, clothing, shelter, fuel and medical supplies, which lasted for many weeks after the withdrawal of the Germans in the liberated area—conditions far worse than those obtaining during the German occupation—were at least partly due to other urgent demands made upon SHAEF in connection with the immediate prosecution of the war, and in so far, attributable to military necessity. Nevertheless, they cannot help but feel that, especially if the Netherlands Government had been placed in a position to provide the population of the liberated provinces with certain additional supplies for their own account, more could have been done to relieve the distress of these people.

3. For, fully realising the pressing demands of actual warfare, the Netherlands Government made repeated attempts to supplement those supplies which SHAEF had been able to provide, but which did not in themselves suffice to guarantee satisfactory minimum rations for the civil population in the liberated area. In doing so they were guided by the conviction that no nation that is in the fortunate possession of a considerable merchant marine can, save for a short period

¹ Not printed.

² Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force.

and in exceptional circumstances, be expected to remain inactive whilst seeing that the supplies provided for her citizens are so insufficient as to barely cover their most essential needs and prevent disease and dire distress. The Netherlands Government compare their position in this respect with that of the Governments of countries which have not been occupied by the enemy and which being, like the Netherlands, in possession of their own shipping, have experienced no similar difficulties in respect of the supply of essential commodities to their civilian population.

4. So far, the Netherlands Government unfortunately have not been successful in obtaining the desired quantities of essential primary supplies, the procuring of which has not infrequently been made dependent on authorisation to obtain means of transport. Availability of transport, on the other hand, has constantly been made dependent by the Combined Boards,^{2a} the national Procurement Agencies and others, on the authorisation to procure supplies. Thus, it has not proved possible, so far, to break this vicious circle.

5. The Netherlands Government believe that any preparatory discussions in which they are to take part in view of their taking over from SHAEF the responsibility for the provision of supplies for the civilian population, should be based on the following principles:

(a) Sufficient provisions to be guaranteed to cover the requirements of the civilian population of the Netherlands on the level existing for countries which—without having been occupied by the enemy—are largely provisioned from overseas for a period to be agreed upon;

(b) Adequate and suitable shipping space to be guaranteed for regular transport of provisions to the ports of destination in Europe;

(c) Sufficient and suitable means of transport to be made available for a regular and adequate distribution of these provisions to the centres of consumption in the liberated Netherlands.

In the opinion of the Netherlands Government it would not be sufficient to re-affirm that the Inter-Allied and National Agencies concerned will give full co-operation in the procurement and transport of such provisions. It is their opinion that arrangements should be made which would place such supplies and means of transport fully and freely at their disposal. With regard, therefore, to these supply arrangements the adoption of the following practical measures should be ensured:

(d) The Combined Boards to allocate requirements submitted by the Netherlands Government for a period of 6 months after the complete liberation of their territory and to continue the allocation thereafter to such an extent as will enable them to acquit themselves in a just and reasonable manner of their responsibility to the people of the Netherlands.

^{2a} For brief description and membership of the Combined Boards on which the United States was represented, see Department of State *Bulletin*, January 16, 1943, pp. 67-69.

(e) The Netherlands Government to be ensured the possibility of realising their purchasing programme, and the necessary instructions in this connection to be given to the National Procurement Agencies concerned, i.e., commodity controls in the countries represented on the Combined Boards.

6. The Netherlands Government consider the acceptance of the foregoing principles essential for the successful discussion of the point raised in your letter since they would be unable to acquit themselves of their responsibility if the conditions indicated above were not fulfilled. They would therefore be glad to learn whether the Government of the United States of America can see their way to considering these principles as a common basis for the proposed preparatory discussion and planning. If so, the Netherlands Government will be glad to transmit in due course the names of their representatives both for the matter of provision of supplies and of shipping space and other means of transport.

7. In connection with the subject matter of this letter, the Netherlands Government desire to draw attention to two further points:

Firstly, the Netherlands Government are fully aware that their need for shipping space, during the period in which the responsibility for the provision of supplies for the civilian population still remains with SHAEF is likely to grow more urgent. Adequate shipping space will consequently form the most important means of preventing interruption of the steady flow of supplies when the responsibility is transferred from SHAEF to the Netherlands Government. It is therefore confidently hoped that, in view of their present proposals, the Government of the United States of America will continue to support the Netherlands Government by having sufficient shipping placed at their disposal.

Secondly, The Netherlands Government have learned that the preparations for sending supplies for the civilian population of the Western part of the Netherlands after its liberation have been entrusted to the 21st Army Group, and that the necessary discussions in this respect will be held in Brussels. Although these arrangements deal with a different period from that under consideration, Her Majesty's Government are, nevertheless, of the opinion, that these matters should not be discussed separately. The quantity of supplies required by the Netherlands Government to fulfill their own obligations in due time, will, of course, greatly depend upon the steps to be taken by the 21st Army Group for the still occupied part of Western Holland. It is therefore suggested that the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee also be adequately represented at the conversations to be held in Washington.

In view of the fact that the most pressing material needs of the people of the Netherlands are involved, the Netherlands Government have felt it their duty to submit this somewhat elaborate reply to the suggestion contained in your letter."

HORNBECK

856.00/1-2545

*The Ambassador to the Netherlands Government in Exile
(Hornbeck) to the Secretary of State*

No. 34

LONDON, January 25, 1945.

[Received February 8.]

SIR: I have the honor to report that:

I. I called on the morning of January 20 on Mr. Hoyer-Millar, the recently appointed head of the Western Department of the British Foreign Office, within the purview of which office British relations with the Netherlands fall. Mr. Hoyer-Millar opened the conversation with an observation to the effect that he did not possess great knowledge of the Netherlands but that he does know that the situation in Holland, especially as regards the livelihood of the people, is at present "pretty miserable". There followed a conversation of about twenty minutes, in the course of which Mr. Hoyer-Millar stated that he thought that this situation and the problems of relief which it presents are being given appropriate and adequate attention by SHAEF; he talked of a "Plan B"; he said that Dr. Gerbrandy³ had come away from his conversation with General Eisenhower feeling "pretty well satisfied"; he said that one of the greatest difficulties is that no one can tell what the physical conditions will be at the time when the liberation of Holland is completed, as regards, for instance, accessibility of harbors (the approaches to which may be full of mines and the facilities of which may be nonexistent) and as regards transportation in general; he said that he thought there would be ample stock piles of food but one could not know what the shipping situation would be; he said that Mr. Law⁴ had, since his return from Washington, had a conversation with the Netherlands Ambassador to Great Britain (Michiels van Verduynen), and that the Ambassador had given indication that he was gratified with the present state of arrangements; he said that the allocation of shipping which had been effected in Washington for France and Belgium related to space in connection with the supplying of materials and equipment for reinforcement and revival of industry, and that it had nothing to do with the question, either immediate or future, of food and other supplies for relief; he said that Dr. Gerbrandy had written letters to Mr. Churchill⁵ and President Roosevelt.

II. On January 22, I encountered Mr. Hoyer-Millar at a luncheon party, and in the course of a very brief conversation Mr. Hoyer-Millar informed me in confidence that in the letters which Prime Min-

³ P. S. Gerbrandy, Netherlands Prime Minister.

⁴ Richard K. Law, British Minister of State.

⁵ Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister.

ister Gerbrandy had sent to President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill, Dr. Gerbrandy had urged that one or the other of two alternatives be adopted: that the Allies either make revision of plans of military strategy toward speeding up the liberation of Holland or make arrangements for promptly sending foodstuffs and other relief supplies into Holland. Further, he said that Dr. Gerbrandy had had a conversation with Mr. Churchill on January 20, and that in this conversation Dr. Gerbrandy had urged adoption of the first of those alternatives and had said nothing about the second. Mr. Churchill had replied, he said, that the question of military strategy was in the hands of the generals; but Dr. Gerbrandy had urged that it was not exclusively so.

III. During the course of a luncheon party given by him on January 22, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Eden, remarked to me that difficult problems lie ahead in relation to the country to which I am accredited and that the British view the conditions of hardship which now prevail in that country (Holland) with sympathetic concern. I commented that I feel that some of those difficult problems are already upon us; that the situation with which the Dutch people and government are confronted and which must concern many of us calls for sympathetic attention and solicitous effort; and that for my part I feel that he and his people have it in their power to be very helpful and I am hoping that they will give all the assistance of which they are capable. Mr. Eden replied that we might count on them for that.

Respectfully yours,

STANLEY K. HORNBECK

856.48/2-2245

*The Ambassador to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Hornbeck)
to President Roosevelt*⁶

LONDON, February 21, 1945.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I.

In my contacts thus far with officials of the Netherlands Government I have encountered several who seem weary, perplexed, apprehensive, burdened with a psychosis of frustration and—in greater or less degree—suspicioning resentment. Regarding some of them, there come to me reports that in their dealings with opposite numbers in

⁶ A copy of this letter was sent by Mr. Hornbeck to the Secretary of State with the notation that the message related to matters which fell within the purview of the Secretary as well as that of the President.

the allied governments they are importunate to a degree which creates irritation and impatience. There are among them, however, more than a few who seem calm, cheerful, optimistic, and who are in their contacts effectively urbane.

The long and the short of the matter is that these officials are representing and are working on behalf of a country which is small, is being weakened, and is—with warrant—terribly concerned about its future; and they are dealing constantly with officials of three countries (in particular) which are large, are powerful, and are pre-occupied with the problem of defeating common enemies and laying foundations for relationships of peace and security in the postwar world.

Some of the problems with which these Netherlands officials are confronted are of vital importance to them and are of a nature which can be given more sympathetic consideration by the Government and the people of the United States than by those of any other country. The greatest and most immediately pressing of those problems is that of survival—first of their people, second of their country. There is a very real question today whether many of their people—especially those who live in western Holland and those who have been taken by the Germans for slave labor—may not in the course of the next six months die of starvation, neglect or abuse; a question whether still more of them will not have become so worn down that they can never fully (i.e., both physically and psychologically) recover; a question how far the stamina of the nation is being permanently impaired; a question what will be the political structure of the metropolitan area and of the empire when conditions of peace have taken the place of conditions of war; and, finally, a question what will be the standing, the contribution and the influence of the Netherlands in international relations in the postwar world.

These officials and their people are looking to the Government and the people of the United States for a kind and a degree of consideration and helpfulness greater than they hope or expect to receive from the governments and peoples of any other countries. They are not asking for charity. They do plead for opportunity. They want to be able to buy—at the earliest possible moment. They cling to a concept of independence which makes them resentful of the fact that in reality they are dependent upon and have to accept the dictates of their greater and more powerful allies.

Nowhere is there greater call, it seems to me, in the field of our relations with other countries, for patience, tolerance, forbearance, giving of material assistance and the whole content of the course of good neighborliness, on the part of the United States, than in our

relations with these hard-pressed Netherlanders; nowhere a greater call—not even in our relations with the Chinese.

II.

One of the things that these officials most crave is that in matters of special concern to their country they be consulted, that in matters of common concern they be taken into the confidence of their allies, that as a government they be given full opportunity to express their views, advance their claims, and make their country's commitments on an "in council" basis. The more it may be found possible for the people and the governments of the greater powers to accord them and their views and their representations sympathetic consideration, the easier it will be to reconcile them to decisions which run counter to their desires and to elicit from them the fullest cooperation of which they are capable.

III.

Most important, however, today, of all the problems that confront them and that relate to them, is the problem of getting *food* to their people. At this moment starvation stares the population of western Holland, including The Hague, squarely in the face. Unless food can be sent into that area not only soon but more than soon, there can be no telling how many innocent and worth while people may be lost to Holland and to the world—a development which, were it to occur, would lay the major powers open to a variety of charges by hostile critics in days to come.

It is not for me to attempt to assess what may be the conditions of need in France and in Belgium; but on the basis of such information as I have, it does not appear that the people of either of those countries are critically short of food, and it does appear that neither of them has suffered as have the Dutch or has in prospect such further sufferings as have the Dutch. What may be the situations in Italy and in Norway are matters for consideration in some other context. Whatever may be the needs elsewhere, in western Holland the Dutch are now confronted with conditions of *desperate* need.

IV.

There are, I well know and understand, considerations of policy, considerations of military strategy, problems of relative advantages in allocation of short supplies and in use of shipping space, etc., etc. Against the background of these considerations, it is easily possible to believe and to affirm that delivery of food to the population of unliberated Holland at the present time or in the near future is "impossible". That conclusion, however, can only derive from premises ex-

pressive of man-made decisions. There is food, there are ships, there are airplanes, there are armed forces. There is one possible procedure at least—and there are perhaps others—by which food *could be* gotten into Holland. Over and over during the recent years of war there has been achieved not only the possible but also the “impossible”. In regard to each and to both of these there have had to be made at highest levels choices as between competing claims and objectives. The situation is changing constantly and decisions made at given moments come in for review from time to time as changes occur. It would be inappropriate for me to attempt to suggest at what point or in what manner a review should be made of decisions of strategy, whether military or political or both. It is my function to bring to your attention facts and to inform you regarding what seem to me to be possibilities. These two things I have attempted to do in this letter.

V.

Recapitulating:

There would seem to be special need at this time for the maximum of considerateness on the part of the personnel of the allied governments in their contacts with and their handling of the Dutch; Holland is in danger of being submerged (in more ways than one); the Dutch nation, small in numbers at best, is in danger of being decimated; that situation poses a problem and presents a challenge to the good will, the capacity and the ingenuity of the whole community of the United Nations.

Yours respectfully,

STANLEY K. HORNBECK

840.50/2-2245: Airgram

*The Ambassador to the Netherlands Government in Exile
(Hornbeck) to the Secretary of State*

LONDON, February 22, 1945.

[Received February 27—5 p. m.]

Netherlands Series A-7. In a note of February 20, 1945, the Netherlands Foreign Office refers to paragraph No. 5 of its note of January 1, 1945—see airgram Netherlands Series A-4 of January 6, 1945—and makes the following comment:

“Thus far, the Netherlands Government are without a reply from the Government of the United States of America informing them that this Government are in agreement with these principles as a common basis for the proposed discussion and planning, although the events on the battlefields of Europe clearly seem to indicate that the moment to begin the planning in this respect is approaching more rapidly than might have been thought previously.

“For this reason, the Netherlands Government have the duty to point out that the gravest consequences may result from unreadiness in this important matter, and therefore hope that they may receive at an early date the views of Your Government on the contents of their letter of January 1st, 1945.”

HORNBECK

856.48/3-545

The Netherlands Embassy to the Department of State

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

The Netherlands Government is negotiating with the British Government regarding deliveries of foodstuffs destined for the larger cities in the Western part of the occupied Netherlands, where, as is well known, conditions are deteriorating from day to day and indeed the point of starvation has been reached.

These deliveries will consist of 5000 tons weekly, namely, 750 tons of margarine, 4000 tons of flour, 250 tons of foodstuffs for children and ill persons, to wit: infant food, condensed milk, whole milk, oats, powdered sugar, dehydrated eggs and chocolate. Further, a small quantity of medicines which cannot be specified at present but the tonnage of which will be small in comparison with the entire cargo.

Transportation will take place by way of Sweden, because otherwise the German Government would refuse the necessary permit, and the ships will be directed from Sweden to the port of Delfzijl, where the first cargo would arrive in the beginning of April.

The British Government, although favorably inclined to the plan set forth above, doubts whether it will be able to provide the above enumerated quantities in their entirety from their own supplies. However, being aware that the needs of the Netherlands are most pressing and urgent and that the first shipments of foodstuffs should suffer no delay, it is seriously considering to furnish the beforementioned quantities in full for these initial shipments, provided the shortages which thus might arise should be replenished from elsewhere.

The Netherlands Ambassador would be grateful if through the kind intermediacy of the Department of State the above described matter should be submitted to the Combined Boards for such measures of relief as they may deem suitable to take.

In addition, it may be mentioned that the goods to be furnished by the British Government will be purchased by the Government of the Netherlands.

A request similar to the one put forward above will be addressed to the Government of the Dominion of Canada.

WASHINGTON, March 5, 1945.

856.48/3-545 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 12, 1945—10 p. m.

1904. Department received following *aide-mémoire* from Netherlands Embassy dated March 5 :

[Here follows text of *aide-mémoire* printed *supra*.]

This proposal raises questions relative both to blockade and British supply situation and stockpiles. Before considering proposal further or taking it up with military here Department would appreciate your ascertaining how far British have gone with Netherlands in approving proposal on blockade grounds and in agreeing on supply grounds. The latter point involves problem of British stockpiles and their replenishment, which will be handled separately and you should not enter into discussions with British on that matter. Has EWD⁷ any information as to attitude of SHAEF on blockade aspect of introduction of proposed supplies into Netherlands or whether Netherlands authorities have raised this question with SHAEF.

STETTINIUS

856.50/3-1445 : Airgram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Hornbeck), at London

WASHINGTON, March 14, 1945.

Netherlands Series A-10. With reference to notes received from the Netherlands Government on January 1, 1945, and February 20, 1945, referred to in your airgrams A-4 dated January 6 and A-7 dated February 22 respectively, you are requested to inform the Netherlands Government of the following.

(1) The Government of the United States has been kept fully informed of conditions in the Netherlands, more especially in the liberated part of the country, and is keenly aware of the acute need of the civilian population due to current shortages of food, clothing, shelter, fuel and medical supplies. This Government has not sought to compare such unhappy conditions with those obtaining during the period of occupation by the enemy nor with those obtaining in countries not occupied by the Axis powers. Any such comparison would seem without useful purpose, if viewed in the light of the major objectives of the United Nations, namely, defeat of the enemy and liberation from Axis domination.

⁷ Economic Warfare Division of the Embassy in London.

(2) At the same time, this Government has been determined from the outset, within the limitations of military necessity, to alleviate suffering, hunger and distress of the Allied peoples to the greatest possible degree. Early in the war, the principle was firmly established that resources of the supplying countries would be mobilized on a combined basis, not only in the prosecution of the war but in the equitable provision for civilian needs so far as such resources, including shipping, after provision for military operations, would permit. No one has been able to foretell with any accuracy the course of military events and it has therefore been necessary to reserve a general first priority for military needs.

It has been impossible, due to limitations of supply and shipping, to adopt the principle of making firm commitments in advance for other than basic military requirements or to guarantee in advance, supplies, shipping or inland transport facilities for national import programs, as the Netherlands Government suggests. Allocations must of necessity await actual availabilities as and when they occur.

(3) The United States Government has been pleased to note in recent weeks a slight improvement in supply and shipping availabilities and, preparatory to the eventual relinquishment by the military of supply operations for the civilian populations of liberated territories, has urged the establishment of national government import programs, based on port clearance and inland transport capacity, on behalf of which claims for supplies and shipping could be separately presented to the allocating authorities.

As the Netherlands Government has been informed allocations of shipping, outside military requirements, have already been made for the first and second quarters of 1945 and all possible assistance by the civilian agencies is being directed to the procurement of supplies for such ships. This Government urges that the representatives of the Netherlands Government, concerned with procurement, be instructed to expedite purchases wherever possible and to take the maximum advantage of wartime supply availabilities including the utilization of substitutes where more full specifications cannot be met.

(4) Progress is therefore being made toward the objectives outlined in the notes of the Netherlands Government under reference. The Government of the United States recognizes the desirability of these objectives and will, as military considerations permit, cooperate fully in their realization.

(5) Pending the fuller implementation of the Netherlands Government's plans to supply civilian needs in the liberated portion of the Netherlands, the Government of the United States has been in continuous touch with the military authorities to the end that liberated

civilian populations be afforded the maximum relief supplies which can, during the period of armed conflict, appropriately be supplied through military facilities. It has, indeed, been unfortunate that military requirements have prevented up to the present time, the carrying out of the planned provision for civilian needs. This Government has recently noted with gratification, an improvement in the availability of military civilian supplies for the portion of the Netherlands now liberated and the accumulation of special reserves for that portion of the Netherlands still under domination of the enemy.

STETTINIUS

856.48/3-1945

Memorandum by the Ambassador to the Netherlands Government in Exile (Hornbeck)^a

[LONDON,] March 19, 1945.

I. Shortly before Judge Rosenman's departure from London for the Continent^{3a} there was handed to Judge Rosenman by Mr. Hornbeck a memorandum as follows:

"March 12, 1945.

"The situation and problem with regard to Holland boil down to this:

"That Holland (the Netherlands in Europe) now consists of two areas: the liberated area (between one-fifth and one-third of the country) and the unliberated area (between two-thirds and four-fifths of the country);

"That in the liberated portion (the population about two million) there exists a situation of distress (if not of desperate need) which is gradually being relieved: conditions there are growing better;

"That in the unliberated portion (population about six million) there exists a situation of desperate need (people are already dying of starvation: conditions there are rapidly growing worse);

"That pending the liberation of the still unliberated area, it is for practical purposes impossible for the Allies to deliver to the population food (or any other forms of relief) in any substantial amount;

"That between now and the time when liberation occurs conditions of starvation will be seriously affecting from three to four million persons;

"That when the liberation of that area takes place responsibility with regard to that population (i.e., with regard to conditions of civilian livelihood in that area) will immediately devolve upon the Allies (i.e., upon the military agencies, and behind them the governments, thereof);

"That the one thing that can and imperatively should be done currently by the Allies in this connection is to perfect plans, accumu-

^a Transmitted to the Department by the Ambassador as an enclosure to his letter dated March 19, 1945; received March 25.

^{3a} Regarding the Rosenman Mission to Europe, see vol. II, pp. 1064, 1074, 1075-1076, 1080-1082, and 1097.

late supplies, make ample provision regarding assignment of personnel and earmarking equipment, etc., (especially transport) for discharging with the maximum of possible promptness, as soon as it devolves upon them, that responsibility;

"That toward ensuring that such preparations be made—and be comprehensively and adequately made—there is need for a top level decision and a Combined Staff issuance of orders that this situation and problem are to be given the highest practicable priority of effective attention."

II. It is believed that there might to advantage be added to what was stated in that memorandum additional paragraphs as follows:

"That there are four reasons in particular why action in the sense of the last paragraph of the memorandum of March 12 (above) should be taken: first, it appears to be the only procedure which will adequately accelerate the administrative processes which are involved in the handling of this problem; second, such acceleration is imperative toward preparedness to meet the needs of a situation which may confront the Allies soon and with unexpected suddenness; third, substantial humanitarian considerations are at stake; and, fourth, should the Allies be 'caught short' in this matter, there would be unfortunate and disagreeable political repercussions.

"That the desirability of prompt action in regard to this matter cannot be over estimated."

III. With regard to the statement which appears in the fourth paragraph of the memorandum of March 12: namely, "That pending the liberation of the still unliberated area, it is for practical purposes impossible for the Allies to deliver to the population food (or any other forms of relief) in any substantial amount", it is believed that, for purposes of clarification, supplementary observation should be offered. While it is for practicable purposes not possible for *the Allies to deliver* to the population in the unliberated part of the Netherlands food or other forms of relief in any substantial amount, it nevertheless is beginning to appear possible for the Allies to effect and to contribute to the success of an arrangement whereby deliveries of food, etc., may be made to the population under reference by and through Swedish agencies: in other words, it may become possible for the Allies to effect such deliveries indirectly. It is understood that conversations and negotiations are in process toward the effecting thus of deliveries of perhaps as much as 20,000 tons per month at the port of Delftzijl of supplies the ultimate sources of which would be Great Britain, the United States, Canada. It is believed that every practicable effort should be made to effect the conclusion of such an arrangement and the putting of it into operation at the earliest possible moment.

856.48/3-2245 : Telegram

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

LONDON, March 22, 1945—7 p. m.

[Received March 23—9:15 a. m.]

2970. *a.* Embassy near the Netherlands Government inquired of Secretary General of the Netherlands Foreign Office whether question of food shipments to occupied parts of the Netherlands had recently been raised with SHAEF by Netherlands Government. Embassy near the Netherlands Government was informed that Netherlands Government in London has no indication of any recent discussion with SHAEF on this matter (reEmbs 2686 of March 15 paragraph 11⁹). It is possible that the Netherlands Prime Minister in his conversations with General Eisenhower about three weeks ago discussed the question but no report of such a discussion has been received by Netherlands Government here.

b. EWD has been informed by MEW¹⁰ that the Netherlands Ambassador has suggested that in order to avoid an interruption in shipment of relief supplies to the Netherlands which might occur at time Sweden becomes unable to supply further foodstuffs and before plan for shipments from United Kingdom or other sources could be instituted, an interim plan be adopted under which Swedes would continue to ship goods in return for an assurance of replacement from Allied sources.

MEW in giving its views, interdepartmentally, to Foreign Office has said that it would raise no objection from blockade standpoint to principle of Swedes receiving compensating imports but that it spoke only for the British and not for American blockade authorities. In addition MEW has pointed out that it doubts whether supply authorities would be prepared to give an undertaking to replace foodstuffs until they know precisely how much they are being asked to replace. Embassy would appreciate indication of Department's preliminary views on (1) question of exports to Sweden to compensate for further shipments to the Netherlands and (2) shipments to the Netherlands through the blockade.

WINANT

⁹ Not printed.

¹⁰ Ministry of Economic Warfare.

856.48/3-2345 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 23, 1945—6 p. m.

1139. For Reber.^{10a} In *aide-mémoire* from Dutch Embassy, March 5, Netherlands Government requested approval of delivery of 5,000 tons relief supplies weekly in Swedish ships for larger cities in occupied Netherlands. AmEmbassy, London, advises that Foreign Office and British Chiefs of Staff are in accord and War Cabinet expected give approval shortly. In November SHAEF approved introduction foodstuffs into occupied Holland even though there might be possibility that portion would fall into enemy hands. We have not as yet approached War Department here as our understanding is that Combined Chiefs of Staff have already agreed in principle to food shipments into occupied territory to relieve extreme conditions subject to SHAEF's approval. AmEmbassy London advises British are satisfied and do not intend put question to SHAEF again. Can you ascertain whether Dutch have discussed present problem with SHAEF and if not whether SHAEF approves present Dutch proposal? Foregoing refers to blockade aspect of proposal. Concerning supply aspect British expected make supplies available from U.K. but raise question of overseas replacements to fill shortages which might thus arise. For your information, this Government believes that replenishment question must be considered as part of over-all supply problem which includes consideration of U.K. stockpiles. Arrangements being made for comprehensive discussions between U.K. and U.S. on this matter.

GREW

856.48/3-2645 : Telegram

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

PARIS, March 26, 1945—5 p. m.

[Received March 27—4:36 a. m.]

1449. From Reber. Reference Department's 1139, March 23. Various proposals for food supply to occupied Holland have been discussed with the Dutch Government. This specific proposal was not mentioned in the last talks. SHAEF has, however, agreed in principle to food shipments to Dutch territory occupied by the Germans and would raise no objection to the present proposal.

^{10a} Samuel Reber, Counselor of Mission on the staff of the United States Political Adviser, Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, with personal rank of Minister.

In this connection it is noted that the question of replenishment will be considered as part of the overall supply problem which meets with SHAEF's approval. [Reber.]

CAFFERY

856.48/3-3045

The Apostolic Delegate (Cicognani) to the Secretary of State

No. 133/45

WASHINGTON, March 30, 1945.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY: His Holiness has instructed me to present the following facts for the valued consideration of the Government of the United States:

Pressing appeals are constantly being made with a view to securing the intervention of the Holy See on behalf of the population of Holland, particularly in the western provinces, where the food situation is arousing the gravest preoccupations. This is also true of the northern part of the country. Large numbers of persons are actually dying in the streets, and the general situation is such as to produce genuine conditions of famine and starvation. In some cases, individuals have had to be so long without nourishing food that they were unable to take food when it finally became available even in reduced quantities.

The pitiful appeals which are thus sent to the Holy See find a compassionate echo in the heart of His Holiness, and with all confidence he asks the United States Government to take means to provide relief for this serious problem, just as soon as circumstances and means will make assistance possible. The Holy Father observes that the understanding charity of the United States in this critical situation will win for the American nation an everlasting claim on the gratitude of the people who will benefit from this relief, and will likewise be a source of universal admiration for a humanitarian work so generously carried out.

Sincerely yours,

A. G. CICOGNANI
Archbishop of Laodicea

856.48/4-345: Telegram

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

LONDON, April 3, 1945—9 p. m.

[Received April 3—5:08 p. m.]

3397. Germans have agreed to Swedish ship *Gotland* leaving Baltic for United Kingdom port there to load supplies for relief distribu-

tion in occupied Netherlands. Although Admiralty has not yet fixed route and port either for voyage to United Kingdom or thence to the Netherlands, British, with Embassy's concurrence, are indicating to Swedes that we wish ship to leave Baltic as soon as departure can be arranged. Amount of food for occupied Holland which Ministry of Food can make available is limited, but it could probably provide food and medicines for at least one and perhaps two or three trips of *Gotland*. *Gotland* is understood to carry 3,500 tons. Thus far Embassy has agreed only to *Gotland's* proceeding to United Kingdom but unless Department and FEA¹¹ see objection Embassy will also agree to despatch of foodstuffs and medicines from United Kingdom to occupied Holland, provided amounts are reasonable and reports on distribution continue satisfactory.

Sent Department as 3397 repeated Stockholm as 290.

WINANT

856.48/3-545

The Secretary of State to the Netherlands Ambassador (London)

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of the Netherlands and has the honor to refer to the Embassy's *aide-mémoire* dated March 5, 1945 in regard to a proposal which has been under consideration by the British and Netherlands Governments that food shipments amounting to 5,000 tons weekly be made to the enemy-occupied portion of the Netherlands.

Mr. Stettinius is glad to inform Dr. Loudon that from the blockade point of view this proposal meets with the approval of the Department of State. The American Embassy at London and the American Legation at Stockholm have been so informed.

As regards the question of supply this Government likewise has been informed that the British Government is willing to advance certain supplies from food stocks in the United Kingdom but has requested replenishment from overseas in respect of shortages which might thus arise. This Government is not informed as to the nature of the supplies for which replenishment may be required nor the source from which replenishment is expected. As Dr. Loudon may know, the overall question of supply and stockpiles is being reviewed in conversations now in progress between the British and American Governments.¹² This Government, therefore, is not in a position to discuss the question of possible replenishment from United States sources pending the conclusion of the conversations referred to above.

WASHINGTON, April 5, 1945.

¹¹ Foreign Economic Administration.

¹² For documentation on these conversations, see vol. II, pp. 1059 ff.

856.48/3-3045

The Secretary of State to the Apostolic Delegate (Cicognani)

WASHINGTON, April 9, 1945.

MY DEAR ARCHBISHOP: I have received your letter No. 133/45 of March 30, 1945 regarding appeals that are being received on behalf of the suffering population of the Netherlands.

The alarming conditions in the occupied portion of the Netherlands have been a cause for deep concern on the part of this Government. You will be interested to know that several shipments of relief supplies have recently been made to that country from Sweden. The question of further and increased shipments from other sources is being urgently explored and you may be assured that all possible steps, consistent with military requirements, will be taken for the relief of suffering in the Netherlands.

Sincerely yours,

EDWARD R. STETTINIUS, JR.

856.48/4-445

Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Roosevelt

WASHINGTON, April 9, 1945.

Reference is made to Mr. Hassett's memorandum dated April 4, 1945¹³ requesting a report for you on the status of measures to bring relief to the civilian population of the occupied portion of the Netherlands.

The food situation in that area had reached a state of serious deterioration by November 1944. Inquiry was made of General Eisenhower whether he would object from the military point of view to shipments of relief supplies to occupied Holland. He replied that he had no objection and, moreover, indicated the desirability of such shipments. Since December approximately 20,000 tons of relief foodstuffs and medicines have been forwarded. The greater part of supplies thus far sent have been of Swedish origin.

The Department of State and the Foreign Economic Administration recently approved, after further clearance with SHAEF, a British proposal to make further and continued shipments to occupied Holland of relief supplies up to 5,000 tons weekly. Initial shipments will be made from food stockpiles in the United Kingdom.

At the time the report by the delegates of the International Red Cross Committee¹⁴ was made, it is believed that distribution of the initial shipments from Sweden had not begun. These shipments plus

¹³ Not printed; Mr. William D. Hassett was Secretary to President Roosevelt.

¹⁴ Not printed.

the further shipments recently authorized should serve materially to alleviate conditions in that area.

E. R. STETTINIUS, JR.

*The British Prime Minister (Churchill) to President Roosevelt*¹⁵

LONDON, 9 April 1945.

938. 1. The plight of the civil population of occupied Holland is desperate. Between two and three million people are facing starvation. We believe that large numbers are dying daily, and the situation must deteriorate rapidly now that communications between Germany and Holland are virtually cut. I fear we may soon be in the presence of a tragedy.

2. Eisenhower has plans prepared for bringing relief to the civil population when Western Holland is liberated and we have accumulated the stocks for this purpose in suitable proximity. But if we wait until Holland has been liberated, this help may come too late. There is need for action to bring immediate help, on a far larger scale than is afforded by the Swedish relief scheme.

3. I therefore ask you to join me in giving notice to the German Government, through the Swiss Government as the protecting power, to the following effect.

It is the responsibility of the German Government to sustain the civil population in those parts of Holland which remain in German occupation. As they have failed to discharge that responsibility, we are prepared to send food and medical supplies for distribution to the civil population through the agency of the International Red Cross.

We are ready in [*to*] increase the limited supplies that are already being sent from Sweden and also to send in further supplies, by sea or direct from areas under military control of the Allies, subject to the necessary safe conducts being arranged. We invite the German Government to accord the facilities to enable this to be done.

4. In present circumstances I think that the German Government might well accede to this request. If, however, they should refuse, I propose that we should, at this stage, warn the German Commander in Holland and all the troops under his command that by resisting our attempt to bring relief to the civil population in this area they brand themselves as murderers before the world, and we shall hold them responsible with their lives for the fate which overtakes the people of Holland.

¹⁵ Copy of telegram obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.

Full publicity would be given to this warning so as to bring it home to all German troops stationed in Holland.

5. We must avert this tragedy if we can. But, if we cannot, we must at least make it clear to the world on whose shoulders the responsibility lies.

6. The terms of the communication to be made to the German Government through the protecting power are being drafted and will be sent to you tomorrow.

In the meantime, I hope that you will feel able to agree in principle.

*President Roosevelt to the British Prime Minister (Churchill)*¹⁶

[WARM SPRINGS, GEORGIA,] 10 April 1945.

740. Your No. 938. I agree in principle with your proposal to give notice to the German Government that it is responsible for the sustenance of the civil population in those parts of Holland that remain in German occupation.

In view of Stalin's¹⁷ recent allegations in regard to CROSSWORD,¹⁸ I believe that before making any arrangement through the Red Cross with any German authority we should inform Stalin.

ROOSEVELT

856.48/4-1345

The British Embassy to the Department of State

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

In his telegram No. 743^{18a} to the Prime Minister, President Roosevelt agreed to His Majesty's Government's scheme for sending relief supplies to enemy occupied Holland through the lines.

2. In his telegram No. 740, President Roosevelt suggested that His Majesty's Government should inform Marshal Stalin. But in his telegram No. 743, in approving the message proposed by His Majesty's Government to the German Government through the Swiss Government, the President appeared to make his approval subject to approval by Marshal Stalin, as distinct from asking that Marshal Stalin be informed.

¹⁶ Copy of telegram obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.

¹⁷ Josif Vissarionovich Stalin. Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union.

¹⁸ Reference is to "Sunrise-Crossword", the code name for discussion then taking place in Switzerland between German and Allied military representatives regarding a possible surrender of German forces in Northern Italy. For documentation on this subject, see vol. III, pp. 717 ff.

^{18a} Not printed.

3. His Majesty's Government see no reason for doing more than notifying Marshal Stalin since

(1) they have had most reassuring accounts of the way which supplies allowed through the blockade from Sweden have been distributed so far under the supervision of the Swedish Red Cross observers;

(2) even if any food were diverted by the German Army it could not possibly reach any Germans fighting the Russians;

(3) there will be no direct contact with any German authorities.

4. The matter is most urgent. Even on the present reduced scale, rations in the area will only last another fortnight. If Soviet consent is sought the whole plan may be held up indefinitely.

5. In the circumstances His Majesty's Government urgently invite the United States Government to concur in the despatch of the attached message from the Prime Minister to Marshal Stalin.¹⁹

WASHINGTON, April 14, 1945.

:856.48/4-1845: Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 18, 1945—7 p. m.

1556. For Reber. The Department on April 4 approved a British-Netherlands plan for immediate shipment of relief foodstuffs up to 5,000 tons weekly to occupied Netherlands by neutral means and under adequate safeguards. The Department is now informed that a proposal approved by the British military and Foreign Office for dropping daily by air a large amount of supplies into German occupied Netherlands may be referred to SHAEF. In such case you may advise SHAEF that the Department would approve the additional introduction of foodstuffs into occupied Holland but only if there appears to be reasonable assurance that such foodstuffs would in fact reach Netherlands hands.

STETTINIUS

740.00119 EW/4-2445: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Harriman)

WASHINGTON, April 24, 1945—7 p. m.

942. Following an urgent proposal by the Netherlands Government that a truce be arranged with the German authorities in the Nether-

¹⁹ Not printed; it stated that the United Kingdom and the United States were prepared to send food and medical supplies through the International Red Cross to those parts of the Netherlands still under German occupation (856.48/4-1345).

lands²⁰ to make possible the supply of desperately needed food and medicine to the starving population of the occupied provinces, the Combined Chiefs of Staff on April 23 authorized the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, in his discretion to undertake any operations and effect any truce arrangements for the purpose of providing relief to the Netherlands which are indicated by the situation and do not prejudice his main operations, provided that in so doing he does not depart from the unconditional surrender policy agreed upon by the United States, Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. and provided further that the Soviet military authorities shall not only be kept fully informed but shall, if they so desire, have military representatives present at any discussions with the German Commander or his representatives.

General Eisenhower has been instructed that in the event he decides to negotiate a truce he shall endeavor to obtain the following conditions:

1. That the truce shall be without prejudice to the ultimate unconditional surrender of all German forces in the Netherlands.
2. That all German forces in the occupied Netherlands shall cease all active operations including all forms of naval and air activity conducted from that area.
3. That the Germans shall freely admit and facilitate the distribution of all forms of relief supplies for the Netherlands population under arrangements to be agreed upon.
4. That the Germans shall refrain from any form of inundation or destruction of capital goods.
5. That all political prisoners shall be transferred from prison to accommodations in accordance with the standards of the Geneva Convention.²¹
6. That no further executions of political prisoners shall take place.
7. That raids and similar measures shall be discontinued by the security police.

If these conditions are accepted by the German Commander, General Eisenhower is authorized to agree in return:

²⁰ The Netherlands Government presented the proposal to the British on April 12, 1945, who in turn reported it to Secretary of State Stettinius. Secretary Stettinius concurred in the idea of a truce and suggested that the matter be put into General Eisenhower's hands with the necessary discretion for action left to him, but that such action, however, be subject to instructions from the Combined Chiefs of Staff that he not depart from the policy of unconditional surrender agreed to by the United States, United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union and that the Soviet Union be consulted upon any action contemplated. (740.0011 EW/4-1745). For further account of proposals for aiding the Netherlands, see Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, in the official Army history *United States Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1954), pp. 457-459.

²¹ International Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, signed at Geneva July 27, 1929. For text, see *Foreign Relations*, 1929, vol. I, p. 336.

1. That the Allied forces will not advance beyond the "Grebbe Line" (mouth of the river Eems through Amersfoort to Veenendaal to Wageningen on the Rhine) or such other line as may be agreed upon.

2. That the Allied forces will cease active operations against the German forces within the occupied Netherlands. This agreement to cease operations shall not apply to Allied operations in Netherlands territorial waters against enemy forces operating from bases outside German occupied Netherlands.

Concert with your British colleague and inform the appropriate Soviet authorities of the foregoing. It should be made clear in this connection that General Eisenhower has been authorized to carry out his instructions without delay.

GREW

740.00119 E.W./4-2845: Telegram

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

PARIS, April 28, 1945—midnight.

[Received April 29—9:50 a. m.]

2199. For Matthews²² from Murphy.²³ Reference my letter of April 16. The Department will be interested in SHAEF cable to Combined Chiefs of Staff Scaf 314 April 27 regarding truce in Holland. Latest developments are that two Generals from British 21st Army Group will enter into contact today with representatives of Seyss-Inquart. Discussions will be initially limited to question of food supplies for Holland. It has apparently not yet been decided when and if SHAEF will later take part in discussions. In meantime pending negotiations dropping of food by air will be begun today.

Russians have replied through military mission Moscow they have studied conditions of discussion with the Germans and would like to add one more namely that the German command be obligated not to transfer its troops to other parts of the front including the Russian front during the entire period of proposed armistice. [Murphy.]

CAFFERY

856.48/5-245: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 2, 1945—4 p. m.

[Received 4:11 p. m.]

2279. From Murphy. Generals Smith and Strong of SHAEF returned today after their meeting yesterday with Seyss-Inquart and a

²² H. Freeman Matthews, Director of the Office of European Affairs.

²³ Robert D. Murphy, United States Political Adviser for Germany.

delegation of 26 Germans. Despite threats Seyss-Inquart yielded nothing on the matter of negotiations for a surrender or truce stating that as Civil Administrator he was competent only to discuss the supplying of Holland with food. He said western Holland was a fortress area for whose defense the German military commander was responsible. When a telegram from Swiss was read to the Germans stating that the Swiss had been informed by German officials that a central administration had ceased in practice to exist the Germans said they were in full touch with the German Government and High Command. In contrast to their attitude on military affairs the Germans were willing to facilitate arrangements for the supply of food. They opposed dropping by air which they said was wasteful as so many of the drops were misdirected and fell in canals. Agreement was reached on the transport of food by rail at one point through the lines and also through the port of Amsterdam to which first ship will proceed on Friday. Drops by air may, however, be continued to assure distribution to outlying regions. [Murphy.]

CAFFERY

856.48/6-2645

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Netherlands Ambassador
(London)*

The Acting Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of the Netherlands and has the honor to inform him that on June 19, 1945 the Combined Chiefs of Staff decided to terminate military responsibility for provision and distribution of relief supplies for various countries including the Netherlands upon the completion of August loadings, and the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, has been so informed. Responsibility for the provision of petroleum, oil and lubricants and coal will be the subject of separate consideration.

The Acting Secretary is advised that while the Combined Military Authorities will do everything possible to ship all approved requirements up to and including August loadings, they cannot remain responsible after the termination of military responsibility for shipment of any approved requirements which for supply reasons were not available by that time.

It is understood that the shipping authorities are considering the transition of supply responsibility to the Netherlands Government and will endeavor to make available as nearly as possible an equivalent amount of tonnage. At the same time, the military authorities in conjunction with the Combined Boards expect to make such ad-

justments in existing allocations and procurement arrangements as may be necessary to insure a proper sharing of the total supplies allocated for liberated areas.

The Acting Secretary has every reason to believe that the transition of supply responsibility to the Netherlands Government will be carried out effectively, and that shipping and allocations of supplies will be adjusted as far as possible within the over-all limitations. To this end the agencies of the United States Government will lend every possible assistance and the Acting Secretary urges that the Netherlands Government appropriately instruct its supply and procurement officials concerning the responsibility to be assumed.

WASHINGTON, June 26, 1945.

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE NETHERLANDS REGARDING MUTUAL AID

[For texts of agreements between the United States and the Netherlands respecting mutual aid, including agreement relating to supplies and services signed at Washington, April 30, 1945, with accompanying memorandum and exchange of notes, signed at Washington, April 30, 1945; agreement relating to principles applying to the provisions of aid to the armed forces of the United States, effected by exchange of notes signed at Washington, April 30, 1945; and exchange of notes, signed at Washington, April 30, 1945, see Department of State Executive Agreement Series No. 480, or 59 Stat. (pt. 2) 1627-1641.]

INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES FOLLOWING THE DEFEAT OF JAPAN

(See under Netherlands East Indies, Volume VI)