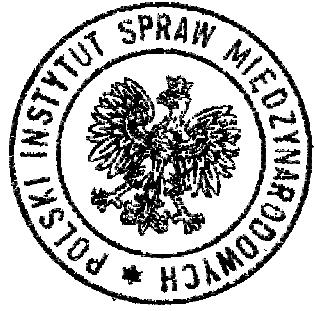


Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych

POLISH  
DOCUMENTS  
ON  
FOREIGN  
POLICY

24 October 30 September  
1938–1939





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24 OCTOBER      30 SEPTEMBER  
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EDITORS

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THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
WARSAW 2009

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[www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl)

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ISBN: 978-83-89607-72-0

PUBLISHER

Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych  
ul. Warecka 1a, 00-950 Warszawa

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Printed by Drukarnia nr 1, 02-521 Warszawa, ul. Rakowiecka 37

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## INTRODUCTION

In the final months of peace in 1939, the fate of Europe depended on decisions taken in Warsaw as it never had before or since. After the Munich Conference, Hitler set out to subordinate Poland in his drive to ultimately topple the Versailles order. He intended to neutralise the formal French-Polish alliance and to create a 'buffer zone' dependent on Germany, separating the Reich from the Soviet Union. Poland, isolated and discredited by its role in the partitioning of Czechoslovakia, seemed an easy target. Hitler claimed for the incorporation of the Free City of Danzig into the Reich and an extraterritorial motorway through Polish Pomerania linking East Prussia with the rest of the Reich. Hitler's essential demands, however, were not territorial in nature but political: Poland was to join the Anti-Comintern Pact and commit itself to consulting its foreign policy with Berlin. In exchange, Hitler offered Poland peace, a guarantee of its Western boundary and the role of the Reich's vassal in a new European order based on German hegemony. Warsaw was thus expected to renounce one of the foundations of its foreign policy since 1919—the principle of not entering into any alliance with one of its powerful neighbours against at the other.

Poland's rejection of Hitler's offer to join the new European order, shaped by Berlin, on a voluntary basis took the German Chancellor by surprise. It not only frustrated his plans of expansion in Eastern Europe in search of a *Lebensraum* for the German nation, but it also meant a risk of war on two fronts in case of an armed conflict in the West. Poland's resistance to Hitler's plans also marked a radical change in European politics, signalling the end of the policy of concessions in the face of German demands (appeasement) and the beginning of cooperation between countries interested in halting the expansion of the Third Reich—the emergence of a *de facto* anti-German coalition. Hence an examination of the steps undertaken by Polish diplomacy

in the final months of peace and of the documents it produced at the time is vital to comprehending the new international constellation that determined the destiny of Europe in the years that followed.

The overwhelming majority of those interested in the subject, including historians and other specialists, have no knowledge of Polish, which explains why Polish documents on foreign policy, with a few exceptions, have been practically unknown, or little known at best, beyond Poland's borders.<sup>1</sup> The same can be said about the work of Polish historians.<sup>2</sup> The present volume includes a selection of Polish foreign policy documents from the period between 24 October 1938 and 30 September 1939 in English or, in some cases, in French.

The volume has been compiled on the basis of *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne* [Polish Diplomatic Documents], a series published since 2005 by the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM). It contains a selection of documents already published in three successive volumes of the

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<sup>1</sup> Exceptions include the papers of Polish ambassadors: in Berlin (*Diplomat in Berlin 1933–1939; Papers and Memoirs of Józef Lipski, Ambassador of Poland*, New York–London, 1968), and in Paris (*Diplomat in Paris, 1936–1939; Papers and Memoirs of Juliusz Łukasiewicz, Ambassador of Poland*, New York–London, 1970), published through the efforts of the Polish emigré community in the West, as well as the memoirs of Józef Beck—a source of lesser cognitive value (*Dernier rapport. Politique polonaise*, Neuchâtel, 1951).

<sup>2</sup> For many years, the only fundamental works on the subject known in the West were the monographs by Anna Cieniała (*Poland and the Western Powers 1938–1939; A Study in the Interdependence of Eastern and Western Europe*, London–Toronto, 1968) and by Marian Wojciechowski (*Die polnisch-deutschen Beziehungen 1933–1938, Studien zur Geschichte Osteuropas* series, vol. 12, Leiden, 1971). The state of research in the 1990s is reflected in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, vol. IV: 1918–1939, P. Łossowski (ed.), Warsaw, 1995, and vol. V: 1939–1945, W. Michowicz (ed.), Warsaw, 1999. New findings in Polish historiography during the last decade and new interpretations can be found in: S. Zerko, *Stosunki polsko-niemieckie 1938–1939*, Poznań, 1998; S. Dębski, *Między Berlinem a Moskwą, Stosunki niemiecko-sowieckie 1939–1941*, Warsaw, 2003 and 2007; M. Kornat, *Polska 1939 roku wobec Paktu Ribbentrop-Mołotow*, Warsaw, 2002. It is also worthwhile to mention M. Kornat, *Polityka Równowagi 1934–1939. Polska między Wschodem a Zachodem*, Cracow, 2007. The causes of World War II have been examined extensively in historiography, but the editors decided to skip the vast list of these freely accessible publications.



series.<sup>3</sup> The editors of the present volume did not undertake any research at the source, capitalising earlier archival research conducted by the Editors of the above mentioned volumes of *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne*. The editors of the present volume would like to thank Marek Kornat, Wojciech Rojek and Stanisław Żerko for their permission to use those documents and some of the accompanying editorial material.

\* \* \*

Poland's restoration to statehood in November 1918, following 123 years of partitions, was the result of a synergy of efforts undertaken by Poles in the diplomatic corridors in Paris, London, Washington and Rome, and especially at the Versailles Conference, as well as their own independent struggle back home for a new state and its boundaries.<sup>4</sup> The 'ethos of action' aimed at regaining Poland's independence irrespective of the existing international situation or the decisions of the Great Powers, exerted a strong impact on Poland's foreign policy during the entire inter-war period, resulting in an ambivalent nature of Poland's approach to the Powers behind the Versailles system. The new Polish state was undoubtedly one of the Versailles Treaty's principal beneficiaries. Aleksander Skrzyński, one of Poland's most outstanding ministers of foreign affairs between the two world wars, described the Versailles Treaty as 'Poland's very existence.' He also noted on many occasions that 'Poland held the key to European security—any combination that would attempt to ignore this fact would be doomed to failure from the very outset.'<sup>5</sup> The Polish *raison d'état* necessitated cooperating with Paris and London for the stabilisation of the Versailles system, and this was the objective of the military treaties that Poland concluded with France and Romania in 1921, Poland's strong determination

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<sup>3</sup> *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1938*, edited by M. Kornat, Warsaw, 2007; *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1939, styczeń-sierpień*, edited by S. Żerko, Warsaw, 2005; *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1939, wrzesień-grudzień*, edited by W. Rojek, Warsaw, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Among recent works, see *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1918, listopad-grudzień*, edited by S. Dębski, Warsaw, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> P. Wandycz, *Aleksander Skrzyński, Minister spraw zagranicznych II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw, 2006, pp. 47–48 and 141. Skrzyński's successor August Zaleski in turn noted: 'There is nothing for Poland to wage war over,' August Zaleski, *Przemowy i deklaracje*, Warsaw, 1929, vol. 1, pp. 6 and 16.

to work with Great Britain and its consistent support during the 1920s for the institutions of the Versailles system, especially the League of Nations. The Polish political establishment associated Poland's security at the time with close political and military cooperation with France—the principal architect of the Versailles order.

Until 1925, the French-Polish alliance was a natural consequence of both countries' community of strategic interests, but in mid-1920s this alliance began to erode. France and Great Britain, in their efforts to stabilise the Versailles system, began to search for ways to restore full rights to Germany, to include it in the system and safeguard it an equal party status. Poland's role as a French ally and a pillar of the Versailles system to the east of Germany began to diminish as the tendency strengthened to involve Germany in the main stream of European affairs. This trend resulted in 1925 in the Locarno Treaty, which enhanced the security of Western Europe at the cost of Central Europe, whose relative level of security was undermined by the Treaty. The emergence in Europe of two zones with different levels of security drove a wedge into the French-Polish alliance and into the two countries' community of strategic interests.

Warsaw viewed the Western powers' attempts to reform the Versailles Treaty and their policy to involve Germany in European affairs with great reserve. Poland's political establishment feared that this could conceal plans to revise the system at Poland's expense, the more so as suggestions in this vein were raised during diplomatic discussions. In December 1935, Ralph S. Stevenson, a senior official at the Foreign Office, declared in Geneva to representatives of the Polish Foreign Ministry that 'with regard to Germany, one had to choose between two methods: either to buy peace, or to wage war. England will, to the limit of what is possible, pursue the first course [...] In Europe the Austrian question will end either with an *Anschluss* or with a *Gleichschaltung*. This, however, will not stop German expansion, which could unfold in the direction of Czechoslovakia, and perhaps also Poland. England—Stevenson went on—can intervene only in defence of the *status quo* in the West of Europe, but no House of Commons will accept an intervention in defence of the order in Central and Eastern Europe, for instance in defence of

the Corridor [i.e., Polish Pomerania].<sup>6</sup> This fear of the Western Powers' instrumental approach to the security interests of East-Central European countries reinforced Poland's determination to seek for an autonomous and independent foreign policy. Consequently, the main criterion determining Poland's approach to various political projects in foreign affairs during the inter-war era as well as the limits of Polish cooperation with the Western powers was the political impact of those projects on the preservation of the Polish-German *status quo*. As a result of its strive for the greatest possible autonomy and freedom of manoeuvre, however, Poland found itself trapped in 1938, when at the news that a Four-Power conference had been called in Munich to consider German demands towards Czechoslovakia, the Polish authorities decided to act on their own. On 30 September 1938, Kazimierz Papée, the Polish envoy in Prague, submitted an ultimatum to the Czechoslovak government, demanding that it cede to Poland the part of Teschen Silesia known as Zaolzie predominantly inhabited by Poles.<sup>7</sup>

Poland's single-handed step was meant as an act of protest against the idea—revived in Munich—of a directorate of European powers. But, as Polish historians have justly pointed out, 'this diversion from the spirit of Munich' was very convenient for Hitler. 'By undermining Western politicians' preferred method of resolving Central European disputes solely by the Munich directorate, Poland made it possible for the Chancellor to definitely turn his back on the need to consult London and Paris about the Reich's demands—a need that had greatly hampered Germany's freedom of action.'<sup>8</sup> The reasons for Warsaw's reserve about the concept of a directorate of Powers and Poland's efforts to preserve the autonomy of its foreign policy in rapidly

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted after Marian Wojciechowski, *Die polnisch-deutschen Beziehungen 1933–1938...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 212–213.

<sup>7</sup> See the ultimatum note handed by the Polish envoy in Prague to the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs on 30 September 1938, *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1938*, *op. cit.*, doc. 353, pp. 640–642. Under pressure from Hitler, in 1938 the Western Powers decided to give precedence to ethnic considerations over historical ones in the matter of Czechoslovakia's boundaries. This immediately opened up the problem of equal treatment of all Czechoslovakia's neighbours and of its minorities. In 1919–1920 the Western Powers, by recognising Czechoslovakia's annexation of Teschen Silesia, supported Prague's arguments that this area had historically been part of the Crown of St. Wenceslaus.

<sup>8</sup> S. Żerko, *Stosunki polsko niemieckie...*, *op. cit.*, p. 96. A similar conclusion in S. Stanisławska, *Polska a Monachium*, Warsaw, 1967, p. 263.

changing conditions are easy to understand, yet this does not alter the fact that Poland's policy in September 1938 was misguided. Contrary to the Polish authorities' expectations, it did not improve Warsaw's position. Quite the opposite, it led to its isolation in Europe, significantly complicating its situation when in the second half of October 1938 Poland found itself under pressure from Hitler.

The second factor that affected Polish foreign policy during the inter-war period was Poland's location between two powers revisionist with respect to the Versailles order: Germany and Soviet Russia. Moreover, the Polish state had re-appeared on the map of Europe also as a consequence of the collapse of the two neighbours responsible for Poland's disappearance from the map 123 years earlier. Poland was striving to keep a balance in the face of the revisionism of its two powerful neighbours, although the expression 'policy of equilibrium' used by Polish diplomacy at the time remains controversial even today.<sup>9</sup> Poland's location between the two Powers entailed two mortal dangers: that Poland would become dependent on one of them or that they would once again cooperate against Poland.

In 1919, Józef Piłsudski, one of the co-founders of the restored Polish state and the author of guidelines of its foreign policy, said: 'If we were forced to link our destiny with either Germany or the Bolsheviks, this would mean that our task had not been completed. Poland's civilisational mission would remain unfulfilled.'<sup>10</sup> Poland's Foreign Minister Józef Beck in turn, talking about the guidelines of Polish foreign policy with British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax on 4 April 1939, observed: 'As far as Poland is concerned, two truths due to its geographical situation are vital, namely for its policy not to rest either on Germany or on Russia. Should Poland make its policy dependent on either of those powers, it would cease being an element of peace, and would become a factor capable of provoking conflict. [...] this principle has vital significance for Poland.'<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> S. Żerko, 'Polska polityka zagraniczna w styczniu-sierpniu 1939 r.,' *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, vol. 5, no. 5/27, 2005, p. 22, ft. 5. For polemics with his statements and a defense of the 'policy of equilibrium' see M. Kornat, *Polityka równowagi...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> J. Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, Warsaw, 1937, vol. 5, p. 111.

<sup>11</sup> See doc. 84, p. 180. See also: doc. 82, p. 166: 'Two things are impossible from the Polish point of view, namely making Poland's policy dependent on either Berlin or Moscow.'

Cooperation between Germany and Russia—two neighbours with a hostile approach to the newly restored Polish state—constituted a threat to Poland's very existence from the very outset. Kazimierz Świtalski, Speaker of the Polish Parliament, noted the following observation made by Piłsudski to his closest collaborators on 7 March 1934: 'During its history, at the time of Catherine [the Great] and Frederick of Prussia, Poland found out the hard way what it meant when two powerful neighbours reached an understanding. Poland was torn to shreds then. This is a permanent danger for Poland. After the Great War this danger diminished because Germany had been beaten by the Entente and Russia by the Commandant [i.e., Piłsudski]. Those two countries were thus less powerful. They did, however, conclude the Rapallo accord which, although not directed against Poland as much as against the entire world, was nonetheless dangerous for Poland.'<sup>12</sup>

The Polish policy of 'resting on neither Germany nor Russia' was always meant to counteract the possibility of anti-Polish cooperation between Poland's two neighbours and, at the same time, to maintain broad autonomy in foreign policy. This required, however, tight cooperation with the Western Powers, France in particular. Given the evolution of British and French policy toward Germany from mid-1920s, this was becoming more and more difficult for Warsaw to achieve. At the same time, there was a danger that the Versailles system would be substituted by a directorate of Powers disregarding the interests of Central European states. The precedent of the Locarno conference of 1925, and especially the so-called Four-Power Pact (embracing France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy) proposed in 1932, reminded the Polish political establishment that such a possibility should not be ruled out.

The situation in Europe changed, however, when Adolf Hitler assumed power in Germany, as his aim was not to revise the Versailles system, but to destroy it altogether. Consequently, he was not interested in Germany's participation in a European directorate of Powers.

In contrast to his predecessors at the post of chancellor, he did not initially aim to 'finish off' Poland unconditionally, and this led Warsaw to view him as a moderate and reasonable politician. In his plans, the Führer first saw Poland in the role of Germany's outpost (*Vorposten*) in the East and as a 'bastion of

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<sup>12</sup> Kazimierz Świtalski, *Diariusz 1919–1935*, edited by A. Garlicki and R. Świątek, Warsaw, 1992, p. 658.

civilisation' protecting Germany from the Bolshevik threat on the one hand, and from potential French attempts to exert pressure on the Reich on the other. In the long-term perspective, Hitler expected to subjugate Poland and subordinate it to German aims on the international arena. He was preparing first and foremost for a confrontation with France and thus sought to deprive it of potential allies. It was only after a victory in the West that he intended to turn against Russia. In this latter project, he did not rule out collaboration with Warsaw. Hence 'the role of Poland in Hitler's long-term plans in the East depended on the evolution of Germany's relations with the Western Powers.'<sup>13</sup> Warsaw in turn, coming under mounting pressure from the Western Powers to accept a peaceful revision of the Versailles system at Poland's expense, decided to counter the potential threat by seeking to normalise its relations with Germany, if only provisionally.

On 26 January 1934, Poland and Germany signed a Declaration renouncing the use of force that was to remain in force for 10 years. Through this Declaration, Warsaw postponed for several years the threat that the Western Powers might treat Poland as currency in buying peace from Hitler, while Germany was able to escape isolation following its withdrawal from the League of Nations. This Declaration together with the 1932 Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact constituted the foundation of Poland's above-mentioned policy of 'equilibrium' or 'equal distance' during the 1930s.

Commitment to this policy was reflected, on the one hand, in Polish politicians' consistent rejection of Berlin's oft-suggested need for Poland and Germany to cooperate against the USSR and, on the other, in their reiterated readiness to take a stand in defence of the Versailles system should the Western Powers ever opt for such a policy.

The most evident manifestation of this approach was Poland's position on the remilitarisation of the Rhineland. Having heard of the entry of German troops into the Rhineland on 7 March 1936 and following consultations with the Polish President, Prime Minister and Chief of General Staff, Beck declared to the French ambassador in Warsaw that should Paris decide to

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<sup>13</sup> M. Wojciechowski, *Die polnisch-deutschen Beziehungen 1933–1938...*, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

react, Poland would meet its obligations under the 1921 alliance treaty.<sup>14</sup> France, however, remained passive in the face of the German steps.

Thus, despite the *rapprochement* with Germany after 1934, the Polish authorities consistently held the view that in an armed confrontation between Germany and the Western Powers defending the Versailles system, Poland had to side with the West. In March 1937, during a conversation with Winston Churchill, a staunch opponent of appeasement, Józef Beck made it clear to the British politician that should there ever be war in connection with Germany's violation of the order in Europe, Poland would side with Great Britain.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, Polish diplomacy anxiously followed all Soviet attempts to enhance Moscow's influence in Central Europe. In May 1938, Wacław Grzybowski, the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, warned that Moscow's aim was not to support Czechoslovakia in its conflict with Germany, but to spark off a European war: 'The attitude of the Soviets in the Czechoslovak affair is very similar to their position on the Spanish question. Besides general assurances of allied solidarity and a declared will to cooperate in the peaceful resolution of the Czechoslovak question, the Soviets' true efforts are consistently aimed at aggravating the situation in Central Europe, based on the political calculation that an armed conflict would result and the Soviets could then adopt a wait-and-see attitude.'<sup>16</sup> The opposite scenario was even more disturbing for Poland: should the USSR truly wish to take an armed stand against Germany, this would require the consent of the interested countries to the presence of the Red Army on their territory. In the Baltic States and in

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<sup>14</sup> See note of 7 March 1936 in: Jean Szembek, *Journal 1933–1939*, Paris, 1952, pp. 166–168. The matter was first mentioned by the then French ambassador in Warsaw, Léon Noël, in his memoirs *L'Agression allemande contre la Pologne. Une Ambassade à Varsovie 1935–1939*, Paris, 1946, p. 125.

<sup>15</sup> J. Beck, *Dernier Rapport...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 127–128; J. Gawroński, *Moja misja w Wiedniu*, Warsaw, 1965, pp. 391–392. Similar suggestions also appeared two months later in Beck's discussion in London, on the occasion of George VI coronation ceremonies. See M. Nurek, *Polska w polityce Wielkiej Brytanii w latach 1932–1938*, Warsaw, 1983, pp. 71–72. See also M. Zacharias, 'Geneza układu o wzajemnej pomocy między Polską a Wielką Brytanią,' in: Z. Błazyński (ed.), *Władze RP na obczyźnie podczas II wojny światowej*, London, 1984, pp. 84–92.

<sup>16</sup> See the report of the ambassador in Moscow on the Soviet position with regard to Czechoslovakia, 25 May 1938, *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1938...*, *op. cit.*, doc. 122, p. 286.

Poland, this prospect was especially alarming, as was best reflected in an observation made by the Latvian Minister of Defence: Should Soviet troops ever be allowed to enter Latvian territory, Latvia would 'never be able to get rid of them.'<sup>17</sup>

An entirely new chapter in these dramatic events began on 24 October 1938, when Joachim von Ribbentrop, the Reich's Minister of Foreign Affairs, confronted Józef Lipski, the Polish Ambassador in Berlin, with the proposal for a 'comprehensive' settlement (*Gesamtlösung*) of German-Polish relations. The documents in the present volume throw light on further developments as seen through the eyes of Polish diplomacy, ending with the establishment in France of a Polish Government-in-exile, whose basic aim was to continue the struggle at the side of the Western allies. Poland, a founding member of the anti-Nazi coalition, remained an integral part thereof from the first to the last day of the war in Europe.

\* \* \*

Of the 233 documents presented below, 226 were published in the *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne* series (see footnote 3). The present volume also contains 7 new documents which, for various reasons, were not included in this series. Footnotes from *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne* were used in part, while other footnotes were written anew, expanded or rewritten with the needs of a non-Polish reader in mind.

The documents which appear in English translation in this volume were not originally intended for publication. Some are rather informal and at times even conversational in tone, while others include comments suggesting a personal friendship between the author and the addressee. As such, they did not present any particular technical difficulty in translation, with the exception of occasional idiomatic expressions, some of them now obsolete, or typically Polish forms of address or valedictions, for which the nearest English equivalent was chosen.

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<sup>17</sup> This statement is to be found in the report of the Polish envoy in Riga from his conversation with the Latvian Minister of Defense, 28 February 1939, *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1939, styczeń-sierpień...*, *op. cit.*, doc. 61, p. 120. See also S. Dębski, *Między Berlinem a Moskwą ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 242–243.



Polish geographical names that appear in the original documents were changed to reflect the international historical context. Hence Danzig instead of Gdańsk, Kaunas instead of Kowno, Königsberg instead of Królewiec, Marienwerder instead of Kwidzyń, Memel instead of Kłajpeda, Ratibor instead of Raciborz and Teschen instead of Cieszyn, etc. Carpathian Ruthenia was also adopted as the preferred form for the area also known as Carpatho-Ukraine, Trans-Carpathia or Sub-Carpathia.

The territory known to the Poles as Pomorze Gdańskie and to the Germans as Westpreussen and which is referred to in the documents from 1938–1939 as ‘Pomorze,’ was translated as Polish Pomerania to avoid confusion with the part of Pomerania that at the time was a part of Germany.

A number of documents included in this volume have already been published in English. They can be found in *The Polish White Book*, a selection of diplomatic documents published in 1940 by the war-time Polish Government-in-Exile; and in *Diplomat in Berlin*, a compilation of the diplomatic papers of Józef Lipski, the Polish Ambassador to Germany, which was published in 1968 by Columbia University Press, New York.

The documents published in *The Polish White Book* were translated and published in great haste shortly after World War II began. Moreover, considerable portions of the original documents were omitted in the English edition. As a result, the editors of the present volume decided to retranslate a number of those documents in whole or in part. The documents published in *Diplomat in Berlin* were left in their original form, save for corrections of occasional spelling errors and evident oversights.

The documents in French, largely taken from *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne*, were treated in the same fashion.

The underscored fragments in the text were underlined in the original documents (by typewriter or by hand), passages in italics indicate text that was written or overwritten by hand, including signatures, while ... marks illegible words or passages.

The Index of Personal Names only provides information about the functions held by a given person in 1938 and 1939.

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# DOCUMENTS



## 1

*[After 25 October]. Note from the conversation  
between the Ambassador in Berlin and the German Minister  
of Foreign Affairs*

*(unofficial—supplementary report)*<sup>1</sup>

Top Secret.

Note from the conversation between  
Ambassador Lipski and the Reich's Minister of Foreign Affairs v. Ribbentrop  
at Berchtesgaden on 24 October 1938.

In a conversation on 24 October over luncheon at the Grand Hotel in Berchtesgaden, at which Herr Hewel was present, Herr von Ribbentrop put forward to the Polish Ambassador a proposal for a basic settlement of issues (*Gesamtlösung*) between Poland and Germany which, as he expressed himself, would remove the causes of future strife. This included the reunion of Danzig with the Reich, while Poland would be assured of retaining railway and economic facilities there. Poland would agree to the building of an extraterritorial superhighway and railway line across Polish Pomerania. In exchange, von Ribbentrop mentioned the possibility of an extension of the Polish-German agreement<sup>2</sup> by twenty-five years and a guarantee of Polish-German frontiers. As a possible sphere for future cooperation between the two countries, the German Foreign Minister specified joint action in colonial matters, the emigration of Jews from Poland, and a joint policy toward Russia on the basis of the Anti-Comintern Pact. Herr von Ribbentrop asked the Ambassador to communicate his suggestions to Minister Beck. He would like to discuss these matters with him with the Ambassador's participation.

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<sup>1</sup> In the first note from this discussion (Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 454–458) Lipski omitted the *Gesamtlösung* proposal.

<sup>2</sup> This concerns the Polish-German declaration of 26 January 1934.

In his reply, Ambassador Lipski referred to the Chancellor's declaration on the Danzig question made to him on 5 November 1937,<sup>3</sup> and repeated to Minister Beck in Berlin on 14 January 1938.<sup>4</sup>

The Ambassador also pointed to the importance of Danzig as a port for Poland, and repeated the Polish government's principle of non-interference in the internal life of the German population in the Free City, where complete self-government is established.

Finally, the Ambassador stated that he would like to warn von Ribbentrop that he could see no possibility of an agreement involving the reunion of the Free City with the Reich. He concluded by promising to communicate the substance of this conversation to Minister Beck.

After the conversation von Ribbentrop invited the Ambassador again to call on him and, mentioning the issue of the union of Carpathian Ruthenia with Hungary,<sup>5</sup> put to him the question whether he was raising it with the German government as a Polish demand. He added that, if the Polish government agreed to the German concept regarding Danzig and the superhighway, the question of Carpathian Ruthenia could be solved in accordance with Poland's wishes on the matter. Ambassador Lipski answered that his only task was to inform the German government of Poland's attitude in regard to Hungary's demand in Carpathian Ruthenia, since Poland had already informed the Italian government.

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 453–454; PDD 1938, doc. 400.*

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<sup>3</sup> According to the ambassador's note: 'An der rechtspolitischen Lage Danzigs wird nichts geändert werden'. The official Polish-German communiqué about Lipski's visit to Hitler confirmed that 'die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen durch die Danziger Fragen nicht gestört werden sollten'.

<sup>4</sup> This refers to the assurance that the legal status of Danzig (including Polish rights with respect to the Free City) will not change.

<sup>5</sup> Carpathian Ruthenia was part of Czechoslovakia until September 1938, and an autonomous region of the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia from October.

## 2

*26 October. Report of the Ambassador in Moscow  
on his conversations with the People's Commissar  
for Foreign Affairs*

Moscow, 26 October 1938

S e c r e t

To Józef Beck  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

About the conversation with Litvinov.

The course of my two conversations with Litvinov (both at his invitation) was, in summary, as follows:

The first (on 22 October) Litvinov began by recalling my conversation with Potyomkin on 20 October (he had a note before him) and asked first of all if he was dealing with a private initiative on my part or with the initiative of my government.<sup>6</sup>

I replied that this essentially depended on his response. Should the response be positive, I have no doubt that the initiative will turn out to be official. On the other hand, would the Commissar not agree that in case of a negative response, it would be preferable for our relations if the initiative was private? Commissar Litvinov agreed and asked what the political basis of my proposal was.

I answered that in spite of all the friction and opposition, our foreign policies always had one common trait: they were both entirely autonomous. Personally I always felt high respect for the autonomy of Soviet policy, whereas the autonomy of our policy has been won in a heavy struggle.

I thus presume that Commissar Litvinov feels no longing to settle relations in our part of Europe with the participation of third parties. I think that the

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<sup>6</sup> This is a reference to the Polish initiative, recalling that the Polish-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, concluded in 1932, was still in force and that both states were carrying out its provisions. The communiqué of both parties on this question was published with the date 26 November 1938.

mere fact of our good neighbourly relations could have far-reaching political consequences.

(Litvinov was apparently pleased with my recognition for the autonomy of his policy, whereas my immediate intention was to steer him away from complicated international combinations).

Litvinov then asked how I intended to make our proposal explicit. I answered that explicitness had to be reached by way of mutual understanding and that until he had taken a stand on our initiative, I would perhaps be unnecessarily imposing on his precious time.

In response, Litvinov promised to report on the matter to his government.

\* \* \*

The course of the conversation on 25 October was as follows:

Litvinov declared that his government would take a positive stand on our proposals and asked me for specific proposals.

I told him that good relations between States differ from bad relations in that they can't be expressed in an overly striking manner ('хороших отношений нельзя выразить способом сногшибательным'). I said that the edifice of good-neighbourly relations had to be built gradually, beginning with the foundations. In our conditions I believe the following to be elements of such foundations:

1) Restoration of the state of legality through respect for existing agreements.

As examples of glaring violations of agreements I mentioned:

- a) the non-operation of border commissions in the matter of aeroplane overflights,
- b) the unilateral liquidation of the Kiev train,
- c) the disappearance of the automobile in which colonel Zaborowski was travelling,
- d) the disappearance of our citizens on the territory of the USSR.

2) The halt to press and propaganda attacks, especially with regard to our foreign policy.

3) The increase of trade subject to clearing. I elaborated on this point quite extensively.

4) In addition I mentioned the question of the treatment accorded to our agencies.<sup>7</sup>

Litvinov was not thrilled by the modest scope of the subject. He told me that what I was proposing was not a foundation, but a roof, and that in laying foundations one has to have a vision of the entire building. The foundation should be a political concept whose aim would be to maintain peace in our part of Europe, with a simultaneous definition of the political means leading to this goal.

I defended my position as one pointing to indispensable elements for the creation of friendly neighbourly relations. Assuming the aim, in principle, of maintaining peace, I said that the means to achieve this end would be dictated by the situation, whereas I consider the very existence of good relations to be decisive. Litvinov stood by his views and stated that what I was proposing gave him too little 'to report on to his government'. He put forward, among other things, the concept of 'mutual strengthening of our States', but when I pressed him for details on this point he stated that this was only an example.

Following a lengthy discussion, not seeing any reason for haste, I took the matter *ad referendum*.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
/Wacław Grzybowski, Ph.D./

*PDD 1938, doc. 401*

### 3

#### *28 October. Instruction of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in Moscow*

Polmission Moscow

Received cable No. 56.

I approve the position you have taken.

It would be desirable to reach some concrete results in the area of trade.

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<sup>7</sup> For a listing of complaints concerning surveillance, vexations and impediments in the functioning of Polish agencies in the USSR, see, among other sources, PDD 1938, doc. 406.

On the other hand, it is not our aim to extend the normalisation of relations beyond the scope of shaping peaceful neighbourly coexistence.

Litvinov can be told that the aim of normalisation is the maintenance of peace along the 1,300 km of the Polish-Soviet border on the basis of a scrupulous performance of the provisions of the non-aggression pact and the avoidance of any, even small, instructions that could give rise to irritation.

Beck

*PDD 1938, doc. 402*

## 4

### *31 October. Instruction of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in Berlin: Position of the Polish government regarding German demands*

Warsaw, 31 October 1938

Top Secret.

To Józef Lipski  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in BERLIN.

In connection with your indication of the Reich Government's desire to achieve a general agreement which would finally stabilize Polish-German relations in accordance with the principle of a good and friendly co-existence, as expressed by Mr. von Ribbentrop in his conversation at Berchtesgaden on 24 October, please inform the governing circles of the Reich of our following views:

1) Although, to our sincere satisfaction, the last crisis did not lead to a general European military conflict, in the eyes of the Polish Government the value of good Polish-German relations in a general stabilization of peace is not only of undiminished importance, but, in face of the dominating general political chaos, has gained in weight and cogency.

2) In the sphere of Polish-German neighbourly relations, in spite of local difficulties, great progress has been made, since it has not escaped our notice



that the Reich Chancellor's declarations in regard to us, made in his public statements, contain increasingly precise and unequivocal formulas.

3) The Polish-German Agreement of 1934 has stood the test of the greatest political upheaval post-war Europe has so far experienced. In these circumstances, it is only logical to emphasize this achievement, by impressing the publics of both countries with the fact that the said Agreement was not of a transient and tactical nature. On the contrary, it expresses the firm resolution to repair mistakes of past history, which has been so abundant in strife and conflict without advantage to either of our nations.

4) In the opinion of the Polish Government the subject of any future understanding concluded with the object of permanently maintaining good neighbourly relations would have to be the following:

- a) A certain extension in the period and form of the 1934 Declaration, as the basis of relations between the two States.
- b) Such a settlement of the problem of the Danzig Free City as would prevent, in future, the continually recurring difficulties of a technical and psychological nature which arise from friction in this sphere. The question of the Free City is urgent because in the state of affairs hitherto prevailing, with the League of Nations reserving very far-reaching prerogatives to itself, but not able to fulfil its task in a manner beneficial to the Free City and to Polish interests, the need arises for the Polish and Reich Governments to approach the problem in a spirit of frankness.

5) On the Polish side the fact will always remain that so important a State as Poland has access to the sea which is reduced to the minimum possible, and this at a time when the Republic's sea commerce and its mercantile marine are naturally developing on a very wide scale. The construction of the port in Gdynia<sup>8</sup> considerably enlarged Poland's possibilities, but the position of the Free City at the mouth of the Vistula (which, especially since the creation of the Polish Central Industrial Area,<sup>9</sup> is an increasingly important communication way) confers quite special importance on the Free City from the aspect of

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<sup>8</sup> A modern sea port and city were being built in Gdynia since 1923. This was, along with the Central Industrial Area, one of the greatest Polish investment projects of that period (see next footnote).

<sup>9</sup> An industrial complex, including armament industries, developed since 1936 in the south of Poland.

Polish maritime interests. A very large number of further basins can still be excavated at Gdynia, but it would be impossible to find any substitute for the natural port situated at the mouth of the main Polish waterway. On the other hand, the exploitation of any port under normal economic conditions is only possible when it is situated within the Customs area of the country which forms its hinterland. For this reason, in past ages the Free City of Danzig, while enjoying local autonomy because of the nature of its population, was even under Polish sovereignty. It should be added that the Danzig delegation to the Congress of Vienna had, as its chief task, the maintenance of its connection with whatever type of Polish State might arise as the result of the deliberations of that Congress. These historical considerations are meant only as illustration and commentary. Present-day realities provide clear arguments for a definition of the bounds of Polish interests in relation to the Free City.

6) In the circumstances, in the understanding of the Polish Government the Danzig question is governed by two factors: the right of the German population of the city and the surrounding villages to freedom of life and development; and the fact that in all matters appertaining to the Free City as a port it is connected with Poland. Apart from the national character of the majority of the population, everything in Danzig is definitely bound up with Poland. In the present state of affairs the existing Statute and agreements guarantee Poland:

- a) Unrestricted access to the sea by waterway and railway.
- b) The ownership of the railways serving the port at Danzig and the port at Gdynia.
- c) The inclusion of the Free City in the Polish Customs area.
- d) The rights of the Polish minority.

Other rights derive from these four cardinal conditions. The Statute contains yet another fifth condition which, despite several declarations of the Danzig Senate, the last being made in 1932, has never been fulfilled. The failure to fulfil this condition reacts most unfavourably upon the economic position of the Free City.

7) Taking all the foregoing factors into consideration, and desiring to achieve the stabilization of relations by way of a friendly understanding with the Government of the German Reich, the Polish Government proposes the replacement of the League of Nations guarantee and its prerogatives by a bi-lateral Polish-German Agreement. This Agreement should guarantee the existence of the Free City of Danzig so as to assure freedom of national and

cultural life to its German majority, and also should guarantee all Polish rights. Notwithstanding the complications involved in such a system, the Polish Government must state that any other solution, and in particular any attempt to incorporate the Free City into the Reich, must inevitably lead to a conflict. This would not only take the form of local difficulties, but also would suspend all possibility of Polish-German understanding in all its aspects. Even in 1933, after the conversations had been opened which led to the conclusion of the 1934 Declaration, Marshal Piłsudski raised the Danzig question as a sure criterion for estimating the German Reich's intentions towards Poland. This was made known both through diplomatic channels and also, so far as I remember, in a conversation between Marshal Piłsudski and Dr. Goebbels.<sup>10</sup> I expressly consider that this point of view is binding upon Poland.

8) In face of the weight and cogency of these questions, I am ready to have final conversations personally with the governing circles of the Reich. I deem it necessary, however, that you should first present the principles to which we adhere, so that my eventual contact should not end in a breakdown, which would be dangerous for the future.

MINISTER

*PWB, doc. 45; PDD 1938, doc. 405*

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<sup>10</sup> This conversation took place on 14 June 1934.

## 5

*1 November. Report of the Ambassador in Rome on conversations within the diplomatic corps during the Czechoslovak crisis*

Rome, 1 November 1938

SECRET.

Dear Mr. Minister,

I wish by this letter to send you my usual report from the more important discussions I have had with representatives of the local diplomatic corps, including on the Czechoslovak crisis. From the present report I have excluded my conversations with Ciano (of which I had 12), as all the important details from these have already been sent to Warsaw through my dispatches.

I will begin with the Englishman.<sup>1</sup> With the ambassador of Great Britain I had a lengthy discussion on the eve of our entry into Silesia, i.e., on 1 October.<sup>2</sup> To my arguments about our rights to Silesia and a lack of understanding for the legitimacy of our demands on the part of both English politicians and its public opinion, which is continually ill-disposed toward us, he responded by saying that England had been on the verge of war with Germany not in order to defend Czechoslovakia, but on the principle that it cannot by any means accept the fact that someone, through war or the threat of war, forces his will on Europe. Meanwhile, we are settling our claims with regard to the Czechs in an identical manner even though we have been promised that our affairs would be settled *within* three months.<sup>3</sup> I replied that we are forced to proceed in this manner, because we do not trust the Czechs and, unfortunately, we have lost our trust in the Western Powers.

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Drummond.

<sup>2</sup> Polish troops entered the so-called 'Zaolzie', a part of Teschen Silesia (about 900 km<sup>2</sup>), on 2 October 1938. Czechoslovakia had obtained Zaolzie by a decision of the Powers in 1920 and this became one of the causes of the tense relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia during the inter-war period. Polish actions, taken in the shadow of the Munich Conference, provoked sharp criticism, also in Great Britain and France.

<sup>3</sup> During the Munich Conference of 29–30 September 1938, it was decided that Polish and Hungarian demands with regard to Czechoslovakia should be settled within three months, failing which they would be settled by means of a new conference.

This was the first reason, while the second was that we realise perfectly well that within three months neither France nor England would have much to say in this corner of Europe *but only Germany will*. So in order to avoid an unnecessary conflict with Germany our government decided to seize the part of Silesia due to us at the same time as the Germans.

On 10 October I had a second conversation with the English ambassador in which he had to admit my earlier arguments had been right. When I explained to him the significance of a common frontier with Hungary<sup>4</sup> for peace and the regulation of relations in Central Europe, he replied: 'You are perhaps right again, but the matter cannot be settled otherwise than on an ethnographic basis'.

I have reported on my discussions with Zamfirescu in my dispatches. I would only like to underline here that in the initial discussion, when the issue of Romania's possible participation in the dismemberment of Carpathian Ruthenia arose, Zamfirescu presented the matter in a manner that led me to suppose that he was acting with the acquiescence of his government, the more so as he returned to the subject several times.

On 17 October, I had a lengthy discussion with the envoy from Yugoslavia, Christi . We discussed a wide range of issues connected with the situation in Central Europe and Europe in general as a result of the Munich Conference and he unequivocally agreed with my opinion about the necessity of a common Polish-Hungarian frontier. He held the view that the Czechs had fallen into the German sphere of influence, which, along the southern chain of the Tatra Mountains, could have a decisive influence also on the position of Hungary. The latter, in turn, pressed from both directions by German influence, will be forced into the role of a satellite of Germanic policy.

He explains Romania's anxiety and outright fears of this *Polish-Hungarian* frontier by the fact that Romania is afraid of Hungarian claims in Transylvania and, moreover, it fears that with a common Polish-Hungarian frontier Poland will shift the weight of its allied relations from Romania to Hungary.

I am not sending any report from my frequent discussions with the Hungarian envoy Villani, as with him I agree one hundred percent on everything, even on the fact that the Hungarian government on the entire issue of claims with regard to Czechoslovakia showed too much

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<sup>4</sup> The Polish-Hungarian frontier came into being upon the Hungarians' occupation, in March 1939, of the whole of Carpathian Ruthenia.

procrastination and, at the same time, indecisiveness and a desire to have the matter settled *not* by Hungary itself, but *by others on Hungary's behalf*.

*Respectfully.*

*Wieniawa Długoszowski*

*PDD 1938, doc. 407*

## 6

*4 November. Cable from the Ambassador in Moscow  
about his conversation with the People's Commissar  
for Foreign Affairs*

Moscow, 4 November 1938  
Received on 5 November, at 9:00 A.M.

Mr. Grzybowski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

No. 88.

In reference to cipher cable No. 87.

Litvinov told me that his government shared our desire to improve our mutual relations and presented me today with the draft of the following communiqué:

'The Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Grzybowski, acting on instructions from his government, held several discussions with Commissar L. over the course of the past few days, to exchange opinions in connection with the new international situation.

'The exchange of opinions has led to the following observations:

'I. The Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact, concluded in 1932 for a period of five years and prolonged for a further period until 1945, possesses a sufficiently wide basis to guarantee the inviolability of peaceful relations between both States and the non-involvement of either of the two States in political combinations hostile to the second State;

'II. The governments of the USSR and Poland are animated by a striving for the loyal preservation of all the provisions of the said agreement;

‘III. Being interested in the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the whole extent of Eastern Europe, both governments will consult each other in cases when the peace and tranquillity are under any threat whatsoever;

‘IV. Both governments will instruct their respective representatives to begin examining at once the possibilities of expanding trade between their two States.’

I took the matter *ad referendum*, subject to the following personal observations:

Firstly, the reference in the introduction to the international situation seems unnecessary.

Secondly, I find point III to be too wide politically and geographically. I would propose that you agree to the principle of consultations and put off the announcement of this point until mutual relations will have improved.

Thirdly, I insisted on the necessity of specifying and expanding point IV, stressing in it the aim of friendly settlement of all day-to-day matters. It is also my opinion that point II would be appropriate in the commentary, but not in the communiqué.

*PDD 1938, doc. 411*

## 7

### *4 November. Discussion during a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw devoted to events in Czechoslovakia following the Munich Conference*

4 novembre 1938

Conférence chez Beck (en présence d’Arciszewski, de Papée, de Lubienski, de Gwiazdoski, de Kobylanski, de Potocki et de moi-même).

Beck. – Questions à étudier: Bilan des derniers événements; question tchèque et ses suites; examen de notre position dans différents secteurs.

Dans ces derniers mois, toutes sortes de systèmes et de méthodes auxquels on attachait plus de valeur qu’ils ne le méritaient, ont échoué. Il faut s’en rendre compte et en prendre acte, car cela résulte de l’analyse du passé et

aura une influence sur l'avenir. La S.D.N. est morte. Avec elle, ce qu'on appelle le système français en Europe orientale a été atteint d'une façon extrêmement grave, de même que l'efficacité de l'action conjuguée de la France et de l'Angleterre à laquelle on voulait accorder, à la lumière de la S.D.N., un caractère analogue au verdict d'un tribunal international. D'autre part, il s'est révélé que les lions ne sont pas si terribles qu'ils en ont l'air quand on vit plus intimement avec eux et si, en apparence, l'entente entre Rome et Berlin s'en est bien tirée, on peut néanmoins noter: 1° l'accroissement entre eux de divergences d'opinions, dissimulées mais réelles, sur les questions de l'Europe orientale; 2° que les Allemands eux-mêmes ont moins de discipline intérieure qu'on ne pouvait en attendre de leur part, en face d'une situation difficile. La discipline a été maintenue, car la décision est restée entre les mains d'une seule personne et la puissance de sa volonté, ainsi que les moyens techniques, ont suffi pour mener l'action, mais le fait que les questions de personnel sont insuffisamment étudiées et que la modération qui contraignait les Allemands avant la guerre à ne pas s'épancher devant des étrangers a disparu, est significatif.

L'arbitrage de Vienne a révélé le manque d'énergie des deux partenaires (les Tchèques et les Hongrois) pour rendre possible n'importe quel règlement de la question<sup>5</sup>. C'est le symptôme de l'effritement des gabarits politiques suivant lesquels opère tout journaliste moyen. Nous l'avons échappé belle; nous n'avons pas agi d'une façon trop arbitraire; nous ne sommes pas intervenus. D'autre part, il a été prouvé que nous ne saurions pas rester indifférents aux questions qui nous touchent des près. A cet égard, notre position n'est pas de plus mauvaises. Notre situation politique est bonne.

L'effondrement des espérances des divers États voisins de la Pologne suscitera probablement dans les esprits un pessimisme illimité duquel il faudra tirer des conclusions; il peut en résulter que certains pays, tout en faisant preuve de faiblesse dans une direction, montrent de la force dans une autre. C'est ce qui se produit.

La question tchèque une fois réglée, on pourra apprécier si la « saison » européenne de cette année se trouve close. C'est alors seulement qu'on pourra revenir à l'analyse et se tourner vers les éléments de la vie internationale qui viennent de se manifester. Néanmoins, nous savons aujourd'hui que, si un État figure sur la carte, quand bien même il ne serait qu'une création très bizarre,

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<sup>5</sup> The so-called Vienna Arbitration of 2 November 1938 granted Hungary the southern portion of Slovakia and the south-western portion of Carpathian Ruthenia.



son démembrement entraîne beaucoup de difficultés, aussi bien d'ordre politique que d'ordre psychologique. Il est excessivement rare, dans l'histoire, que quelqu'un ait disposé du territoire d'un autre pays sans avoir tiré un seul coup de fusil. Pour employer une comparaison tirée de la technique, la force motrice de ce pays était plus puissante qu'elle ne semblait l'être, toutefois, le résultat a été le même. Dans la désagrégation de l'État tchécoslovaque, il y a lieu de noter:

1° Il a fallu effectuer une pression politique très grande;

2° La résistance militaire a été faible.

3° L'ébranlement intérieur du pays, par rapport à l'ampleur de la catastrophe, a été très léger; on avait l'impression qu'en Tchécoslovaquie, la majorité des gens ne s'intéressait pas à ce qui se produisait. Au fond, on aurait pu exiger encore plus des Tchèques sans rencontrer de leur part d'opposition plus marquée. La faiblesse de cet État a dépassé tout ce à quoi nous aurions pu nous attendre, à l'origine. Avant la guerre, on se plaignait des Balkans, car il y avait, là-bas, des États faiblement organisés qui servaient d'instruments à d'autres. Après la guerre, on a « balkanisé » l'Europe jusqu'aux Carpathes. L'Autriche s'est détachée de cet ensemble. Nous devons appuyer la politique polonaise dans les Balkans sur un contrefort ayant le maximum de consistance. D'où l'intérêt que nous portons à la Hongrie: c'est elle qui a le plus de possibilités; elle est plus près de nous que les autres pays balkaniques (Yougoslavie). La collaboration des Hongrois avec nous n'a pas été héroïque au cours des derniers événements. Il se sont montrés faibles dans des moments historiques difficiles, mais la faute en incombe à la catégorie de gens qui gouverne ce pays. C'est un exemple instructif. Les plus grands potentiels même, s'ils ne sont pas jetés sur le plateau de la balance de la décision, ne donnent rien. La consistance de la Hongrie peut être meilleure, en principe, que celle d'autres pays et cela vaut la peine d'être étudié. L'attitude que nous avons adoptée à l'égard de la Hongrie doit être maintenue, malgré certaines insuffisances de sa part. Notre attitude envers les Tchèques peut, dans l'avenir, revêtir un meilleur aspect; nous ne le nions point, mais cela n'exclut nullement le maintien de notre attitude antérieure à l'égard de la Hongrie. Il semble que l'évolution intérieure de la Tchécoslovaquie se poursuivra encore. Les principes fondamentaux de ce pays, d'ordre intérieur et d'ordre extérieur, se sont effondrés, mais on ne peut pas concevoir que seuls des soldats (Chvéïk) habitent ce pays. Il est difficile de savoir ce que représentent aujourd'hui le gouvernement de Prague et le pseudo-gouvernement slovaque. Nous pouvons nous en occuper, mais le problème hongrois sera toujours au

premier plan, et il s'agit pour nous d'obtenir, le plus rapidement possible, une frontière commune avec la Hongrie.

Pour résumer, on peut dire: l'existence de l'État tchèque est une question toujours ouverte. Elle se pose devant nous: cette grande vague qui s'étend sur le monde entier s'arrêtera-t-elle, enfin, à la frontière de la Pologne? Devons-nous nous attendre à ce qu'elle se tourne d'un autre côté en Europe? Il faut bien regarder vers l'Occident pour savoir comment elle s'y présente. Il faut vérifier quel est, en Europe, le désir de chercher l'aventure sur le continent, surtout étant donné que le problème des colonies commence à se poser.

La Russie a été efficacement repoussée d'Europe, probablement pour longtemps; son jeu a été par trop mauvais.

Au moment où elle est entrée à la S.D.N., nous avons affirmé que nos rapports avec elle reposaient sur le pacte de non-agression et cela a été la condition à laquelle nous avons subordonné notre vote en faveur de son entrée au Conseil. Il serait utile actuellement de revenir à cette condition.

On a craint que l'énergie que nous avons déployée pour régler l'affaire tchèque ne provoque de fâcheux remous dans la Baltique mais, en réalité, elle a produit un résultat tout à fait opposé. Les secteurs lithuanien et letton se sont animés; les dernières conversations avec les ministres de ces deux pays en sont la preuve. Notre poids spécifique a augmenté et il y a là un élément que l'on peut gagner et dont il faut s'occuper.

Russie subcarpathique: Papée est venu de Tchécoslovaquie pour nous communiquer ses impressions et pour nous indiquer comment se sont comportés là-bas les différents éléments en face de la question hongroise.

L'Angleterre et la France ont montré un désintéressement total; l'Italie a été plus ferme qu'on ne pouvait s'y attendre et elle continue à l'être; cela s'est manifesté surtout lors de l'arbitrage de Vienne. Ce sont les Italiens qui ont poussé au rattachement de Mukačevo et d'Užhorod à la Hongrie et ils se sont abstenus d'accorder leur garantie. Ils penchent nettement vers la conception d'une frontière commune entre la Pologne et la Hongrie. Ciano s'était montré assez hostile au programme hongrois maximum, mais il a compris qu'il ne pouvait pas passer outre sur la question de la Russie subcarpathique et il a reculé le plus possible la frontière de la Hongrie, car il a estimé que c'était le seul moyen pratique d'arriver à un résultat en ce moment. Il a agi envers nous avec logique.

Les Allemands sont facilement accusés d'user de ruse et de prétention au pouvoir supérieur. Ribbentrop promet trop. Comme tous les hommes

possédant peu de charme, il tâche de plaire. Il a fait preuve de modération dans l'affaire slovaque, car c'était conforme au style allemand. Au point de vue polonais, le jeu des Allemands, en Russie subcarpathique, laisse supposer qu'ils ourdissent des « plans sataniques ». On peut croire qu'en déléguant Ribbentrop, Hitler a craint de lui laisser les mains trop libres et qu'il lui a donné des instructions strictes sur les méthodes à employer; c'est cette contrainte qui a été la cause principale pour laquelle Ribbentrop s'est obstiné à rester sur le terrain de l'ethnographie. Hitler lui-même a usé de ce moyen pour venir à bout des autres partis et il ne pouvait pas facilement changer de tactique. Son attachement aux conceptions nationalitaires est, en effet, fanatique.

Est-ce qu'Hitler, en réglant l'affaire de la Russie subcarpathique, a voulu se frayer la voie vers Kiev? Les Allemands s'intéressent assez à la Ruthénie; je ne pense pas cependant qu'ils considèrent la Russie subcarpathique comme l'occasion d'un pas décisif dans la question de l'Ukraine. La mort de Staline serait, en ce moment, une catastrophe, car la course vers l'Ukraine pourrait être reprise.

Nous trouvons souvent, dans les comptes rendus que nous recevons de Russie subcarpathique, des noms allemands. Il s'agit d'éléments nouveaux qui viennent s'en mêler: la radio de Vienne; des agitateurs. Il serait utile de vérifier si ce ne sont pas les mêmes agitateurs autrichiens, qui, au temps de la Grande Guerre, sont devenus les premiers qui *sich gleichgeschaltet haben* et qui tentent maintenant de prendre leur revanche politique dans ce secteur. Les anciens Autrichiens peuvent facilement tendre à se donner un rôle patriotique en se posant, dans cette région, comme les représentants du III<sup>e</sup> Reich. Mais les anciens amis sont morts ou ont perdu leur importance. Bénès a commencé à se livrer à des combinaisons avec la Russie nouvelle, et la question ukrainienne n'était pas commode à résoudre pour lui. Soudainement, on s'est tu sur la question ruthène et le problème de la Galicie orientale est né. Ainsi, d'une part, on a spéculé sur la Russie rouge, d'autre part les conceptions allemandes sont entrées en jeu. Maintenant, un troisième moyen se présente pour aborder l'affaire; on spéculé en vue de la désagrégation de la Russie et les grandes puissances s'y intéressent.

Kobylanski nous informe de la conversation qu'il a eue avec Slavik. Celui-ci dit que tous les motifs raisonnables sont en faveur de la restitution à la Hongrie de la Russie subcarpathique, mais que le sentiment slave se prononce en faveur de son maintien au sein de la Tchécoslovaquie.

Papée. – Situation en Russie subcarpathique: il y a, là-bas, deux chefs militaires. Le moral des troupes est de plus en plus mauvais et on peut craindre une dissolution complète. Une action très puissante du clergé, dont les

membres commandent souvent des troupes, tout en exerçant leur ministère, est à noter.

Il ne faut pas négliger les Slovaques mais les convaincre qu'ils ne perdront rien au règlement de la question ruthène.

La démobilisation et le retrait des troupes tchèques de Russie subcarpathique constituent un problème grave, car ces troupes peuvent se trouver bloquées et dans l'impossibilité de trouver une issue; le gouvernement slovaque lui-même pourra avoir, de ce fait, des ennuis.

Beck. – La question slovaque suscite en nous les plus sérieuses inquiétudes. Après la fixation de la frontière ruthène, les Tchèques peuvent maîtriser les Slovaques et, si ceux-ci continuent à se monter aussi indolents, les Tchèques leur imposeront ce qu'ils voudront. La Russie subcarpathique, même dépendant d'une Tchécoslovaquie puissante et alliée de l'U.R.S.S. n'a rien pu faire jusqu'à présent contre nous; donc, dans les conditions actuelles, le danger qu'elle constitue ne peut pas s'accroître. Je ne surestime point l'importance, pour notre politique intérieure, de la question de la Russie subcarpathique.

*JSJ, pp. 367–372*

## 8

### *7 November. Instruction of the Under Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Washington: Polish government's position in the matter of colonies and Jewish emigration from Poland*

Polmission Washington

Received cipher cables Nos. 55 and 57.

I would like to ask you not to commit yourself in any discussions whatsoever as regards this or that specific colonial territory for Poland in connection with the Jewish question.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> At around this time, various ideas were being discussed in Poland about obtaining territories for settlement (colonies) to which Polish Jews could emigrate. The best known such project concerned Madagascar.

The fact that serious American Jews are discussing or putting forward this or that colony-related proposal, perhaps in connection with making it possible for Jews to emigrate, is desirable.

Detailed instructions to follow in writing.<sup>7</sup>

Szembek

Can be sent: 7 November 1938

*PDD 1938, doc. 413*

## 9

*8 November. Letter of the Ambassador in Moscow  
to the Minister of Foreign Affairs about conversations  
with the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs*

Moscow, 8 November 1938

Top Secret

To Minister Józef Beck  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

I would like to add a small commentary to my reports about my discussions with Litvinov.

The aim of the entire endeavour as you have defined it, in the form of 'signs of an external détente', seems truly achievable. This would, naturally,

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<sup>7</sup> The instruction of 9 November, sent after Ambassador Potocki's telegram about the possibility of directing Jewish emigration to Angola (PDD 1938, doc. 414) reads as follows: 'The matter of Angola, which is of interest to us, must take the form of an initiative of American Jews aimed at resolving the Jewish question in Poland. The first stage of this operation should be the securing, by the Jews themselves, of a favourable position of the United States and Great Britain for the Jewish project. It is only at a later stage, when the situation becomes clear, that Poland will be able to take a stand [in the matter]. I would like to ask you to avoid associating the Polish government with this operation. Beck' (PDD 1938, doc. 417).

be the beginning of a slow process of repair, which can take place in our relations with the Soviets. Their present unfavourable state, caused by a long list of factors, will recede slowly.

For Litvinov, the entire centre of gravity is to be found in the political moment that could possibly motivate such a great change of the USSR's present policy. Thus, there is logic in his striving for the communiqué.

Insofar as reaching a turning point in our neighbourly relations seems possible in political terms, significant practical benefits seem unlikely for the time being. This follows from the Soviets' general situation, primarily due at present to two factors:

1) Projects for more radical changes in foreign policy have been rejected. The Soviets continue to be oriented toward collaboration with the United States and England. For this purpose, anti-Japanese accents are presently being pushed as something of value for America and England. Collaboration with France has been side-tracked. In the face of conciliatory gestures made with regard to Germany in the West, the Soviets are to some extent adapting their tactics to this fact. It follows that the United States, England and France will continue to be the USSR's main partners in economic relations and as sources of imports.

2) The main source of concern is the internal situation. The Soviets are presently going through a period of rapid decline to a level of 'dangerous weakness.' The internal situation is dictating a whole range of negative steps with regard to foreigners, the options of the government apparatus are being reduced, and reality is in contradiction with the system and requires dissimulation whenever possible.

The above two observations have lead me to the following conclusions:

- a) A certain expansion of trade will probably be possible, gradually and in modest volumes.
- b) Matters remaining to be settled between us are of negative significance; the positive ones are of a third-rank nature and can't in fact produce anything. Their gradual settlement will require some time and could be of symbolic significance only.
- c) Fundamental changes in the stance toward our agencies are only possible with difficulty, as this would constitute a precedent for others and would require that the Soviets back down from already won positions, because the diplomatic corps has come to terms with

it all. Practical exceptions to our advantage are possible, however, and we have already achieved them in some cases.

In light of the above, it does not seem to me that we could, in exchange for certain political advantages offered to Litvinov, really gain anything but political advantages as well.

I am not overestimating their current significance, but I believe in their significance for the future.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
*Wacław Grzybowski*

*PDD 1938, doc. 415*

## 10

*8 November. Note from the conversation  
of the Under Secretary of State with the Ambassador of Italy*

SECRET

Note from the conversation of Minister Szembek  
with the Ambassador of Italy, Baron di Valentino,  
on 8 November 1938

We spoke on the subject of the Vienna Arbitration. The Ambassador pointed out that Count Ciano had reached the ultimate limits of what was possible and could not have obtained more. The Ambassador recalled the Austrian problem and the resistant position adopted by Italy with regard to the German *Anschluss* tendencies. As a result, Italy desisted, it is true, but this took place following the war in Abyssinia (a clear allusion to Germany's favourable position with regard to Italy on the Abyssinian question). The Ambassador insinuated during the further course of the discussion that German resistance in the matter of Carpathian Ruthenia is caused by the desire to secure for itself, just in case, a gate for a sally in the Ukrainian direction. The Ambassador does not consider the present settlement—following the Vienna Award—as definitive and lasting. The question of Ruthenia remains open. It has been and still is better to let it remain open than to obtain a definitive, but negative, settlement.

I asked the Ambassador if, during the course of the negotiations related to the Czech-Hungarian conflict, the principles spelled out in the *lettre d'envoi* appended by the *Entente* and Associated Powers to the Treaty of Trianon were taken into account.<sup>8</sup> The above document placed the problem of Carpathian Ruthenia on a different plane than the question of old Hungary's other territories.

The Ambassador replied that fundamental difficulties in the recent negotiations were rooted in the fact that Hungary had raised the question of Carpathian Ruthenia and of the frontier with Poland much too late.

The Ambassador then asked if and what decisions had been taken with regard to the creation of a free port in Bratislava. In this connection, he made reference to voices in the Polish press. Certain special rights are supposedly to be reserved in the port of Bratislava for Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The Ambassador returned to this issue on several occasions, emphasising that this question was very interesting.

I answered that all the above mentioned States gravitated, so to speak, towards the Danube, but that, as far as we were concerned, we hadn't entered into any agreements concerning the port in Bratislava. We are presently negotiating with Czechoslovakia the liquidation of a range of problems that arose in connection with the return to Poland of the Zaolzie part of Teschen Silesia and the rectification of the Polish-Slovak frontier.<sup>9</sup> In those negotiations, which will probably last for a long time, economic matters play a serious part.

During the conversation, the Ambassador spoke with scepticism and negatively about France and the possibility of a deeper settlement of Italian-French relations.

Lastly, he informed me that he was leaving the day after tomorrow for Rome at the summons of Count Ciano, so he would not be present during the ceremonies on 11 November. Count Ciano wishes to discuss with him the situation that has emerged in Europe in connection with the liquidation of the Czech crisis.

*PDD 1938, doc. 416*

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<sup>8</sup> The peace treaty concluded with Hungary on 4 June 1920.

<sup>9</sup> This refers to small changes made to Poland's benefit along the Polish-Slovak boundary.



## 11

*9 November. Report of the Ambassador in Berlin on his conversation  
with the Ambassador of Italy about the German-Italian  
arbitration in the matter of Czechoslovakia's frontiers*

9 November 1938

Top Secret.

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
i n W a r s a w

From my conversation with the Italian Ambassador I learned many details concerning the Vienna Award. With the reservation that his report was confidential, he disclosed to me that, although in Rome Ciano and Ribbentrop<sup>10</sup> agreed to concede Užhorod and Mukačevo to Hungary, the German side changed its mind on the eve of the arbitration, raising objections against the Hungarian demands regarding these cities. The German government used the argument that, since the countries of the Berlin-Rome Axis were acting for the first time before international public opinion in the role of arbitrators, any hint of bias should be avoided. However, in Vienna Ciano categorically stood by the Rome agreement to concede Užhorod and Mukačevo to Hungary. According to Signor Attolico, nothing more could be obtained, particularly since the Hungarians were in very bad form for negotiations. For instance, from Carpathian Ruthenia not a single petition of the population for union with Hungary had been forwarded to the arbitrators.

Answering my question, the Ambassador explained that, besides the establishment of an ethnographic line, nothing had been settled in Vienna, not even the possible guarantee for Czechoslovakia.

In Signor Attolico's opinion, upon its being separated from Užhorod and Mukačevo, Ruthenia would face an acute problem in the future. However, he thinks that in view of the tension accumulating at present on this problem, especially on the part of the German government, a public discussion of this matter, in the form of press polemics, such as is taking place in Poland, would be harmful rather than useful for the future realization of the common

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<sup>10</sup> The Reich Foreign Affairs Minister's visit in Rome took place on 27–29 October 1938.

Polish-Hungarian frontier. For the German government it is a matter of prestige, with Berlin engaged as arbiter in Vienna.

As far as the guarantee for Czechoslovakia is concerned, Signor Attolico thinks that, if Berlin reached final agreement with Czechoslovakia in particular fields and Prague would require a guarantee, the Reich government would probably grant it. That is why the Ambassador would prefer to press that the guarantee problem be postponed, rather than settle for prompt action. In accordance with this information, under the present changed circumstances the British government shows considerably less interest in the guarantee and is rather unwilling to grant it. This might be a sort of argument for Berlin.

When our conversation turned to Romania, the Ambassador agreed with me that the Romanian government, owing to Comnen's erroneous appraisal of the situation, has taken a negative stand toward the common Polish-Hungarian frontier. The Romanians will not avail themselves of this occasion to improve their relations with Budapest with the help of Poland and Italy.

In the opinion of the Ambassador, it would be advisable to wait until after the visit of the Romanian King to London. That visit is absorbing the monarch and his entourage to such an extent that any steps on the part of Rome and Warsaw in Bucharest should be undertaken only after this visit.

In connection with the above conversation and the Polish Ministry's telegram of 7 November reporting on the alleged communication by the Reich government to the Hungarian government that it regards the Vienna Award as a final settlement of the Hungarian-Czechoslovakian frontier problem, and that it is interested that Czechoslovakia should remain within the frontiers established in Vienna, I would like to state that such a declaration is in conformity with official statements by the German authorities. May I recall here a fragment of Foreign Minister Ribbentrop's speech delivered on 8 November at the banquet for the foreign press, which reads as follows:

'The arbitration decision which was pronounced by Italian Foreign Minister Count Ciano and myself, after the most thorough consideration and the most careful weighing of all interests involved, has now finally determined the frontier between Hungary and Czechoslovakia on the basis of ethnography'.

This, in my opinion, does not actually preclude the possibility that the rest of Carpathian Ruthenia left outside Hungary could not be dealt with in the future. However, the approach to this problem from the propaganda angle should, in my opinion, be somewhat altered and cannot be based on the claim for a common Polish-Hungarian frontier, for this argument contradicts the

arbitration based upon ethnographical ground. As far as this place [Berlin] is concerned, the problem could be more successfully promoted if it originated from the real internal development of the situation in Carpathian Ruthenia. As a matter of fact, I would not be surprised if, in spite of the present situation, the problem of Ruthenia, especially with the growing Ukrainian activity within the territory, would in the future return to haunt Bucharest and force the course of its tactics accordingly. Some outpourings made to me by Mr. George Bratianu would confirm such a point of view.

Finally, I would like to call your attention to the passage of von Ribbentrop's speech of 8 November regarding the Reich's relations with Czechoslovakia, which reads as follows:

'If, following the final delineation of its frontier, the Czechoslovak government is ready to recognize fully the new reality and adopt a completely new orientation in its policy toward Germany, a reconciliation with this state, as well as a final settlement between the two nations, is possible'.

From this declaration it might be deduced that the Reich's possible guarantee to Czechoslovakia would depend on a previous basic agreement of these states between themselves and the dissolution by Prague of the network of its present alliances.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
Józef Lipski

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 459–461; PDD 1938, doc. 418*

## 12

### *12 November. Report of the Ambassador in Berlin on Polish-German relations and German foreign policy*

Berlin, 12 November 1938

Top Secret. (Personal)

Dear Mr. Minister,

1. With reference to my handwritten letter of 5 November, I am taking the liberty of communicating to you that until now my planned meeting with

the foreign minister of the Reich, von Ribbentrop, has not taken place. I would like to recall that on the eve of the Vienna Award, on 1 November, I announced at the secretariat of the Minister of Foreign Affairs my return from Warsaw, stating that I was at the disposal of Herr von Ribbentrop. I repeated the same thing to Secretary of State von Weizsäcker on 3 November, as well as to Ambassador von Moltke. At the banquet for the foreign press on 7 November von Ribbentrop was present, but he left for Munich immediately after dinner to attend a celebration to be held there on 8 and 9 November. I had no opportunity for an exchange of opinion, and the Minister only told me in passing that he would be back in Berlin from 10 November on. This was confirmed by his secretary, on his own initiative, with the explanation that owing to the many travels of the Minister lately, it was impossible to fix a meeting, but that the conversation could be arranged for 11 or 12 November.

In the meantime, as I was informed, Herr von Ribbentrop, who returned just for a short while to the capital, left Berlin again, I believe, on 10 November.

Of course, I do not deem it necessary to insist on this conversation, especially since Ribbentrop's initiative made to me at Berchtesgaden came from the German side. It also seems to me impossible to discuss the subjects raised at Berchtesgaden with any other official, unless I described in detail to von Ribbentrop the stand of the Polish government on this whole problem. Here I make the only exception for Herr von Moltke, who was the first to bring up the topic of Danzig in a conversation with me. As the ambassador accredited to us, he should have authoritative information on the limits beyond which we cannot go in this matter.

Considering the tactics used by Herr von Ribbentrop, I must first of all mention that he is an inaccessible minister for all diplomatic representatives accredited here. I was told yesterday by the American Ambassador that he has to leave for the United States to report to Roosevelt, and he has been vainly hunting for Ribbentrop for six weeks.

As far as our problem is concerned, I think that, following your interview,<sup>11</sup> the position Chodacki took toward Greiser, and certain explanations from Moltke, Ribbentrop must realize that our answer with regard to Danzig will not be a positive one. Possibly, in view of the unclear situation with regard to

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<sup>11</sup> For the representative of the Hearst press concern, 30 October 1938.

the Western states, he is not too anxious to start talks with us, or possibly he would like to initiate them at a more convenient moment for the Reich government. The way in which both the Chancellor in his speeches and the local press here treated French-German relations for some time shows a desire to bring about a relaxation on that sector first of all.

Negotiations with Poland are possibly planned for a time following the finalization of an agreement with France.

It is rather characteristic that since the Munich Conference Polish-German relations have not improved but are considerably cooler.

All recent declarations of the Chancellor are openly unfriendly toward England; in spite of the fact that he is attacking the opposition, the method he is using is nevertheless making it far from easy for Chamberlain to carry out his policy of rapprochement with the Reich.

I think that the recent anti-Jewish excesses on the whole territory of Germany, which reached hitherto unprecedented proportions and could not be attributed to a mob impulse, since they were organized by Party organs, will further deepen the controversies existing between the Germany of the present era and the Anglo-Saxon world.

I am at a loss to judge whether these events will render difficult M. Daladier's policy of rapprochement with the Reich. Nevertheless, observing from this locality at a moment of a certain rapprochement between Paris and Berlin, any apparent improvement in the attitude of France toward Poland would be a very positive element for us in Berlin.

Information is reaching me from French industrial circles that their attitude toward Poland has considerably improved. These spheres call attention to the fact that at present, when Russian prestige has waned in Paris, it would be possible, through the use of material means, to influence the French press to write in a pro-Polish spirit, thus winning over wider circles of public opinion for us.

2. Our negotiations on Jewish matters, upon a definition of our common stand and to some extent a balancing of opinions, were arrested for lack of decision by competent German authorities. It is necessary to stress that the atmosphere created about the Jewish problem is weighing heavily on the German negotiators, including high-ranking officials who are simply anxious to save their own skins. I therefore think that a certain dose of patience is needed, the more so as our decree and orders have remained in force.

I gave an order to the consulates that Jewish passports are very rarely to be stamped; beginning with November 15, when the *sursis* granted in Warsaw expires with regard to the revocation of citizenship, energetic action should be taken in the execution of this law.<sup>12</sup>

3. Finally, I am taking the liberty of also calling your attention to the Ukrainian problem, and to its aspect now developing in the local territory.

Upon the occupation of Vienna, the local Ukrainian headquarters were transferred to the Reich. They consisted in the majority of groups of the Konovalets type, whose active nature pushed them to the forefront. A number of local organizations are dealing with Ukrainian matters, for instance, Ribbentrop's office, Rosenberg's office, certain offices of the Propaganda Ministry, and, last but not least, the German Intelligence Service. At present, all these elements, as far as can be observed, lack a precise directive from the top as to the line to follow in such a complicated matter. But they are bursting with dynamism, and the groups most harmful to us, such as the Yary and Melnyk type, are taking advantage of this atmosphere. I conversed today with Professor Smal-Stocki, who is to report his observations to Director Kobylański. For my part, I would only like to ask for your opinion whether, when the occasion presents itself, I should not take this matter up in more detail with high-ranking German officials, for instance with von Ribbentrop or Göring, in order to establish our point of view, for with some young, inexperienced leaders here the conviction is growing that the Ukrainian problem might be solved even without Poland, and the idea of penetration via Carpathian Ruthenia and Romania is being disseminated. These, of course, are utopian ideas but, nevertheless, being presented by Ukrainian elements hostile to us, they might result in serious friction with Germany on the Ukrainian problem.

*J. Lipski*

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 462–465; PDD 1938, doc. 421*

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<sup>12</sup> The Act of 31 March 1938 provided for the deprivation of Polish citizenship of those who had 'uninterruptedly sojourned abroad for a period of at least 5 years following the establishment of the Polish State, [and] had lost his/her links with the Polish state'. The Decree of the Minister of Internal Affairs of 6 October 1938 (published on 15 October) bound all bearers of Polish foreign passports to submit their documents in a Polish consulate for verification. Passports without the verification annotation did not entitle their bearers to cross the Polish boundary as of 29 October 1938.

## 13

*18 November. Unsigned note about anti-Jewish excesses in Germany*

18 November 1938

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs

The recent anti-Jewish excesses on the territory of the Reich, motivated as repressions for the assassination of the secretary of the German Embassy in Paris by the Jew Grynszpan,<sup>13</sup> have weighed heavily on the Reich's internal and external political situation. All the information I have obtained from Germany indicates that German society as a whole, except for the most obstinate party formations, took a rather negative view of the retaliatory action applied to the Jewish population. Even though the majority of German society approved of the Nuremberg Laws as measures aimed at the separation of the Jewish element from the Germans, even at the cost of heavy material losses for the Jews, the systematic destruction of Jewish property, be it in the form of breaking windows and equipment in shops and dwellings and the plunder of objects, or in the form of setting synagogues on fire or blowing them up with dynamite, organised by the party in broad daylight and before the eyes of the public, has exceeded the measure of what a normal German citizen considers acceptable. Thus, criticism is unexpectedly widespread and includes all social strata. This is compounded by the fact that German society in its attitude is not anti-Jewish, as is Polish society, for example. Moreover, these events are being exploited for criticising the regime by elements with an *a priori* negative attitude towards it. One can safely say that as a result of these developments, the optimism which existed following the Sudetenland victories achieved through peaceful means has receded, and doleful moods have again become dominant. The anti-Jewish events of recent days have weighed even more heavily on the Reich's relations with other countries.

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<sup>13</sup> On 7 November 1938, the secretary of the German embassy in Paris, Ernst vom Rath, was fatally wounded on the grounds of the embassy by Herschel Grynszpan, the son of Polish Jews expelled on 27–29 October from Germany to Poland (along with 17,000 others). During the night of 9–10 November, the Reich was the scene of a massive pogrom (the so-called 'Kristallnacht'), which lasted into the following day. 30,000 Jews were deported to concentration camps, thousands were beaten, about 400 were murdered or committed suicide, and the Jewish community was ordered to pay a contribution of 1 billion RM.

The local diplomatic corps, which was a witness to the excesses, and the representatives of the foreign press, without exception, condemned the methods used in this case by the party. Naturally, even here there are certain degrees in negative attitudes, commensurate with the interests linking the Reich with a given country. Nevertheless, there is a steadfast unanimity among all foreigners, even the most ardent supporters of a *rapprochement* with the Reich.

*PDD 1938, doc. 423*

## 14

### *19 November. Report from the Ambassador in Berlin on his conversation with the German Minister of Foreign Affairs*

BERLIN, 19 November 1938

Top Secret

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
i n W a r s a w

In accordance with the conclusion contained in my letter to you dated 12 November, I did not take any further steps to hasten my conversation with the Reich minister of foreign affairs, Herr von Ribbentrop.

On 18 November, I was informed that Herr Ribbentrop would receive me at the Auswärtiges Amt on 19 November at 12:30 P.M.

The conversation took the following course:

Herr von Ribbentrop opened the conversation by remarking that since our last meeting at Berchtesgaden on 24 October he has had no opportunity to see me because he was constantly travelling, and lately he was absorbed in the problem of the assassination of the secretary of the Embassy in Paris, vom Rath.

I only mentioned that upon my return from Warsaw I called at the secretariat of the Minister, announcing that I was ready to meet him.



Next, in accordance with your instructions contained in your letter of 31 October,<sup>14</sup> I informed von Ribbentrop that I had acquainted you with his suggestion (*Anregung*) made at Berchtesgaden regarding a Polish-German agreement which would finally stabilize mutual relations between the two countries, and that you had requested me to communicate our attitude in answer.

To give greater weight to my arguments I availed myself of my written instructions, and exactly and emphatically communicated their contents to the Reich Minister of Foreign Affairs. Herr von Ribbentrop listened attentively to my exposition without discussing particular points.

I noticed that he was impressed by my statement that any tendency to incorporate the Free City into the Reich must inevitably lead to a conflict, not of a local character only, but one also jeopardizing Polish-German relations in their entirety. I concluded my exposition by quoting Marshal Piłsudski's opinion that the Danzig question would constitute a criterion for evaluating Germany's relations to Poland, adding a number of other explanations of a general nature.

In his reply Herr von Ribbentrop stated that the Reich desired to maintain the best possible relations with Poland, just as it did with Italy, and assured me that all his emphasis was in this direction. In a very friendly tone he stated that it was his desire to hold conversations with Poland, not in a diplomatic manner, but entirely as between friends, frankly and openly. He remarked that he had just conversed with the newly appointed French Ambassador, using diplomatic language.

Referring to the idea contained in your instructions, he stated that during the Czechoslovak crisis Polish-German relations stood the test to the advantage of both parties. Poland's determined attitude helped the Germans to achieve their demands while German action enabled Poland to recover Teschen Silesia. Here Herr von Ribbentrop was discursive, reverting to the history of the last crisis, and repeating a statement already known to me that in the political constellation of that time France was actually isolated and that he was all the time convinced that neither France nor England would move to the defence of Czechoslovakia. A certain *novum* was his explanation that a meeting of foreign ministers of the Reich and Italy had been planned, for the day the conference of Munich was later held, to be attended by Generals von

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<sup>14</sup> See doc. 4.

Keitel and Pariani also, in order to establish common military action in case of an armed conflict of Germany with the Western Powers. Von Ribbentrop quoted this detail to me in order to stress that the Reich could absolutely count on Italy's military aid. The fact that the Italian and German General Staffs were to meet only on the day of Germany's mobilization would, in my opinion, point to the lack of a basic coordination for the event of war. Herr von Ribbentrop emphasized in his further deliberations Germany's military superiority at that time, remarking that at present the situation has become even more favourable for the Reich.

Reverting to Polish-German relations, von Ribbentrop emphasized that he would like you to know that Germany conceived of relations with Poland on a very broad political plane, and that he had no intention of simply raising one question after another with Poland. He added that negotiations with Poland were of quite a different character from those with Mr. Beneš for Czechoslovakia. In the course of his argumentation he declared that for years you had been pursuing a definite and consistent course in Polish foreign affairs. I replied that, if the Reich conceived of its policy toward Poland on broad lines, then I had no fear as to our relations. Von Ribbentrop said that in any case he had more than once confirmed this in his conversations with me.

Von Ribbentrop then explained how the suggestion he had communicated to me at Berchtesgaden had arisen: taking as basis the Chancellor's conviction as to the necessity for maintaining the best of relations with Poland, which was a fundamental principle in Reich policy, he had been trying to find a solution which would completely stabilize the situation. He had talked only indefinitely (he used the word 'vaguement') with the Chancellor on the subject, and on the basis that Danzig was a German city he had himself put forward his suggestions. (It was worthy of note that von Ribbentrop discreetly gave it to be understood that he was responsible for the initiative in this matter, leaving the Chancellor out of it).

He returned again and again to his explanation that his sole desire was to achieve stabilized relations and that he had sought for a solution for this reason. He alluded to the interview you gave to the Hearst representative, which he understood as the adoption of a negative attitude on the matter, and he revealed some disappointment that this had been done in a public statement. I said nothing to this. He also mentioned that he would gladly have a talk with you.

We discussed the Danzig question itself in general terms only. When he reverted to my statement that any tendency to incorporate Danzig into the

Reich would lead to a conflict in Polish-German relations, I reaffirmed it most decisively. I added that the Danzig question was most irritating for our public opinion, the more so since we have made such great concessions to Danzig in respect of freedom of development for the German population and choice of their own form of government. I did not fail to mention the irritation caused by the activities of chauvinistic party elements, and specified Mr. Forster. With reference to our conception of the matter, I quoted Chancellor Hitler's words in his Reichstag speech on 21 February 1938. When speaking of Danzig, he said: 'The Polish state respects national relations in that city, and that city and Germany respect the rights of Poland'.

With regard to our suggestion of a Polish-German agreement guaranteeing the existence of the Free City, von Ribbentrop indicated that he could not express an opinion, and that he must study further and reflect still more on this whole problem in the light of my statement. Incidentally, he mentioned that apparently new irritation had arisen in Danzig in connection with post boxes, and asked me to raise the matter in Warsaw.

In the course of the conversation von Ribbentrop asked me what our attitude was with respect to the superhighway. I replied that my discussion in Warsaw had been primarily concerned with the Danzig question, so I could not give him any definite answer on this point. I simply expressed my personal belief that it might be possible to find a solution.

In its further course the conversation dealt with the Jewish problem; the Minister sharply criticized the attitude of the American government and President Roosevelt, pointing to the summoning of Ambassador von Dieckhoff to Washington. He expressed his deep conviction that there would be anti-Semitic outbursts in America in the future, and that those now ruling the country would pay heavily for this. In his opinion the real power in the United States is lodged neither with the government nor the city but with the farmers. I availed myself of the discussion on this subject to recall to the Minister that the Polish delegation in Warsaw for negotiations with the Reich on the Jewish problem is awaiting a reply from the German side in order to conclude the negotiations. The Minister promised to have this matter investigated.

Herr von Ribbentrop is leaving for Berchtesgaden in connection with the credentials to be presented to the Chancellor on Monday and Tuesday by a number of ambassadors and envoys, among others, the Belgian and French ambassadors.

Presentation of credentials at Berchtesgaden is explained by the fact that owing to the reconstruction of the Reich Chancellery in Berlin there are no adequate premises in the capital for these receptions.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
*J. Lipski*

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 465–469; PDD 1938, doc. 425*

## 15

*22 November. Unsigned note from the conversation  
between the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
and German Ambassador von Moltke*

Record of the Foreign Minister's conversation  
with German Ambassador von Moltke on 22 November 1938

Ambassador von Moltke declared that Minister von Ribbentrop had summoned him and told him to go to Warsaw in order to inform the Polish government about the delivery of the note in Budapest (Ambassador von Moltke read out the text of the note, which he then left upon leaving). Ambassador von Moltke didn't know if the note had been presented in Budapest on the previous day, or whether it was being presented simultaneously to his *démarche* in Warsaw.

According to the Germans, as Hungary has turned for arbitration, notification of the arbiter that action by regular troops had taken place, put the latter in a very difficult situation. The Germans are communicating the contents of their note *à titre amical*. At the same time, Ambassador von Moltke is asking if the Polish government would not think it possible to join the actions of Germany and Italy and warn the Hungarian government that, *pour le moment* (von Moltke repeated this twice), it is not the right time for armed action on Hungary's part. In any case, the Czech army surpasses the Hungarian army.

Minister Beck interrupted by saying that our assessment of the Czech army is entirely different.

Ambassador von Moltke further emphasised that von Ribbentrop would like to use this opportunity to stress that all rumours of Great Ukrainian intentions connected with Carpathian Ruthenia are a misunderstanding and their dissemination only brings harm. At the same time, he stressed Germany's reaction to our request to shut down Ukrainian programs on the Vienna radio. This matter had been decided in keeping with Polish wishes and with the knowledge of the Chancellor. It is enough to glance at the map to see that basing Ukrainian plans on Carpathian Ruthenia is unrealistic.

Minister Beck replied that as far as our joining the German *démarche* in Budapest was concerned, he does not feel it to be possible, as there is no analogy in our positions. Poland was not part of the arbitration, thus von Ribbentrop's principal argument is not applicable to us. Our public opinion is decidedly pro-Hungarian, and our government holds similar feelings of friendship toward Hungary, as we consider the Hungarians our friends. In truth, we do not like the policy pursued by Mr. Kánya. Moreover, we feel that the present resolution of the matter of Carpathian Ruthenia is not appropriate, as this entity is unfit to function. We have always been of the opinion that Hungary was being ill-treated and now, at a time of crisis, we considered it advisable to seek solutions that could satisfy that country so as to avoid unloading their expansion in the direction of Romania. I understand that Hungary encountered similar reservations about its expansion during the Regent's visit in Germany. Ambassador von Moltke can also tell von Ribbentrop from Minister Beck that Poland is not pushing the Hungarians to quarrel. When the Hungarians were asking us for advice, Minister Beck replied that under such circumstances, when the most vital interests of the Hungarian state were at stake, Poland could not give any advice, as only the Hungarian government could decide what to do.

What is being said about the *Carpatho-Ruthenian* issue and Poland's stance on it is somewhat exaggerated. Poland's interest in this matter is also overemphasised. Means of communication play a significant role here, but there are various methods *for* this. If Poland were to treat this matter as an important Polish interest, the Polish government would long ago have found the means to settle the matter. There is a great difference between direct state interest, for the achievement of which one uses all means, and an incidental interest, which one achieves or not. The Carpathians are a good frontier.

Minister Beck instructed that Mr. Chvalkovský be told that there are three reasons why Mr. Beneš could never have produced a true *détente* with Poland, namely:

1. The deceitful seizure of Teschen Silesia;
2. Creating communication and transit difficulties for Poland;
3. The concentration on Czechoslovak territory of various subversive elements (communists, terrorists, Ukrainians, German opposition, etc.).

If Carpathian Ruthenia continues to be, for instance, a ground of concentration for such anti-Polish elements, Poland will find a way to liquidate this nest.

Ambassador von Moltke most clearly became very thoughtful at this declaration and once again returned to the matter of Ukraine. At this point Minister Beck pointed out that Carpathian Ruthenia used to be a larger entity and somehow did not represent such extraordinary threats. Presently, it is indeed a little piece of territory that is difficult to use for any action. In addition, this territory has little in common with Ukraine. The real Ukraine is a great and difficult problem indeed.

Ambassador von Moltke can see no reason why the Ukrainian matter as such should be the subject of dispute between Poland and Germany and there is also no reason why any German activity on the Ukrainian problem should be anti-Polish in nature.

Minister Beck confirmed that he too failed to see any such reason.

While talking about Hungary, Minister Beck observed that time was not on its side and that it could have resolved this problem long ago. Ambassador von Moltke, referring to Minister Beck's declaration that the Polish government had not given advice to the Hungarians, stated that the German conscience was not so clean in this respect. They advised the Hungarians to move forward and expected that they would move along the entire line, all the way to the Carpathians.

On three occasions Ambassador von Moltke requested that pressure be brought upon the Polish press in Carpatho-Ruthenian matters.

About the plebiscite, Ambassador von Moltke stated that according to his information, the population there was not uniformly pro-Hungarian. There are various currents there.

Minister Beck stated that the Carpatho-Ruthenian population was not very conscious, whereas the immigrant population was a different matter altogether.

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Ambassador von Moltke, in the name of von Ribbentrop, once again stressed that the Reichsminister thinks that Polish-German relations are a matter of high policy. It's capital that has stood the test and saved the peace. Ambassador von Moltke has been instructed to declare that his Minister continues to attach the greatest importance to good Polish-German relations. Mr. Lipski heard it from Minister von Ribbentrop himself that this high policy cannot be exhausted pursuant to one contentious issue or another. Von Ribbentrop listened to Mr. Lipski with great attention and took note of Mr. Lipski's declaration (Danzig). He thinks that it will be possible to find a resolution of this problem on another plane. Ambassador von Moltke, in turn, declares that he had always warned von Ribbentrop that Danzig is an issue on which Poland's position is resolute and that Poland will never agree to its radical settlement. Ambassador von Moltke is glad that, following the discussion with Lipski, his Minister has understood this adequately.

Minister Beck stated that given the agitation that this issue is again giving rise to, *offene Aussprache* was the only path that was why Lipski had spoken so openly.

Ambassador von Moltke is very happy with this talk and can already foresee the reactions thereto. False information has been shaping impressions in Germany. Moreover, Ambassador von Moltke emphasises that in a matter such as that of Danzig, which German public opinion is vividly interested in, the Reich government has decided to act only *en tenant compte* of the general principles of Polish-German relations.

*PDD 1938, doc. 427; an extract in PWB, doc. 47*

**16**

*22 November. Report of the Consul General in Berlin  
on the situation of Jews of Polish citizenship in Germany*

BERLIN, 22 November 1938

To the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
in Berlin

Re: Jews of Polish citizenship in the Reich.<sup>15</sup>

The violent acceleration of German Jewry's economic liquidation, made easier by the recent evolution of Germany's international situation, in conjunction with the application of Polish protective directives and their repercussions, has complicated in an unusual way the actual and legal situation of Jews of Polish citizenship in the Reich.

The simultaneous:

1. verification of passports and ensuing positive decisions regarding Polish citizenship,
  2. issue of decisions on the deprivation of Polish citizenship, and
  3. interventions on behalf of persons whose citizenship cannot yet be confirmed,
- lead, in practice, to unavoidable collisions.

This is compounded by the absence of prospects for a swift resolution of the problem through negotiations and the necessity of acting quickly in connection with the growing scale and the good organisation of the German campaign, whose aim is the summary economic liquidation of Jews in Germany.

Under the circumstances, I take the liberty of asking you to pay special attention to the following two questions, the first of which I consider especially urgent and important.

A. Finding a practical way of securing the value and normal profitability of the property of Jews of Polish citizenship in Germany is becoming a matter of primary importance.

In particular, a concept is emerging of creating a central entity controlled by the consular office (or any other organ that you may designate) for

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<sup>15</sup> About the so-called 'Polenaktion', see footnote 13 p. 31.



managing all the real estate, and possibly also storehouses, larger warehouses and production plants belonging to Polish citizens. According to our information, the Lithuanian consulate in Berlin is said to have assumed direct management of real estate belonging to Jewish Lithuanian citizens.

Placing this matter in appropriate light sufficiently early could undoubtedly contribute to strengthening our trump cards in the further playing off of the entirety of the affairs of local Jews of Polish citizenship with the Germans.

B. A certain flexibility in the present instructions concerning the verification of passports and the deprivation of Polish citizenship also seems advisable. This would allow the consular office, within the framework of instructions of course, to apply the most desirable tactical steps in these matters, depending on the continually changing conditions—accretion of anti-Jewish legislation, approach of the German authorities and executive organs, possibilities for Jewish emigration to countries of Western Europe and overseas, increase in the panic atmosphere, the number of decrees on the deprivation of Polish citizenship prepared, and so on.

Consul General  
Stanislaw Kara

*PDD 1938, doc. 429*

## 17

*23 November. Instruction of the Under Secretary of State  
to the Ambassador in Paris and envoys in The Hague and Brussels  
in connection with Germany's expulsion of Jews of Polish citizenship*

23 November 1938

Secret!

As part of the extermination of the Jews, the government of the Reich embarked on a massive expulsion of Jews of Polish citizenship. In 24 hours, the German authorities brought over 10,000 Polish Jews to the frontier. The matter is the subject of Polish-German negotiations, during which the Polish

government is striving, on the one hand, to ensure the transfer of the property of expelled Jews and, on the other, to suspend the arrival of further Jews. One should keep in mind that there are approximately 50,000 Jews who are Polish citizens on German territory. The influx of over ten thousand Jews who are Poles solely on account of their passport, with no other ties to Poland, and the threat of a possible further influx of Jewish masses, is by all means undesirable. We find ourselves in a paradoxical situation in that Poland, from an overpopulated country with an excess of Jews and with a traditionally strong Jewish emigration, is becoming a country of Jewish immigration. These symptoms are economically, socially and politically undesirable, as they further aggravate the Jewish problem in Poland.

In these conditions, the efforts of the Polish government are aimed primarily at making it possible for the refugees arriving from Germany to leave Poland. In this respect, our position is that Polish Jewish refugees from Germany should be subject to the same international emergency measures that are applied with regard to German Jews and whose intensification, in light of recent events in Germany, should be expected. The aim of the Polish government is for the international emergency measures aimed at Jewish refugees sent from Germany to Poland to take on the scope and organisational form necessary to be automatically transformed into a constructive and planned emigration operation encompassing the normal Jewish emigration flow from Poland. Our opinion in this regard is that the method of half-measures as applied until now has turned out to be absolutely insufficient, and that a wide-scale action should be initiated if we are to remove the problem of Jewish emigration, which has become one of the elements of fermenting unrest in Europe.

Authoritative Jewish circles in the United States have already established that a planned action should be initiated for Jewish emigration from Poland. Such views are shared by the president of the United States, Roosevelt. A serious turnaround in views among serious Jewish circles in Poland has taken place recently. The establishment of a Jewish emigration organisation composed of local Jewish financiers should be expected in the next few days.

The Polish government is aiming to give the entire operation the character of a Jewish social initiative, based primarily on international Jewish capital and backed by the governments of those countries that are truly able to resolve the question by making emigration territories accessible to Jews, especially in South America and Africa. This is the direction taken in the discussions conducted by

the ambassadors of the Republic of Poland in Washington and London with the governments of those countries and authoritative Jewish circles alike.

In connection with the above operation I would like to ask you to produce a favourable atmosphere around the issue of Jewish emigration from Poland, with both the government and with the Jewish community. Please be so kind as to stress that the problem has ripened and calls for a wide-scale approach. Please also stress that dealing solely with Jewish refugees from Germany *de facto* places a premium on Germany's Jewish policy at the cost of those countries that treat the Jewish problem as an economic and population issue, and wish to resolve it in a humanitarian manner based on cooperation with Jews and within the framework of international collaboration. Lastly, please point to the necessity of a swift departure of Jewish refugees from Germany who have recently arrived in Poland.

I would ask you to inform the Ministry of steps taken and their results, as well as of all the actions of the government and society with regard to the German refugees.

*PDD 1938, doc. 431*

## 18

*28 November. Letter of the Head of the Western Section  
to the Ambassador in Berlin on the motorway  
through Polish Pomerania (with an appendix)*

Warsaw, 28 November 1938

Top secret.

To Ambassador Lipski  
in Berlin

Dear Józef,

In recent days, together with Kulski we have been dealing with the preliminary preparation of the well-known issue of transit through Polish Pomerania. In the first stage, we would like to define precisely a few most fundamental points and submit them (supposedly in the next few days) for

the Minister's decision—and then draw up a specific project. These points would be decided with the Chief-of-Staff and the Ministry of Communication as the parties most interested—wider coordination would take place later as, in my opinion, it is important for tactical and negotiation reasons to preclude any indiscretions so that the German side not become prematurely convinced that we are accepting changes to the present regime. The precedent of the motorway through Czechoslovakia will certainly be raised, so it seems to me all the more necessary for us to have our own project.

Among the more important questions that we intend to submit to the Minister is that of whether to plan the road through the territory of the Free City of Danzig, or immediately to the south of this territory. The second option seems far more convenient. As to the national status of the future road *and certain other questions*, I am sending a note solely for your guidance, about the direction in which we are moving. I would like to mention that—in December 1937, when Puricelli last raised, through the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Rome, the suggestion of building a motorway through Polish Pomerania—it only concerned a concession for a set period of time granted to the Association about to be established, and not extraterritoriality. As the Embassy in Rome noted at the time (in a report of 28 December 1937), 'Puricelli was supposed to have discussed the project with Chancellor Hitler, who adopted a very favourable attitude to it'. I am mentioning this for your guidance, even though I realise that in this matter certain things have changed since that time.

[appendix]

*director J. Potocki*

Top secret.

#### The question of the motorway through Polish Pomerania

In connection with suggestions about building a motorway through Polish Pomerania to be used by Germany, the following issues arise:

1. Extraterritoriality. The strip of territory that would be designated for the motorway would cease to be subject to Polish jurisdiction and would pass under Germany's jurisdiction if Poland recognised it as extraterritorial. In effect, in this strip German law would be applicable, German courts would be

competent (which is not insignificant with regard to automobile accidents), order would be kept by German police, the German customs system would be in force, etc. A criminal who ran away from Poland onto the motorway would have to be turned over to Polish authorities on the basis of the extradition agreement, whereas political and other criminals could be pursued by German police over the entire motorway. In treasury terms, indirect taxes (petrol), *régies*, etc., would be subject to German regulations.

One of the important consequences of extraterritoriality would be Germany's right to transport troops and military supplies, both in time of peace and war, irrespective of Poland's neutrality.

2. Form of operation. Should the formula of extraterritoriality be rejected, the question arises of who would, on Germany's behalf, build and operate the motorway. It seems that this should be a joint-stock company, in which both the Reich and Poland would have an equal share. This company would be granted a concession from the Polish government for a specified number of years to build and operate the motorway. This could be solely a Polish-German company, or one with the participation of international capital. In the latter case, the question arises about what capital this should be so as to preclude the company from being used by a third State as an instrument in Polish-German relations (Swedish perhaps?). The share of the Reich and Poland could take the form, for example, of participation by both countries' railway authorities in their capacity as State enterprises. Such participation would have to be equal. Compensation for Poland for leasing its territory, for granting a concession and for financial losses that Poland could incur through the reduction of other transit traffic between the Reich and East Prussia, could be, besides a permanent yearly tenure on the part of the company, the receipt of a certain number of shares free of charge. Influence in the Board of Management and other organs of the company should be balanced between Poland and the Reich. The company would probably have to draw profits from the operation by charging a toll for travelling on the motorway.

3. The course of the motorway. The question of the motorway's course is not only an important question for the army, but also a political problem. If the motorway were to run in the northern section of Polish Pomerania, its further course would cross the territory of Danzig. In such a case, the Danzig section would have to be built and operated on the same conditions as the Polish section on account of Danzig being distinct from the Reich and of our prerogatives in Danzig, such as customs, for example.

4. The Paris Convention.<sup>16</sup> During the conclusion of an agreement with the Reich about conditions under which the Reich could make use of the motorway, the issue of the revision of this Convention will arise. It would be best on that occasion to abrogate the Paris Convention entirely, but most probably Germany will not agree to this, even in exchange for the right of military flyover. At the very least, the Convention should be reduced to a minimum.

This is connected with the issue of using the motorway in time of war in which Germany would be a belligerent party, and Poland would be neutral. The Paris Convention only has vague stipulations on this question. It is in our interest to limit military transit on both the motorway and on other highways (subject to the Paris Convention) until peace is achieved, with the exclusion of a war in which either Germany or Poland is a belligerent party. The question of transport of troops or ammunition via the motorway in time of peace should be regulated in advance in order to avoid a sudden threat to State security in Polish Pomerania.

5. Links with Polish territory. The motorway could be built in such a way as to cross Polish territory without any links thereto, or with three or four exit ramps onto Polish territory along its course. The first solution underlines the concession granted to Germany, whereas the second facilitates the resolution of customs and currency exchange difficulties.

Wł. Kulski

26 November 1938

*PDD 1938, doc. 434*

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<sup>16</sup> The Paris Convention, concluded between the Free City of Danzig and Poland in November 1920, defined Poland's rights with regard to and in the Free City.

## 19

*29 November. Note from the Ambassador in London  
(on the basis of instructions from the Minister of Foreign Affairs):  
Guidelines of Polish foreign policy*

## NOTE

Drawn up on the basis of verbal instructions given  
to Ambassador E. Raczyński by the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw on 29 November 1938

Minister Beck instructed me to use the occasion of my first call on the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, following my return to London, to refer to my last conversation with Lord Halifax, on 17 October, and to state that Minister Beck had approved of the views I expressed on that occasion and considered them his own.

Minister Beck further instructed me to conduct a general conversation (*tour d'horizon*) with Lord Halifax and gave me the following elements for this conversation:

The Polish-Soviet communiqué<sup>17</sup> contains substance that is reflected in its wording—and nothing more. It means that both countries are declaring a return to the *status quo ante* in their mutual relations. This declaration was necessary on account of (a) the recently disclosed further demise of the League of Nations; and especially (b) the aggravation of Polish-Soviet relations during the last crisis in the context of the situation in Czechoslovakia (when, from the Soviet side, several army corps feigned concentration on our frontier).

The Czechoslovak crisis. We note that this crisis has led to the breakdown of almost all international canons customary in relations between civilised states. This example is not a 'classic' example, however, as it referred to the second of two countries that, many years ago, Marshal Piłsudski described as 'sick' states (Austria and Czechoslovakia). The internal 'organic' weakness of Czechoslovakia was ultimately the reason why this state, in its former shape, has turned out to be unsalvageable.

We were ready to carry through the settlement of our demands with regard to Czechoslovakia and to straighten out our relations with that state in cooperation with the powers. As this had turned out to be unfeasible, we were

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<sup>17</sup> Announced on 26 November 1938.

pleased with the possibility of resolving this entirely autonomous issue without debts of gratitude towards anyone, including Germany.

We held the opinion that since the matter had entered a critical stage, its settlement should not have been one of half-measures, but such as to guarantee permanence. In the matter of Carpathian Ruthenia, this desirable aim was not attained, however. In that country, the present 'government' was artificially created by Czech military circles, which in fact govern Carpathian Ruthenia.

With regard to Slovakia we showed extreme moderation, which we expressed during the ultimate settlement of the frontier issue. Incidents that took place there were only local in character.

Minister Beck is generally pleased with his contacts with Minister Chvalkovský. On the Polish side (Minister Papée, in keeping with instructions from the Minister of Foreign Affairs), the following circumstances, which had made cooperation between Beneš and us impossible, were emphasised: (1) the Zaolzie part of Teschen Silesia, Jaworzyna;<sup>18</sup> (2) difficulties made by the Czechs in the sphere of economics and communication; (3) the Czech government's support for all anti-Polish elements and movements. Minister Chvalkovský showed understanding for demands formulated in this statement. A question arises, however, of whether he will possess the energy and means to ensure the realisation of the good intentions shown.

Poland's 'good-neighbourly' attitude towards Czechoslovakia will depend on their behaviour. Also dependent on this (among others things!) will be Poland's ability (at the right moment) to 'guarantee' Czechoslovakia (if, and to what extent, Czechoslovakia will be evolving in its makeup in the direction of Switzerland). At present, all options in Czechoslovakia are possible: from Nazism to Communism!

The position of Romania. It is in the interest of the Polish government to contribute to the successful settlement of Hungarian-Romanian relations. In the event, we were ready to mediate and, possibly, to guarantee the agreement reached. This readiness of ours went beyond obligations arising from the alliance that ties us with Romania.<sup>19</sup> It was up to Romania to take advantage of our good intentions—but this did not happen.

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<sup>18</sup> This village and its immediate area, located along the frontier in the Tatra Mountains and the symbol of Polish-Slovak controversies, was taken over by Poland in 1938.

<sup>19</sup> A reference to the Polish-Romanian accord of 1921, which was renewed in 1931.



Danzig. For many years, the presence of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig was a burden for us. Today, we consider this presence an advantage. It should be noted that in both legal and practical terms the situation of non-Nazi elements in Danzig is less unfavourable than their situation in Germany.

The position of the League of Nations in the matter of the High Commissioner will be, for Poland, one of the fundamental tests of the usefulness of this institution—and will define our attitude towards it.

As far as Polish-German relations with regard to Danzig are concerned, the position of both sides is, as before, that Danzig cannot become a bone of contention between the two countries.

Lithuania. Stressing the successfully progressing normalisation of relations.<sup>20</sup>

Balticum. Reiterating the common Polish-English interest in this area in keeping with Minister Beck's conversation with Duff Cooper in the summer of 1938.<sup>21</sup>

The Soviets. Stating that the Soviet state has entered a phase that, for a Western one, would signify a dangerous condition. Reactions in Russia, however, are very specific. Thus the present conditions there could last for a longer period of time.

The Jewish question. Raise it with the greatest insistence as one of the important planes of Polish-English relations, in keeping with our known demands.

Minister Beck instructed me to check, without any pressing, to what extent the above outline is acceptable to our English partner. Are there any possibilities for cooperation (and which, if any)? He has also enjoined me not to raise (for the time being), in conversation with Secretary Halifax, the problem of Polish-British economic cooperation, which could be clarified in the meantime during discussions at the inter-ministerial level (in particular between our financial adviser in London and circles of the Treasury, the City, etc.).

/Edward Raczyński/

*PDD 1938, doc. 435*

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<sup>20</sup> As of 19 March 1938, Poland forced Lithuania to resume diplomatic relations.

<sup>21</sup> Minister Beck's conversation with the First Lord of the Admiralty took place during Duff Cooper's visit to Gdynia on 8–10 August 1938.

## 20

*29 November. Unsigned note on the problem of Jewish emigration*

Note for the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in London,  
Mr. Edward Raczyński

During the conference at Director Drymmer's on 29 November, the following elements for further action in Great Britain in the matter of Jewish emigration were agreed upon.

I. Jewish refugees from Germany. One should strive to include the Jewish refugees who have come to Poland in the general initiative of the London Committee for Refugees from Germany.<sup>22</sup>

II. Acting within the London Committee only on behalf of the refugees, one should systematically shape the opinion among important circles in Great Britain towards a perception of the Jewish problem as an international issue in need of a large-scale solution.

III. The following arguments could serve to support our theses:

1. In contrast to the ruthless extermination methods used by Germany, the Polish government and public showed a humanitarian attitude with regard to the Jews who had arrived in Poland (this was noted by the Jews themselves)—even though 30% of the arrivals were born in Germany, 40% originated from the former Prussian partition, and besides that the Polish citizenship of a serious number of refugees was in doubt. This is a human element with no actual ties to Poland, either through birth, language or family, an element which, despite a Polish passport, should be treated as a German element.

As far as the camp in Zbąszyń is concerned,<sup>23</sup> a few days after the arrival of the Jews to Zbąszyń, children and the elderly as well as persons in possession of assured means of subsistence and their families, were allowed to leave the camp. At present, there are only 4,000 people in the camp at Zbąszyń, most of

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<sup>22</sup> The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (ICR) was called into being during the ill-fated Évian-les-Bains conference in July 1938 to continue work on an international solution to the problem of Jews forced to emigrate from Germany.

<sup>23</sup> Zbąszyń is a locality on the then Polish-German frontier, where a considerable portion of Jews of Polish citizenship expelled from the Reich at the end of October 1938 were assembled.

whom live in apartments, and just a few of them are quartered in an appropriately adapted barrack (for your guidance: the concentration of Jews in Zbąszyń was needed as a means to exert pressure on the Germans during negotiations).

2. Poland is a classic emigration country, from which 65,000 Jews emigrated every year before the war. At present, Poland is becoming a country of Jewish immigration and the number of Jews is growing continuously as a result—something that is bound to boost anti-Semitism. The present paradoxical state of affairs is illustrated by the following figures:

Natural population growth of Jews in 1938:	40,000
Arrival of Jews from Germany in 1938:	20,000
Arrival of Jews from Czechoslovakia, Romania and Hungary:	5,000
	<hr/>
Total	65,000
Jewish emigration from Poland during three quarters of 1938:	7,000
Rise in the number of Jews in Poland:	58,000

In addition, we are facing a possible arrival of another 40,000 from Germany and about 15,000 from Czechoslovakia and Hungary—a total of 55,000 people. The number of Jews in Poland would thus increase over a period of one year by about 100,000 people who *de facto* belong to the category of refugees.

3. The Jews are in possession of considerable territorial concessions, whose full use would make the departure of a certain number of Jews possible. For example, the J.C.A. is in possession, in Argentina, Brazil and Canada, of a total of 1 million ha, on which only 3,622 persons have been settled so far. In addition, placing the Jewish concession in Ecuador (about 500,000 ha) in the right hands would allow for the settlement of at least 10,000 families, i.e., 50,000 persons. The use of these concessions depends not only on appropriate action by Jewish organizations, but also on a more liberal treatment of visas by the relevant destination countries.

4. By reference to experiences in Palestine, attention should be drawn to the special pioneering abilities of Polish Jews, who are not demanding and are suited to agricultural training in the valorisation of colonial regions and other territories requiring pioneering work. If it were made possible for Jews to settle in the African colonies, Jewish capital could be found, as well as the appropriate human element, which could be supplied precisely by Jewish emigrants from Poland.

5. The American Immigration Act is not based on the criterion of citizenship, but that of country of birth. By presently admitting Polish-born Jewish refugees from Germany, even though they are no longer Polish citizens, the United States has filled the Polish quota, hitherto used by Jews from Poland, for two years. Jewish refugees from Germany have thus made it impossible for Jewish emigrants from Poland to leave for the United States. In exchange for this genuine loss, Poland should receive an equivalent in the form of appropriate facilitations for emigration to other countries, or be granted a special emigration contingent for Palestine.

IV. A matter which is ready for specific action is the placement, either in Palestine or in the rich Anglo-Saxon countries, of a dozen thousand Jewish orphans under the care of the Jewish association 'Centos'. Ms. Goldberg, delegated by the Jewish Agency, is conducting this action in Palestine. This action, obviously not requiring funds, should be extended considerably.

PS. As far as the attitudes of the Polish authorities and Polish public to the Jewish refugees expelled from Germany are concerned, it is worthwhile to point out that several thousand Jews were lodged in the Polish consulate in Leipzig and in its garden (in tents). Upon arrival in Poland, the refugees were spontaneously provided with food by railway and police workers and by the public.

*PDD 1938, doc. 438*

## 21

*5 December. Note by the Head of the Section for Poles Abroad  
about planned Polish-German negotiations on minority rights*

Secret

Guidelines concerning the character and substance of discussions about  
minority affairs between Polish and German interior  
ministry representatives

The guiding principle behind the contacts between representatives of both internal ministries was to find a way to shift the continuous interventions and discussions related to minority issues from the ministries of foreign affairs (embassies) to the ministries of internal affairs of both countries. Being fully aware that these discussions would not in the end lead to any specific results, as ultimately the issues raised during the conference of the representatives of internal affairs ministries will have to obtain the acceptance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, these contacts were treated as a one-time trial. The course that issues pertaining to the Polish population in Germany have taken until now offers no guarantee that the system, used consistently for several years, will undergo any real change as a result of this conference. It thus follows that the extension of this type of conference system would be unilaterally used as an instrument by the Reich to maintain or to further things German in Poland.

Recent German directives (the demand for proxy powers and the failure to settle the intervention of the Union of Poles in Germany) indicate that the German tendency is to obtain, in time, a permanent Polish-German body for minority affairs, in which a high functionary of the Reich's Ministry of Internal Affairs would in fact become the representative of the interests of the German minority in Poland. This makes it indispensable not to desist, during the conference, from the principle expressed in the Declaration of 5 November 1937,<sup>1</sup> i.e., that of the sovereign treatment of matters concerning both ethnic groups by their own state organs.

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<sup>1</sup> The declaration, made simultaneously by Poland and Germany, contained the principle of reciprocity in the treatment of the German minority in Poland and the Polish one in Germany.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents below the principles on which, according to the Ministry, the preparations and the conference itself should be based:

1. There is to be no commission, just a conference of representatives of both states in the presence of a functionary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (this should not be a high functionary of the Ministry headquarters), or possibly Mr. Malhomme, the First Secretary of the Embassy.

2. The conference will take place in Berlin.

3. The materials for the discussions will be prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

4. The representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs will be informed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy about the situation and the demands of the Polish population in Germany, whereas, with regard to his German colleague, he will take a stand—without getting involved in any polemics of a political nature—on the subject of the possibilities of realising the internal complex of demands of the German minority in Poland. The representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs cannot make unconditional pronouncements on the subject of the demands of the Polish population in Germany. It will be important to present a couple of *questions préalables* prior to the beginning of the conference (population census and *Kinderbeihilfe*).

5. The substance of the discussions is not binding, whereas the materials for the conference will be sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for final consideration.

6. The outcome of the discussions will be dealt with by the delegate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Embassy) taking part in the conference.

7. For the Polish delegate, the basis for discussions will be the demands of the German minority in Poland, something that does not mean to imply that the delegate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is to become an entity to which demands can be directed. It is a Polish internal matter for him to find himself in possession of these demands as, in keeping with the declaration of 5 November 1937, the settlement of issues pertaining to the German minority is an internal matter and the conference cannot alter this basic point of departure.

8. Besides the above-mentioned *questions préalables* (point 4) and the demands of a principled nature submitted as soon as possible by the Union of Poles in Germany to the Reich's Ministry of Internal Affairs, the conference should be limited to school and cooperative matters.

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Chronologically, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs envisages the matter of the conference as follows:

The Union Poles in Germany prepares a memorial in which, by reference to an already submitted one, it stresses the Reich's central authorities' obligation to accept its intervention in keeping with the declaration of 5 November 1937. The issues raised in the memorial should be discussed by the Union of Poles and the appropriate German authorities. The recently voiced demand for the Union of Poles to present proxy powers in order to act in the name of the persons concerned should be viewed as inappropriate. In addition, the memorial should address the issue of the gymnasium in Ratibor, the rental of premises, the question of schools and the participation of Polish cooperatives in trade (the allocation of fodder, import quotas, etc.).

The above-mentioned memorial should be as brief as possible.

In the meantime, the Embassy will conduct discussions about the *questions préalables*.

Following the meeting of the two delegates from the ministries of internal affairs in Berlin, the Polish delegate will come to an understanding with his German counterpart on the subject of the demands presented to him by the German minority and will listen to his German colleague's report and assessment of the demands of Poles in Germany.

As a result of the discussion, the delegate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs will declare in a non-binding fashion that he would be inclined to present to whom it may concern the entire complex of issues of the German minority in Poland that could be, in his opinion, carried out in exchange for the same complex of issues presented to him by the German colleague in the above-mentioned sphere, provided of course that the first two demands of the Union of Poles (to allow interventions and forsake the demand for proxy powers) are resolved without delay.

Władysław Józef Zaleski

5 December 1938

PDD 1938, doc. 442

## 22

*9 December. Report of the Ambassador in Washington on discussions  
at the Department of State on the subject of Jewish emigration*

9 December 1938

S e c r e tTo the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
i n W a r s a w .

About the Jewish issue in the United States.

In the last few weeks the weight of Jewish and emigration issues has shifted from Washington to London. This was caused by two factors: (1) the narrowing of the emigration problem solely to refugees from Germany, and (2) the discussion about colonies in England's possession. A third aspect, namely the financing of emigration, continues to rest in the hands of local Jewish financiers.

With reference to the first point, in discussions with the Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles, I observed that President Roosevelt and the Department of State had eagerly shifted the entire Jewish issue onto the plane of the Evian Committee, as this committee had initially been President Roosevelt's initiative. I also noticed that transferring this issue to London was a relief for local government circles, because President Roosevelt and the Department of State are under continuous pressure caused by thousands of telegrams and letters from the entire world, calling on the United States to take the European Jews under its protection. At the same time, the humanitarian aspect has gained importance and more than anything affected the desire to attend solely to the needs of the refugees from Germany, as their situation was most critical.

With reference to the second point, i.e., finding a colony for Jews and refugees in general, it was indicated here that only Great Britain is in possession of sufficient territory that could absorb the refugees. The United States on its part can only allow for Jewish emigration to America as part of the existing quota, which has not in fact been increased for various countries, but whose full use has been assured.

At this point it should be added that the desire of European Jews to emigrate exclusively to the United States is well known here, leading, even



among the Jews themselves, to a certain disinclination and fear that an excessive influx of foreign Jewish element may lead in time to an increase in anti-Semitism in America itself.

With reference to the third point, i.e., the financing of emigration, this issue continues to be an open one. Capital could easily be found, according to local Jewish finance circles. However, the same circles always point first to the need to locate territories for colonisation, with financing emigration to follow once the new colonies have been opened.

To summarise all three points, it could be said that despite promises and assurances from all interested parties, the very issue of Jewish emigration is accompanied by many beautiful words and much eloquent press, but, in essence, only leads to breeding hostility among the American public towards those countries where Jews are persecuted, without defining precisely when, where and how the emigration will be effected.

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As to the Jewish question in Poland, I had the opportunity to conduct several discussions with Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles and Assistant Secretary Messersmith. I presented the difficulties that threaten Poland on account of the excess of the Jewish element, and how the Polish government is striving to hold this very burning issue in check, so as not to let anti-Semitism become rampant. I emphasised, however, that insofar as the issue is not resolved in a satisfactory manner, Poland will have to adopt a sharper course towards the Jews, as it can see that only pressing the issue forcefully can bring results.

Sumner Welles replied to this that President Roosevelt and the Department of State understand well the situation of Jewish emigration in Poland, that today the burning issue is, first of all, to resolve the question of the refugees from Germany, as this is dictated by the need of the moment, and because the London Committee can only begin dealing with the issue from this angle. He further said that Poland and its emigration problem are the next problem in line and asked that the Polish government arm itself with patience and wait until the German refugees are dealt with, and then steps would undoubtedly be taken to resolve the Polish problem.

I replied that, unfortunately, today the events are progressing so rapidly that no state can allow itself to settle for vague promises and patient waiting because, as history shows, he who waits ends up empty-handed. I repeated

that we do not wish to act brutally, as the Germans do, yet such methods are nonetheless contagious if no other way out of the situation is in sight.

Sumner Welles admitted I was right, but he said that violent anti-Semitic directives in Poland would give rise to very undesirable reactions in America with regard to Poland, reactions which the American government would find undesirable, as the heretofore close ties of friendship could suffer serious damage.

I replied that all depended on the assistance that Poland would obtain from countries that were in possession of colonies and financial means and from their good will, because, as I was saying, we had not seen this good will until now, even with regard to the thousands of Jews that Germany evacuated to Poland. Poland, I said, by a strange turn of fate, instead of being a country of emigration, is presently becoming a haven for a many-thousand strong Jewish multitude that is fleeing many European countries. Such a state is unbearable and calls for a quick and rational solution.

*Jerzy Potocki*  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

*PDD 1938, doc. 444*

## 23

*15 December. Report of the Ambassador in Berlin on his conversation  
with the German Minister of Foreign Affairs on the subject  
of Polish and German foreign policy*

15 December 1938

Top Secret.

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

I had a conversation with the minister of foreign affairs of the Reich, von Ribbentrop, today, and proceeded to execute the instructions you gave me verbally yesterday in Warsaw.

I opened the conversation by stating that you had summoned me to Warsaw to discuss the whole complex of problems pertaining to Polish-German relations. I referred to your extensive conversation with Ambassador von Moltke yesterday evening, which was already known to Ribbentrop. I pointed to the fact that while Polish-German relations had stood firm during the Czechoslovak crisis as a weighty element of peace, nevertheless a number of misunderstandings had occurred since which resulted in bad feeling. This situation is driving us to the conclusion that an exchange of opinion between you and Minister von Ribbentrop would be desirable and useful.

Herr von Ribbentrop replied that he had already mentioned such a necessity at Berchtesgaden.

I responded that I was instructed by you to suggest a visit of von Ribbentrop to Warsaw.<sup>2</sup>

Herr von Ribbentrop declared that he would willingly consent to an exchange of visits and would come to Warsaw with pleasure. However, he would still like to discuss this matter with the Chancellor in more detail before the holidays, since he is expected in Berlin. (He added that he would also report then on all conversations hitherto held with us.) In principle he thanks you for your invitation.

Here it was possible for me to imply that in 1935 you paid an official visit, and that at that time a return visit had been planned, but it had never taken place. I also mentioned that you were in Germany several times unofficially.

Herr von Ribbentrop further stressed that, in his opinion, it would be desirable to have such visits preceded by suitable diplomatic preparations, and he thinks that you would share this opinion. He inquired in a general sense what subjects would be raised during this visit.

I cited as general topics the Danubian complex, that of the East and of the Baltic countries, referring to the precedent of similar visits in the past. I stressed that problems would be discussed in which the interests of the two states coincide, or could coincide.

On his own volition, von Ribbentrop mentioned problems of immediate Polish-German relations, asking about the superhighway.

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<sup>2</sup> See documents from January 1939.

I remarked that this problem had been referred to you and that it is being discussed in Warsaw, but that, naturally, this matter can only be dealt with within the frame of *der Gesamtlösung*.

With regard to Danzig, I referred to Chodacki's memorandum handed to Herr von Ribbentrop, pointing to the fact that local authorities there deliver speeches of the kind that perforce poison the atmosphere.

Defining further the course of the conversations, we established the following:

Herr von Ribbentrop expresses thanks for your invitation and will take up this matter with the Chancellor. Up to 10 January, that is, until the Chancellor's reception for the diplomatic corps, he will be on leave; as a matter of fact, he already began his vacation but had to interrupt it. After 10 January, he would like to bring up through diplomatic channels the subjects to be discussed with you in a concrete form. He indicated a desire for an exchange of opinion with me during this period as well.

Besides the above question of the visit, which ran through the whole conversation, we also discussed the following subjects:

1) I pointed out to Minister Ribbentrop that Ukrainian propaganda, which makes use of Germany's name, is obviously detrimental to our relations. To illustrate this, I handed him a pamphlet by Yary written in German about the Ukraine, showing on the cover a Great Ukraine reaching up to Warsaw and Cracow. Besides, I remarked that in Warsaw we continually receive information from the territory of Slovakia about anti-Polish activity conducted there, which claims to be inspired by Germany.

Herr von Ribbentrop mentioned that he will have the problem investigated. When he deliberated on the Ukraine as an anti-Russian element, I replied that we have nothing against this, as long as such propaganda deals with territories situated outside the frontiers of the Republic.

Talking more generally about Russia, I recalled that Poland really is the state constituting a barricade against Communist, as well as imperialistic-panslavic, Russia.

2) For his part, von Ribbentrop laid special stress on the way the German minority is treated in Teschen. He remarked that this matter, which he has been personally investigating on the basis of reports and claims, has become detrimental for our relations. He urgently requested me to refer this problem to you, asking that the activities of the local authorities be investigated.

As far as I know, von Moltke approached our Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the same problem. I think it would be advisable to investigate this matter more closely.

3) I expressed thanks that we were informed about the results of the Paris talks,<sup>3</sup> while I pointed out our stand, which I had explained to Secretary of State Woermann on the eve of von Ribbentrop's departure for Paris.

4) Stressing that we have navigational interests at Memel, in view of the fact that negotiations with Lithuania were under way, I inquired about this matter.

Von Ribbentrop answered rather noncommittally, remarking that France and England, as signatories of the convention,<sup>4</sup> had approached the Secretary of State on this matter. He was of the opinion that the signatories of the convention had had the opportunity, in the course of many years, to care for the Memel population. However, they did nothing. From Ribbentrop's words it was clear that he is passing over this question. He further stressed that Memel is a German city. To my remark that I raised this question in connection with our trade interests, von Ribbentrop remarked that, in keeping with our good-neighbour policy, our economic interests would always be resolved satisfactorily.

At one phase of the conversation, when Ribbentrop was speaking of his positive attitude toward Polish problems, he gave way to some sort of regret that his intentions in the conversation at Berchtesgaden might possibly have been misunderstood to some extent—hence our strong reaction to it.

Here I made a reply of a general character, saying that he could be assured that our leading authorities understand his intentions, while I pointed out that local authorities, for instance in Danzig, are jeopardizing an accord by their activities.

At the end of the conversation von Ribbentrop remarked that, if we are led by the principles drawn up by Marshal Piłsudski and Hitler in 1933, then we will undoubtedly reach agreement. However, he added that here it would be essential for the Polish side to understand certain principles of German policy.

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<sup>3</sup> This is a reference to Ribbentrop's visit to Paris on 6–7 December 1938, during which the French-German declaration of non-aggression was signed.

<sup>4</sup> This convention, concluded on 8 May 1924 between the League of Nations and Lithuania, bound Lithuania to respect the rights of the Memel population.

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As a result of this conversation, I have the following comments to make:

I assume that the Chancellor will accept the idea of Minister Ribbentrop's trip to Warsaw, perhaps will even suggest a meeting with you. I also think that the idea of diplomatic preparations would suit you too. Under these conditions, we have to be prepared for concrete conversations beginning 10 January. Before this date it would be necessary to gain possession of material concerning Danzig, which I took the liberty of suggesting to you while I was in Warsaw. We should also state precisely our stand with regard to the superhighway (from press information and the planning of German superhighways disclosed recently, it would appear that a superhighway is intended for the narrowest northern sector, to unite Königsberg, Danzig, and Stettin).

Besides, material should be collected concerning German-Ukrainian joint action detrimental to Polish interests, and possibly data on the anti-Polish activity of German diplomatic agents or others in Czechoslovakia and Lithuania.

In connection with my telegram of today regarding the statement made to Counsellor Lubomirski by Reich Minister Frank, I am taking the liberty of suggesting that Frank should be informed even more fully than before with regard to the problems of Danzig and the Danubian complex, with a mention of the Ukrainian agitation. This matter seems to me particularly important since Minister Frank will undoubtedly report his conversations directly to the Chancellor. The orientation he achieves from his Warsaw conversations will constitute a serious factor for Hitler's decision, especially on the Danzig question, as well as on the Ukrainian problem in the light of our interests.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
Józef Lipski

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 477–481; PDD 1938, doc. 447*

## 24

*16 December. Letter of the Ambassador in London  
about Great Britain's policy following the Munich Conference*

London, 16 December 1938

Secret.

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

Dear Mr. Minister,

In the face of the unusually violent changes in the international situation and the reaction to them in different countries, drawing conclusions of a general nature is presently a risky and ungrateful task. Despite this, I think it is my duty to make a very sketchy attempt to do so, guided primarily by the desire to present you with a picture of the situation as it appears from my observation point. I am only risking that, seen from a different angle, it could perhaps seem partial or one-sided, if not simply common and banal.

The post-Munich situation is described here as a state of neither war nor peace. Prime Minister Chamberlain's pronouncements about the emergence of a new era ensuring peace 'for our times' are universally perceived as an illusion rapidly dissipated upon confrontation with reality. One has to admit that Chamberlain is holding with great obstinacy and with consistence to the line he has chosen and which is to lead him to the Four Power Pact and the realisation of projects of a 'New Organization of Europe' based on this Pact in one way or another. He continues to believe (and believes sincerely, as I am assured) in the effectiveness of the method of personal contacts between responsible state leaders, partners in his chosen combination. With this in mind, he is preparing for another trip to Rome.

It is only too evident, however, that the 'organization of Europe', the most alluring of ideals for the Englishman, does not please Berlin in the least, and the further realisation of the Prime Minister's programme is proceeding with great difficulty. For the time being, the answer to his 'active peace policy' were three sharp speeches by Hitler, a more intense anti-Jewish policy and a new Italian programme of claims, supported by Berlin.

It would thus seem that in the face of such great disappointments, Chamberlain should meet with growing dissatisfaction and opposition not so

much from Parliament (where it would not be all that successful thanks to party discipline) as primarily from British public opinion. Such opposition exists but, *mirabile dictu*, doesn't seem to grow after Munich. I have been hearing much less of Labour's possible revenge than last year. In truth, there are occasional talks about the creation of a true 'national government' with the participation of both opposition parties, but without much conviction thus far.

There are various causes of this, with two especially crucial in my opinion:

Firstly: The concordant opinion that 'Munich' was the most appropriate, if not the sole, way out of a desperate situation. I have recently heard a characteristic avowal of a high ranking Foreign Office dignitary known for his critical attitude towards the Prime Minister's policies. This gentleman expressed the above view, with the reservation that the Prime Minister had made the mistake of branding peace redeemed in this manner 'Peace with Honour!' In the end, the Prime Minister himself came to regret this expression, which he had used under the sway of unrestrained emotion (in addition, my informer claimed that the Western Powers owed the possibility to 'extricate' themselves from an arch-difficult situation without going to war solely to the decision of the Czech State to give in without a fight...).

Secondly: The conviction that the Prime Minister, to use a not altogether apt comparison from the sport world, saved the British goal and, in this way, shifted the game to the east of Europe. Whatever happens, the fact of gaining time will remain, while here, in the land of political empiricism, *ajournement* is no less popular than in Geneva.

It is difficult for me to fathom what the Prime Minister thinks and whether he is less naïve, or less sincere, than his reputation holds. On the other hand, on the basis of long observations, I know the reactions of this nation. These are equally vivacious, spontaneous, solidary, almost as physiological as the reactions of ants or bees and independent of the phraseology with which public opinion is regularly fed. The conflict in the east of Europe, which threatens to involve, in one form or another, both Germany and Russia, despite all the declamations on the part of active elements of the opposition, is here commonly and subconsciously treated as a 'lesser evil' which could stave off threats to the Empire and its component parts overseas for a long time.

Chamberlain's attitude towards the Soviets continues to be characterised by coolness. It is true that he is only too consistent and that he quite openly



avoids anything that could serve his political partners as a reason or pretext to shirk from collaboration... But it is also true that the Prime Minister particularly avoids taking positions against Germany's eastern aspirations.

Lastly, English society is aware, with satisfaction, that the policy of the Prime Minister does not in the least entail forsaking rearming. Quite to the contrary, by gaining time it makes such rearming possible.<sup>x</sup>

As follows from the above observations, Neville Chamberlain continues to be a force in British politics despite the setbacks and even much humiliating unpleasantness that he is made to bear.

On the other hand, he is very bitterly criticised, not only by the opposition (which holds against him that he is not only guided by national criteria but also by that of class, as in the case of Spain) but also by political 'experts' and especially by his own 'services'.<sup>xx</sup> Presently, it is said there that even if the general premise of his policy is just (or at least provides a good pretext for gaining time!), his tactics are unfortunate. I can again quote the opinion of two high dignitaries, who told me that they can see well how low the Prime Minister's prestige has fallen in Germany, whereas until recently he was the object of great esteem there. The services today are not demanding a radical change of the system, but more resoluteness in individual spheres, without making voluntary political or economic concessions in Britain's position in Europe in the illusory hope that greater benevolence or concessions could be obtained in this manner elsewhere.

Finally, there is one more important sphere where a difference of opinion persists, i.e., the sphere of national defence. Prime Minister Chamberlain has not abandoned the platform of voluntary service thus far and, at the same time, he pushes for the expansion of the Navy and the Air Force, without attempting to create a land army capable of offensive action. The Prime Minister's restraint can be explained by his known conciliatory leanings with regard to the military powers of the 'Axis'. On the other hand, in the face of the approaching elections, he has to take into account the unpopularity with which England, especially workers' milieus, would greet conscription. Conscription is nonetheless desired by the services, and it is avidly desired by

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<sup>x</sup> Still one-sided, however; more on this below.

<sup>xx</sup> At the same time, this is indicative of the degree to which the 'services' have been removed by the Prime Minister from any influence on day-to-day foreign policy.

the ‘patriotic’ opposition. Its introduction, and this could probably only take place after the elections, would be the most telling sign that England is moving from affable tractability to greater ‘stiffness’.

I may be deluding myself, but I believe not only that such a turn of events will have to take place, but also that its beginnings can already be felt. For the time being, these are merely insignificant changes in the sphere of official enunciations. In addition, I am thinking of the expansion of the system allowing the state to guarantee loans granted by industry to foreign clients, and the first attempt to extend such guarantees to military equipment (up to a limit of 10 million pounds for the time being), passed by Parliament last week on the motion of the government.

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Such is the background against which the attitude of Englishmen towards Poland should be viewed. As far as the Prime Minister, his friends and his press are concerned, there is no doubt that we are dealing with great restraint. The post-Munich ice has been broken, prejudices of a personal nature are being forgotten, but there continues to be a disinclination to become engaged, especially if such engagement were to have an anti-German edge. Thus far, only the following admission was mustered at the Foreign Office, during a friendly conversation I had: ‘The British government does not wish in the least for Poland to abandon the policy of equilibrium it has pursued until now...’ (Strang, 9 December).

I must note that for some time there has been a seemingly organised campaign in the local public opinion and press, making use of overblown information, if not outright rumours and insinuations, and aiming to present Polish-German relations in an unfavourable light.<sup>xxx</sup> The result of this state of affairs is anxiety and recurring pessimistic assessments of Poland’s political situation. The said ‘campaign’, insofar as one can talk of a campaign in this case—something for which there is no tangible proof—is pursued primarily against the background of the issue of Carpathian Ruthenia and Ukrainian claims and, at the same time, also touches upon other potential points of friction, such as Danzig, and recently (the *Daily Express* and even *The Times*)

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<sup>xxx</sup> For the sake of precision, I have to emphasise that Romania is the object of perhaps even more alarming comments. Incidentally, the local Romanians exhibit considerable irritation on that account!

even Teschen Silesia, wherefrom, via Prague or Moravska Ostrava (!), the press reported about supposedly serious disturbances.<sup>xxxx</sup> Countering this locally is difficult as long as one is not dealing with a clear misrepresentation of facts that may be rectified, something that we do continuously. A more effective method could be to operate 'from the field', using positive facts implicitly belying the rumours being spread. I need not add that the results of such machinations are harmful to our political goodwill and prestige here, especially now, when England is gradually beginning to emerge from the bonds of defeatism.

Respectfully,

/Edward Raczyński/

*PDD 1938, doc. 450*

## 25

*17 December. Report of the Ambassador in Paris  
on French foreign policy following the Munich Conference*

Paris, 17 December 1938

C O N F I D E N T I A L

TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
I N W A R S A W .

POLITICAL REPORT No. XL/3

As a supplement to my cabled reports, which I had the honour to submit to you over the past several weeks, permit me to summarize below my over-all view of French foreign policy after the Munich conference and the visit of Herr von Ribbentrop to Paris.

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<sup>xxxx</sup> These latter rumours may just be Prague's 'riposte' for Carpathian Ruthenia.

The most important event of this period was, of course, the Franco-German declaration of 6 December 1938, signed in Paris by ministers Bonnet and von Ribbentrop.

The desire of the French to improve their relations with Germany after the Munich conference, to at least the same degree as has been done by England through the announcement of the well-known Chamberlain-Hitler communiqué,<sup>5</sup> was undoubtedly definite and strong. However, as it now appears, the actual initiative was taken by Chancellor Hitler in his farewell conversation with Ambassador François Poncet. On the French side, this initiative was received very well and with obvious satisfaction, even with haste toward immediate implementation. When I was leaving for Warsaw at the end of October, Minister Bonnet told me that the declaration might be signed and published at any moment.

These expectations, however, did not materialize for two reasons: apparently difficulties were encountered in reaching an agreement on the text, and later, the assassination of an attaché of the German Embassy in Paris caused a two weeks' suspension of the negotiations.<sup>6</sup> It seemed that the difficulties in agreeing upon the text were due to Minister Bonnet's efforts to draw up a declaration which would include not only the recognition of the Franco-German frontier but also the integrity of the French imperial possessions. The final text of the declaration took into account, to some extent, the objectives posed by Minister Bonnet, or at least could be so interpreted.

When the text of the declaration had been finally decided upon, the German government came up with the proposal of von Ribbentrop's visit to Paris. Minister Bonnet immediately accepted this initiative, since, having regard both for the internal situation and for foreign propaganda, he wished to impart to the declaration the most solemn character possible and to create around this event an atmosphere that would result in a deeper *détente* with the eastern neighbour. Minister von Ribbentrop's visit, already definitely scheduled, had to be delayed for a few days because of the general strike announced in France by labour parties and unions on 30 November. The visit took place on 6 December in an atmosphere of calm courtesy on the part of

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<sup>5</sup> This is a reference to the British-German declaration of non-aggression of 30 September 1938.

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 13 p. 31.

both the French government and French political circles, while the press of the extreme opposition was full of severely critical comments. One had the impression that an overwhelming majority of the French political world wanted to believe in the possibility of permanent results of a *détente* in the relations with Germany, but nevertheless the deep-seated mistrust proved stronger and prevailed in public opinion. This mistrust has been, of course, reinforced by the Italian anti-French campaign, which did not cause any significant reaction in German public opinion.

At present, hardly a week after von Ribbentrop's departure from Paris, even the echoes of this visit have died away and have given place to feelings of unrest caused by both the Italian campaign and the questions of Memel and the Ukraine. It can be stated beyond doubt that while the solemnly signed declaration had reassured French public opinion in the matter in which such reassurance was least necessary, i.e., with regard to the Franco-German frontier, it failed to contribute anything new or reassuring concerning the expansionist tendencies of Germany and Italy, the aspects which disturbed French opinion most. At the same time, however, it should be emphasized that the signing of the declaration with Germany has undoubtedly strengthened, if only temporarily, the position of the French government in public opinion, the stock exchange, and Parliament, and has brought out and deepened the contradictions which divide Premier Daladier's government from the elements of the extreme left, with the Communists at their head.

As to the attitude of the official political circles toward the declaration, it has been highly cautious and very reserved. From the conversation which I had on this subject with Ambassador Léger, it was apparent that the French wanted to interpret the Franco-German *détente* on a wide, European basis, i.e., as a point of departure toward a general pacification of relations on the continent. It seems to me highly probable that, specifically, Ambassador Léger has been coming up with, and is still considering, some four-power pact as a result of Franco-German and Italo-British *détentes*. It is difficult to state definitely to what extent his thoughts are shared by Minister Bonnet and the French government. The opinions of the semi-official press in close touch with the Quai d'Orsay tend to indicate that M. Léger's plans are not unknown to the government. Also, it is noticeable that Ambassador Léger took part in all talks with the German representatives during von Ribbentrop's visit.

On the other hand, however, on the basis of a detailed conversation with Minister Bonnet, I can state with complete assurance that even though the French sought to interpret the *détente* with Germany on a wider, European

plane, they have suffered a complete failure in this respect. For the present, then, the Bonnet-von Ribbentrop declaration should be regarded as a bilateral act of a significance which does not go beyond direct Franco-German relations. Only from this point of view has the declaration brought France the recognition of its eastern frontier and the acknowledgment that there were no outstanding territorial questions between Germany and France. The latter was being interpreted by the French as recognition of the integrity of their colonial empire, excepting the mandated territories. Finally, the declaration brought about an improvement in neighbourly relations, significant in the context of those passages of *Mein Kampf* in which Hitler regarded France as Germany's prime enemy. However, it was also realized that economic problems were so complex as to require prolonged negotiations, and that the improvement in the political climate was not sufficient to permit simplification of economic problems and quick resolution of them.

As far as the first and third sections of the declaration are concerned, for the time being they are to be regarded as a *pium desiderium*, perhaps of one partner only, and do not correspond to reality.

It is particularly noteworthy that with respect to two problems especially important to France, i.e., relations with Italy and the Spanish question, the talks with von Ribbentrop not only failed to produce anything positive but, as is now apparent, raised no hopes for the future.

Summarizing the above, it can be stated that, during the negotiations and signing of the Franco-German declaration, the French have endeavoured, although discreetly, to impart to this act a wider political significance, whereas the Germans have reduced it to an essentially bilateral act. Thus, it is clear that the fate of the declaration will depend entirely on Berlin, for it is not likely that the aims of French policy will undergo a serious change.

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The Franco-German declaration, from the time it was first suggested, and von Ribbentrop's visit to Paris were the first political events which threw light on the whole of French policy following the defeat at Munich, and especially on its relation to the questions of Central and Eastern Europe. The first news of the intent to sign the declaration broke the unanimous silence of practically the whole of the French press after Munich with regard to France's attitude toward alliance with us and to the mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union. The first to be heard were the most fervent proponents of collaboration with Soviet Russia; that is, *Humanité*, *Populaire*, *Oeuvre*, etc.,

including Pertinax and Madame Tabouis. They all came to the defence of the Franco-Soviet pact, but they could not avoid placing the matter of our alliance on the same plane. Conversely, the rightist and semi-official press either maintained silence or, as with *Le Temps* and *Petit Parisien*, stated that only Anglo-French relations constituted the essential factor, whereas the value of the alliance with Poland and the pact with Soviet Russia was highly dubious for France in the new situation. Moreover, *Le Temps* had repeatedly advocated in its editorials a policy of non-opposition to the creation of a German empire in Eastern and Central Europe.

At the same time, the proposal for a Franco-German declaration has brought up the question of France's international obligations within the French government, where pro-Russian politicians, such as Mandel, were concerned whether the declaration would be compatible with our alliance and the pact with Soviet Russia.<sup>7</sup> Finally, he [Mandel] persuaded Minister Bonnet to discuss these matters with me, and probably also with the Soviet and Belgian ambassadors.

The first of these conversations was held before Bonnet approved the final text of the declaration. Bonnet read to me the draft of the declaration, remarking that the reservation regarding relations with third parties referred also to relations with Poland. We returned for the second time to this subject when I gave him your answer to the above statement (on 28 November). Minister Bonnet, holding in his hand the transcribed text of your reply, affirmed that the interpretation which it contained of the French government's stand with respect to our alliance was entirely accurate. Finally, when informing me of his discussions with von Ribbentrop, Minister Bonnet emphasized quite spontaneously that he had pointed out to his German partner the abnormality of both the alliance with us and the pact with Soviet Russia.

Further, the press reports on the session of the parliamentary Commission of Foreign Affairs, held on 14 December, seem to indicate that, although in his exposition Minister Bonnet mentioned neither the alliance with us nor the pact with Soviet Russia, nevertheless, in answering questions he stated that France's obligations toward us and toward Soviet Russia continued in force and were binding to the fullest extent.

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<sup>7</sup> This is a reference to the French-Polish agreements of February 1921 and the French-Soviet alliance treaty of 2 May 1935.

In consequence of the above, it would be premature, however, to believe that the matter of the attitude of the French government, the Parliament, and public opinion was clarified. I am of the opinion that we would be closer to the actual situation if we were to recognize that the Franco-German declaration has only momentarily brought into focus France's attitude to its alliance with Poland and the pact with Soviet Russia, and that this has neither affected nor undermined the formal significance of these two documents. It should also be noted that, as regards the French political circles, which at the time of the Franco-German declaration were concerned with France's former obligations, they represented mainly, in fact, almost exclusively, the pro-Soviet elements. Thus, the matter of the alliance with Poland was not a main concern to them but rather served as a pretext for advocating maintenance of the Franco-Soviet pact.

The analysis of the actual situation from a purely political standpoint must unfortunately show that neither in the attitude of the government as represented by Bonnet, nor in the statements by parliamentary politicians, nor in the press is there anything to indicate a tendency to impart a vital force to the alliance with us or to treat it today as an instrument of French foreign policy. In fact, there is no lack of indications that, should France be required, for one reason or another, to fulfil obligations resulting from its alliance with us, the effort to evade these obligations would be undoubtedly larger than the action toward fulfilling them.

The above opinion appears to disagree with Minister Bonnet's statements which I had the honour to report to you; yet it is undoubtedly right and reflects the true state of affairs. Minister Bonnet is a weak man, who is unable to be firm on any matter and succumbs to a tendency of adapting himself to each of his consecutive interlocutors. Without questioning the sincerity of his statements concerning us, there is not the slightest doubt that, when confronted by the government, as well as the press and Parliament, he does not take the same attitude in matters of the alliance with us as he does in discussion with me.

Several times I have drawn Minister Bonnet's attention, directly and indirectly, to the large differences between our direct conversations and the statements of the semi-official press and the reports emanating from Parliament. So far my remarks have not had the slightest effect. We shall see what the next discussion in the Chamber of Deputies will bring. In any event,



the continuation of the above situation, which to all appearances borders on duplicity in the policy adopted toward us, has been rendered more difficult.

As a matter of fact, our situation in France is not the result of any deeper change in the attitude toward us. Although the bitterness dating from the period of the Czechoslovak crisis plays a minor role, the essential factor is to be found in the general attitude of France toward the entire international situation. Since the Munich conference, France has been in the position of a loser who cannot disengage himself from the enemy pursuing him and is, thus, unable to face a new series of problems. As regards its older international obligations, France is too weak to break them off and equally too weak to acknowledge them with sufficient firmness. Thus, France remains inert and resigned, adopting in advance a defeatist attitude to all developments in Eastern and Central Europe.

As matters stand today, France opposes to the coordinated policy of the German-Italian axis its collaboration with Britain, in which it plays a passive role, and does not consider the alliance with Poland or the pact with the Soviet Union to have any significance in this connection. Not that anybody doubts our determination to resist excessive German demands, but confidence in our success in opposing Germany is completely lacking. From this point of view, the failure to settle the Carpatho-Ruthenian question according to the desires of Hungary and ourselves played a most important and detrimental role.

Summarizing, France considers only the alliance with England as a positive asset; it looks upon the alliance with us and the pact with Soviet Russia as a burden, and thus acknowledges them only unwillingly. This situation may change should France, under the British influence, adopt an offensive policy toward Germany and Italy, which seems totally unlikely in the near future, or should the events show that we can resist German policy effectively and consequently influence the attitude of other states of Central and Eastern Europe toward Berlin. It is also possible that, should Italy's attack become more direct and dangerous and should it be in any way supported by Germany, France, obliged to defend itself more actively in a sector in which it could not rely on formal obligations undertaken by Britain, would desire to bring to bear its continental alliances; however, France would always regard the latter as auxiliary alliances, not on a par with British alliance. As far as Italy is concerned, it can be expected that Chamberlain's visit to Rome be an attempt to bring about a *détente* between Rome and Paris, which may, at least temporarily, produce favourable results, and therefore make France inclined

to maintain in the future its defeatist attitude toward Central and Eastern European affairs.

\* \* \*

As regards Central European problems, the French policy relative to Germany's expansionist efforts not only exhibits complete inertness and defeatism but is also incapable of assuming in the face of these efforts an attitude different from that which characterized it for the last twenty years. I have the impression that, in the matter of a guarantee of the Czech frontiers, the views expressed by Minister Bonnet to Minister von Ribbentrop were analogous to those stated some time ago by Ambassador Léger in a conversation with me. Had Minister von Ribbentrop so desired, he could have obtained the guarantee of the new Czechoslovak frontiers even before they were guaranteed by us and by Hungary. According to the information I received from Minister Bonnet, Minister von Ribbentrop obtained assurance that France would not oppose German economic expansion in the Danube basin, and he could not have failed to leave Paris with the impression that also a political expansion in this direction would not meet with any determined action on the part of France.

In the particular area of Eastern European problems, and especially the Russian question, complete chaos prevails both in French policy and in French public opinion. Confidence in Soviet Russia, or rather in its power, is constantly diminishing, as are pro-Russian sympathies. Evaluation of the internal Soviet situation is pessimistic; here and there, mostly in military circles, anxiety is voiced that a military coup in Moscow might lead to dangerous cooperation between Berlin and Russia. Regarding Ukrainian problems, there is a complete misunderstanding of the situation, which leads, again, to the defeatist view that, should Germany so desire, an effective Ukrainian action could begin any month and threaten the integrity of the new territory. All of the above factors keep French public opinion in a state of constant unrest, which is apparent in the press and in the statements of the deputies; in the face of this situation, the government's stand is one of impotence and helplessness.

One has the impression of a certain general psychosis, which at the moment cannot be broken down even by the most reasonable arguments. However, more and more often reasonable voices appear in the press opposing a policy of complete reserve and pointing out the dangers which a complete

*désintéressement* on the part of France toward Central and Eastern Europe, and particularly toward us, would bring.

However, we are probably as yet far from the situation in which such voices could influence the stand of those deciding the actual direction of French foreign policy. Nevertheless, we find already today among French politicians those who begin to advocate not only the maintenance of the alliance with us but also its revitalization. Needless to say, my own and my collaborators' efforts are directed toward increasing the number of demonstrations in the press and in Parliament for cooperation between France and ourselves, and toward forcing the government by these means to take publicly a better-defined stand. In spite of my rather pessimistic appraisal of France's general international situation, I do not fear that this stand will turn out too negatively.

AMBASSADOR OF POLAND

*Diplomat in Paris, pp. 152–160; PDD 1938, doc. 451*

## 26

*19 December. Note by the Military Attaché  
of the legation in Kaunas about discussions with the military attachés  
of Latvia and the USSR*

Kaunas, 19 December 1938

To the Head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau  
of the General Staff  
in Warsaw

Regarding discussions with the Latvian and Soviet military attachés.

In recent days, I have had the possibility to talk privately with Lieutenant-Colonel Deglavs, the Latvian attaché, and with Major Korotkikh, the Soviet attaché. Both raised the same question, both on their own initiative.

1. Lieutenant-Colonel Deglavs in his discussion with me about changes in the Lithuanian government (4 December) quite unexpectedly moved on to the subject of the need to prepare a common plan of action of the Baltic States

in case of a threat from Germany or Soviet Russia. The sense of his arguments was that it is an urgent matter for all interested parties to begin holding concrete talks on this subject. In his situational appraisal, Deglavs assumed that in either case, Germany or Soviet Russia, the Baltic States would be on Poland's side and they will constitute our northern flank. In his appraisal of forces, he claimed that Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania can field 20 infantry divisions (?). It will be indispensable to reinforce these forces with artillery, combat aircraft, armour and military *matériel*. Assistance in a different form, such as the use of large foreign units, is unacceptable for the Baltic States. He emphasised that working out an operational plan should, as a matter of course, take place in consultation with Poland. He described the attitude of the Baltic States towards Poland using the words 'Poland is our principal force'. He ended his arguments with the characteristic sentence 'Is it worthwhile to deal with trifles while such serious matters have to be resolved?'

I replied by admitting that he was right and asked whether there already was an understanding on this matter between Latvia and Lithuania and whether he thought the issue had ripened sufficiently for its realisation. I received no concrete reply to this, but an allusion that there were some apt people in the Lithuanian Staff, who realised well the need for a military understanding between the Baltic States and Poland. At the same time, Deglavs stipulated that all he was saying was absolutely private and confidential.

2. Several days later (15 December), on a return visit to Major Korotkikh at his home, I met with almost exactly the same arguments from him. Korotkikh talked of the need to form a Baltic States-Poland-Romania bloc against Germany with the support of the Soviets. Korotkikh declared that Lithuania should lean entirely on Poland, as by linking its fate with that of Poland it can preserve its independence. He also emphasised that he understood that in the current situation none of the Baltic States would want to bind themselves with military agreements with Soviet Russia and that this role should be assumed by Poland.

Korotkikh then assured me that General Raštikis was a proponent of an understanding with Poland.

In my replies I tried to be as careful as possible, admitting that Korotkikh's thoughts were very interesting and, in principle, just. I drew his attention to the fact that the proposal of the Soviets' participation in the bloc as he described it was known to us from the Eastern Pact, which had been rejected as none of the above-mentioned countries located between the Black Sea and the Baltic would agree to the presence of foreign troops on its territory.

Korotkikh admitted I was right and said that the Soviets' support could take other forms, upon which he added that it was in large measure a case of political effect, because the mere fact of such an understanding could ensure peace in Eastern Europe.

I don't think that the Soviet attaché could, on his own initiative, have embarked on a discussion of this sort with me, even though he stipulated that he was speaking absolutely privately. The more so as, in my observations of Korotkikh since the September manoeuvres, I have never seen him in longer conversation with anyone from Lithuanian military milieus or with other attachés. Korotkikh has never been very talkative. He most probably carried on his talk with me on the basis of detailed instructions and he had prepared it well.

While reflecting upon the above discussions, I decided to verify if they were not inspired by the Lithuanians, especially as far as the discussion with the Latvian attaché is concerned. With this aim in mind, I have talked with Colonel Dulksnys, head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Department, and I am reporting separately about it.

Mitkiewicz  
Colonel

PDD 1938, doc. 452

## 27

*22 December. Report of the General Commissioner  
in the Free City of Danzig on the information  
of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations*

22 December 1938

Top Secret

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

As a supplement to my today's report No. T3G/1/199, it is my privilege to report that the High Commissioner of the League of Nations informed Counsellor Perkowski today that, in connection with the Foreign Office's

instruction to the British Ambassador in Warsaw, communicated to him by the British Consul, Mr. Shepherd, he let London know that, given the changeability of the situation, at the present time he saw no possibility to issue an opinion about the need to bring the issue of Danzig to the agenda of the next session of the Council of the League of Nations and, in consequence, to recall the High Commissioner, while the idea to designate in Geneva a person called upon to settle Polish-Danzig disputes in first instance seemed off the mark. Moreover, Mr. Burckhardt suggested to the English that they decide on their position in consultation with Warsaw.

In communicating the above, Mr. Burckhardt once again clarified his position, in light of which the League of Nations' relinquishment of its rights as guarantor of the constitution of the Free City should take place no sooner than this constitution can be changed by legal means.

Mr. Burckhardt also pointed out that if the Polish Government wished, for one reason or another, to liquidate the position of High Commissioner, it would be advisable to act in order to bring the matter of Danzig to the agenda of the January session of the Council. Mr. Perkowski, making a reservation about the personal character of this opinion, expressed doubt as to whether the Polish Government would be interested, in any circumstances, for the Council of the League of Nations to deal with Danzig during the January session.

From the above discussion, Mr. Perkowski got the impression that Mr. Burckhardt would wish for us to discuss the question of Danzig with the English prior to the January session.

GENERAL COMMISSIONER  
/-/ Marian Chodacki

*PDD 1938, doc. 457*

## 28

*8 January. Record of the conversation between the Under Secretary of State and the Ambassador in Berlin about Minister Beck's meeting with Chancellor Hitler at Berchtesgaden on 5 January*

Warsaw, 8 January 1939

Record of Count Szembek's conversation with Mr. Lipski

The conversation took place in the presence of M. von Ribbentrop, M. von Moltke, M. Lipski and Count Michał Lubieński.

The Chancellor began by asking M. Beck whether he had any special questions to ask, as he was quite ready to be at his service with any explanations. In replying, M. Beck mentioned the Danzig situation and the Danube problem.

The Chancellor explained at length how the arbitration at Vienna had come about, laying the blame on the Hungarian Government's tactics for Budapest's failure to give effect to the postulate regarding Carpathian Ruthenia.

The Chancellor pointed out that in regard to Poland he always and invariably tried to follow the policy initiated by the Declaration of 1934. In his opinion the community of interests between Germany and Poland, so far as Russia was concerned, was complete. For the Reich, Russia, whether Tsarist or Bolshevik, was equally dangerous. The latter was perhaps a greater danger because of Communist propaganda, but the former was more dangerous in the military and even more the imperialistic sense. For these reasons, a strong Poland was an absolute necessity for Germany. At this point the Chancellor remarked that every Polish division engaged against Russia was a corresponding saving of a German division.

The Chancellor further declared that he was interested in the Ukraine from the economic viewpoint, but he had no interest in it politically.

The Chancellor then discussed the Danzig question, and emphasized that, as it was a German city, sooner or later it must return to the Reich. He stated that, in his opinion, by way of mutual agreement it would be possible to find some way out and achieve a form of guarantee to the legitimate interests of both Poland and Germany. If an agreement was reached on this question, all difficulties between the two States could quite definitely be settled and cleared out of the way. He emphasized that he was ready in that case to give an

assurance, similar to that which he had given France with respect to Alsace and Lorraine, and to Italy with respect to the Brenner. Finally, he drew attention, without stressing the matter, to the necessity for greater freedom of communication between Germany and East Prussia.

M. Beck replied that the Danzig question was a very difficult problem. He added that in the Chancellor's suggestion he did not see any equivalent for Poland, and that the whole of Polish opinion, and not only people thinking politically but the widest spheres of Polish society, were particularly sensitive on this matter.

In answer to this the Chancellor stated that to solve this problem it would be necessary to try to find something quite new, some new form, for which he used the term '*Körperschaft*', which on the one hand would safeguard the interests of the German population, and on the other the Polish interests. In addition, the Chancellor declared that the Minister could be quite at ease, there would be no *faits accomplis* in Danzig and nothing would be done to render difficult the situation of the Polish Government.

*PWB, doc. 48; PDD 1939/I, doc. 5*

## 29

### *10 January. Circular of the Minister of Foreign Affairs about Hitler's policy*

Warsaw, 10 January 1939

Cipher cable No. 2.

The discussions in Berchtesgaden and Munich were useful in checking the German political line after the Czechoslovak crisis. They showed Germany's unchanged intention to continue the policy of good neighbourly relations with Poland.

Moreover, I noted that the rumours about Hitler's intentions in Eastern Europe, where Hitler favours a policy of economic exchange of goods, exaggerated. Otherwise, his Eastern policy continues to be marked by a sharp anti-Russian attitude.



Colonial matters have moved to the forefront of the Chancellor's interests.

About France the Chancellor spoke with relative kindness.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 8*

### 30

*14 January. Report of the Ambassador in Rome on his conversation  
with the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Rome, 14 January 1939

S E C R E T .

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

I am sending you this report from my conversations with Minister Ciano. The conversation of 3 January was conducted for the purpose of informing Count Ciano about your scheduled meeting with the Führer. After a historical introduction dealing with the Czechoslovak crisis, the downfall of the League of Nations, Little Entente, etc., the problem of Polish-German relations came to the fore of Eastern European relations. *En principe*, this is the reason why it was decided for Ribbentrop to visit Warsaw. Given the significance of these relations (Polish-German) for all of Eastern Europe, it was clear that this visit required precise diplomatic preparations.

During the exchange of views, the Führer personally raised the idea of your visit in Berchtesgaden. These were the formal reasons for this visit. Its essence consists in that both Berlin and Warsaw understand well that the pact concluded between Poland and Germany in 1934 played a decisive role during the course of the European crisis in September and October of last year. Recently, one of the Reich's ministers has officially confirmed that the problem of good relations with Poland is always treated by Germany '*in Rahmen der Grosspolitik*'. On our part, we are entirely inclined to continue

good neighbourly relations with Germany, while keeping a free hand in the way we settle our relations with third states.

Further on, as information from you to Count Ciano *à titre personnel*, I related what follows: *Since* the Czechoslovak crisis, you have had no evidence showing that the Chancellor had made his policy in the East of Europe specific. For this reason, you didn't take all that seriously the activeness of German agents in the south and north of Poland, being content with the fact that the Reich Government seemed to attach great importance to avoiding entering into open conflict with Poland (in any case, Polish public opinion became taken with anxiety and distrust with regard to Germany).

In the face of these mutual official Polish-German relations, you consider that the principles of the Warsaw-Rome contacts, defined during your visit in Rome, have kept their *pleine valeur*, of course as long as the Italian Government is also of the same opinion.

Poland has certain direct interests in the Baltic, more important than others. Nonetheless, from the declarations of official German circles we are entitled to think that Germany is also taking our opinion into account in matters of the Danube Basin. The minister is of the opinion that in this area, Polish and Italian interests are solidary. In the discussion with the Führer, this concurrence of our interests will be continually on our mind. All that I could possibly have explained on this account I communicated in a friendly manner to Count Ciano. Upon ending, I once again officially invited Count Ciano to Warsaw, assuring him that in Warsaw he will not find any cause for embarrassment.

In response, he set the date of the visit to the third decade of February, around 20 February, adding that your conversation with the Führer and Ribbentrop and the announcement of Ribbentrop's visit to Warsaw will obviously significantly facilitate his own visit.<sup>1</sup>

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
(Wieniawa Długoszowski)

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 15*

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<sup>1</sup> The Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Warsaw on 25 February–1 March 1939.

## 31

*14 January. Report of the Ambassador in Washington  
about discussions at the Department of State*

14 January 1939

SECRET

About discussions at the Department of State

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

I had a conversation today with Secretary of State Hull and Under Secretary of State Messersmith.

Secretary of State Hull talked, with great emphasis, of the results of the Pan-American conference in Lima,<sup>2</sup> whence he had returned a couple of days ago. He said that the act signed in Lima, one that calls for the solidarity of the American continent, constituted an important document for the entire world, as it presents a peaceful, rational and well-defined programme of peaceful coexistence between the nations of this hemisphere, and that in the future this act could serve as an example for the European continent, which was currently tormented by the dictatorships of totalitarian states.

I congratulated the Secretary of State on this success, without going into the essence of the matter, as I knew that the act signed in Lima rather lacked a practical goal, that the states represented at the conference showed far-reaching differences and that it was only thanks to the act's wording and to able persuasion that they had signed this document, which is very convenient for President Roosevelt for the home consumption of the little-discerning citizens of the United States.

During the further course of the conversation, Secretary of State Hull said that America was presently changing its course and that from a passive state it was embarking on the activation of its foreign policy in the face of the fact that the world was run by, as he said, '*desperados*' and 'gangster'-like cynicism, and not a desire to respect laws, treaties, and justice. America, the Secretary of State continued, had to rearm itself in the nearest future, because the Munich Agreement had given us a good lesson. No one in the future is going to be able to force anything on the United States at gunpoint.

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<sup>2</sup> The 8th International Conference of American States, 9–27 December 1938.

To my observation that the world was increasingly divided into two hostile camps and that ideological blocs were highly dangerous for world peace, the Secretary of State flounced, saying that ideologies were the invention of dictators and that, in principle, nations only liked peace, not the cheap inventions of various dictators who wish to make the world happy.

As to a horoscope for the future, Mr. Hull was very reticent, giving me to understand, however, that the threat of war was hanging over Europe.

\* \* \*

In my conversation with Under Secretary of State Messersmith I raised the Jewish issues. Messersmith told me that he did not expect any positive result whatsoever from the actions of the London Refugee Committee or from Rublee's mission in Berlin.<sup>3</sup> He said that Rublee would leave Berlin with nothing and that he wouldn't in any case agree to Schacht's ideas, even if appropriately modified. In his opinion, it was necessary to embark soon on a search for a way out based on a different premise, namely it would be worthwhile to think about the purchase or acquisition of colonies for Jewish emigration and to activate emigration to Palestine. He further said that the programme, as understood by the Refugee Committee, one which was to settle the problem of German Jews only, was actually a programme with too narrow a scope. We have to assume, he said, that the entirety of the Jewish emigration has to be included, not only part of it, precisely the part that fell victim to the brutal German assault.

Messersmith said with appreciation that he now agreed entirely with the view I had presented to him so many times about the necessity of emigration from Poland, where the problem is truly becoming a burning issue in need of a solution. He spoke using very warm words of the peaceful and matter-of-fact moderation of the Polish Government on the Jewish question, and went on to say that such conduct would bring Poland absolute benefits in the resolution of this issue.

*Jerzy Potocki*  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 17*

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<sup>3</sup> The American lawyer George Rublee conducted talks with German government representatives in the name of the London Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees.

## 32

*17 January. Draft cable from the Assistant Under Secretary of State  
to the Ambassador in Bucharest  
about the possibility of a German-Soviet understanding*

Polmission Bucharest

Received *letter* of 14 January.

We have noted Hitler's continued intransigent position with regard to Bolshevism and the USSR. Even in the economic sphere one can observe a systematic drop of German-Soviet trade.

The National-Socialist doctrine seems inclined towards the concept of a dismemberment of Russia along nationality lines, yet efforts in this direction don't seem very precise so far. *Fears about the possibility of an understanding between Berlin and Moscow continue to be observed in French military circles.*

Arciszewski.

PDD 1939/I, doc. 21

## 33

*23 January. Cable of the envoy in Budapest  
about his conversation with the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Budapest, 23 January 1939

Received on 23 January, at 11:10 P.M.

Mr. Orłowski, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

No. 5.

Csáky received me today and communicated what follows:

I. Speaking for the necessity of resting the Hungarian frontier on the Carpathians, Csáky presented Hitler and Ribbentrop with arguments based on history and *raison d'état*.<sup>4</sup> He pointed to the danger of the Slavic flood.

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<sup>4</sup> This refers to plans of the occupation of Carpathian Ruthenia, presented by the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs during his visit to Germany on 16–18 January 1939.

II. Hitler declared that he didn't consider the matter as finally closed. Ribbentrop was not so clear on this point. At the present time, however, Hitler thinks that Hungary has to respect the Vienna Award and that Germany can't acquiesce to a single cannon shot being fired in Central Europe without being warned about it. Csáky stated that he understands the German point of view, but without making any declarations.

III. Hitler talked of the exaggerated nature of the rumours about his intentions in the East. He stated that in any case all Eastern plans would have to be conducted in concert with Poland and Hungary. He pointed out that he wished to maintain the best possible relations with Poland.

IV. Hitler declared that in the present conditions he won't guarantee Czechoslovak frontiers.

Csáky concludes on the basis of point II that, under certain conditions, Germany would be ready to cede Ruthenia to the Hungarians. The only question is what their conditions will be, something he preferred not to go into at present.

Given Hitler's stressing of the ethnic principle, he put forth, as I predicted in the report of 23 December 1938, the question of rectification of the frontier with Romania, and also certain plans regarding Transylvania.

Csáky communicated to me that he had instructed Hory to ask Minister Beck about our policy with relation to Ruthenia and Slovakia.

I firmly pointed out that we won't be able to push the matter forward in this manner, and that it was necessary for the Hungarians to communicate their intentions to us, both in substantive and tactical terms. Given this, Csáky declared that in a few days he would present his plans to us. I assured him of the constancy of our policy and told him our support would be dependent on how far the Hungarians' intentions would reach.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 23*

## 34

*[After 26 January]. Unsigned note on the talks in Warsaw  
between the Polish and German Ministers of Foreign Affairs*

First draft of the report from the discussions between Minister Beck  
and Minister von Ribbentrop during the latter's visit to Warsaw  
on 26 January 1939

1. Joy on account of the fall of Barcelona,<sup>5</sup> as it heralds the end of the Spanish question, which more than anything else weighs down on Italian-French relations. In case of an end to the Spanish Civil War, the liquidation of the state of tension in French-Italian relations without an open conflict is possible, assuming certain concessions on the side of the French. Should anything happen, Germany will stand by Mussolini.

2. The colonies: Germany will demand the return of the German colonies in Africa. Ribbentrop is not under the impression that this matter is ripe for negotiations, as England will still attempt to wriggle out. The English generally decide slowly. Germany will not accept any partial solutions. It will now bid its time, but it will do so actively. For every international attack on Germany (in the Jewish question, for example), it will respond with a counterattack. In the first instance against the United States, then against England, and then, if France joins the attacks, also against France. It will not even spare Roosevelt. The colonies are the immediate aim of German policy, but its attainment cannot be arranged swiftly.

3. The Czechs—relations with Germany are deteriorating. One can still feel the spirit of Beneš' people there. Germany has evidence that the Czechs have obtained the £10,000,000 loan on political conditions, for which the Czechs will pay bitterly. In these conditions, of course, the Reich will not give the Czechs any guarantees.

4. Carpathian Ruthenia. After Berchtesgaden,<sup>6</sup> categorical orders were issued that no German element should become involved in any Ukrainian anti-Polish work. All German agents received such an order.

5. Ribbentrop spoke of the Japanese with kindness.

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<sup>5</sup> Franco's troops took Barcelona on 26 January 1939.

<sup>6</sup> This is a reference to Beck's conversation with Hitler on 5 January 1939 (see doc. 28).

6. Russia. Ribbentrop asked about the interview with Ms. Le Cler.<sup>7</sup> He also asked about our assessment of the situation in Soviet Russia, as they have little information at present, given the difficulties in penetrating the Soviet Union. Their information comes from the Japanese, but this information can be biased. Minister Beck responded that we had won a war with the Soviets, we had concluded a peace treaty, but the partner is so uncertain that we had had to fence off the frontier with wire. We threw off attacks against our border areas by organizing the KOP units.<sup>8</sup> The USSR then went through an evolution and decided to take an active part in European politics, but we held the view that Russia couldn't bring anything constructive to Europe. The Polish-Soviet frontier is one of the most important European frontiers, because it is the boundary of two mentalities.

Russia proposed to us above all a common guarantee for the Baltic States; then, along with France, it proposed to us the famous Eastern Pact. Poland rejected all these combinations, but it must take care to maintain such relations on the frontier as to preclude a chance outbreak of a conflict. Inside Russia, propaganda is spread about the threat to Soviet Russia from the Western bourgeoisie, and Poland's participation in the supposed threat could only facilitate such propaganda.

There are three possibilities in Russia:

- a. despite the weaknesses caused by the disorganisation of the higher military authorities—an attempt to defuse the internal situation through an external conflict. This does not seem to be a direct threat;
- b. a weakening of the centralising power and the emergence of decentralising trends in regions with a non-Russian population. One should be aware, however, that the Soviet regime has very severely thinned out these nationally non-Russian elements;
- c. a continued slow evolutionary process—not changing the USSR much in essence.

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<sup>7</sup> On 24 January 1939, Beck gave an interview to Ms. Le Cler, a journalist representing the North American News Paper Alliance concern and *The Daily Telegraph*.

<sup>8</sup> Korpus Ochrony Pogranicza (Borderlands Defence Corps) was a military formation created in 1924 to protect Poland's eastern frontier.



The assessment of Russia is all the more difficult as European criteria cannot be applied to it.

Ribbentrop emphasised that Germany recognises that should Russia break up, Poland will be the country most interested in this process. Germany is ready to go hand in hand with Poland in both eventualities (a and b).

Minister Beck replied that all these problems are not for today. As far as the Ukrainian question is concerned, Carpathian Ruthenia is of no significance for the resolution of this problem.

Ribbentrop emphasised once again the anti-Russian attitude of the Chancellor.

Minister Beck stressed that if Russia wanted once again to push its way toward the Baltic, Poland could not look at this indifferently.

7. Danzig. Minister Beck finally said that while the Ukrainian question causes much bad blood in Poland on the surface, the most important threat to Polish-German relations is Danzig.

Ribbentrop expressed satisfaction regarding his visit to Warsaw and understanding that perhaps the question had not been sufficiently prepared, given that his visit had been brought forward. He fears that the Chancellor might not have been well understood by Minister Beck. The Chancellor views the situation from the perspective of centuries (*von einer hohen Warte*). Germany has in many places undone the Versailles Treaty. The Chancellor, however, is ready to give up territorial claims against Poland, but is encountering much internal opposition on this point. He is ready, however, to push for it for the price of the extraterritorial road and the possibility of the Danzig population to realise the slogan *Zurück zum Reich*. The Polish nation should understand how painful losing that territory was for the Germans.

Minister Beck replied that already in Berchtesgaden and Munich he had warned that this was a difficult and dangerous question. As far as communications are concerned, his advice is to forget the term 'extraterritorial road', because Poland is not the Czech state. Many things come to pass in politics and for this reason one has to hold on to certain fundamental notions, such as sovereignty, borders and territory. Poland is not a country governed by parliament, but changes to the state territory are constitutionally reserved for parliament and Minister Beck sees no possibility for himself to present this issue to parliament. The Polish Government, however, is ready to consider most favourably the matter of transit facilitations, even for passenger cars. Transport facilitations could be the subject of negotiations.

Minister Beck further asked how Mr. von Ribbentrop imagines that Polish interests in Danzig may be satisfied. Maritime interests are very important for Poland. Pulling back the Polish customs cordon reduces Danzig to the role of a miserable town. Mr. von Ribbentrop has most probably not studied this question in detail. Ribbentrop admits that, indeed, he has not, and asks how the Berchtesgaden discussion was received in Poland.

Minister Beck: Couldn't be worse. It is difficult to find a justification for presenting the matter on such terms, as it is difficult to find a resolution. It is even more difficult to understand in Poland, as Poland has not done anything to limit the free internal development of Danzig's German population. The Chancellor himself stressed the importance of access to the sea for Poland. This access is narrow and each metre of the coastline is valuable to us.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps Mr. von Ribbentrop has some idea. In any event, technicalities aside, it would seem that the mood in Poland is such that it is considered here that the Germans have had it so easy elsewhere that they are now trying their hand in Poland. The Chancellor talked of arrangements beneficial for both sides, whereas German proposals represent a unilateral change of the existing state for the sole benefit of Germany. The German guarantee is highly valuable, but who can say that some future German government won't revise its stand on this issue?

In general—if we were to go ahead with the German suggestions—Poles will be asking their government why this is done. Where is the *Gegenleistung*? Mr. von Ribbentrop remembers the days when Danzig belonged to Germany. Poles remember the days when it belonged to Poland.

Minister Beck then said that since Mr. von Ribbentrop speaks of the matter openly, he also prefers to treat it entirely openly, because it is preferable to speak frankly than to engage in false courtesy. When Ribbentrop attempted to suggest compensation in the Ukraine, Minister Beck replied that what he was proposing was not an object of compensation, as Minister Beck wouldn't even know what to do with such an object. If Germany were to propose a truly balanced arrangement, Minister Beck would not fear to present it to the public opinion in Poland.

The following day, i.e., on 27 January, Ribbentrop asked once again for more precision on this point, to which Minister Beck observed that he thought

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<sup>9</sup> The total length of Poland's frontiers exceeded 5,500 km, the maritime frontier taking up 140 km.

he had no right to make unilateral concessions and he advised Ribbentrop not to present the matter to the Chancellor in too optimistic a fashion.

Besides this, Minister Beck drew his attention to the balance sheet of the discussions:

- a. Matters about Russia and the great Eastern policy were clarified. Should any fundamental changes occur in this area, the two governments can consult each other;
- b. *One shouldn't overestimate* the elements engaged in diversion against the *Ausgleich*.

As the reverse side of the coin, Minister Beck mentioned Ribbentrop's wish to revert, in a way, to Stresemann's policy, namely to a differentiation between Germany's western and eastern frontier. Poles are not nervous, it is enough for them that the Chancellor has no territorial claims in Europe and that he is declaring this publicly (although the matter of Danzig would seem to contradict this), but Minister Beck has to draw Ribbentrop's attention to the fact that this Stresemann-style is precisely what has always harmed Polish-German relations the most.

As to Danzig, any day now the League will play a joke on us and will depart along with its High Commissioner. Poland will then have to demand material guarantees from the Senate of the Free City. I see no reason for haste in settling this matter, but in such a case we could easily find ourselves at once in an open conflict.

Ribbentrop agreed that both sides have to come to an understanding without delay in order to avoid this.

Minister Beck then suggested the following formula: Should the League of Nations change its position or the nature of its role in Danzig, both governments should (within 24 hours?) come to an understanding and announce a declaration to the effect that *der bestehende Zustand in Danzig nicht geändert wird*.

These formulas were agreed on and reiterated during the discussions on 26 and 27 January.

## 35

*27 January. Head of the Eastern Section to the Embassy in Berlin  
about German-Soviet relations*

27 January 1939

Confidential

To the Embassy of the Republic of Poland  
in Berlin

[RE:] Soviet-German trade negotiations.

The information about the intended dispatch to the USSR of a German trade mission is confirmed by information from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Moscow.

Director Schnurre is to travel from Berlin to Moscow on 31 January at the alleged invitation of Ambassador Schulenburg. While there is a visible tendency to play down this fact on the German side, the Soviets are striving to portray Schnurre's arrival in terms of a German-Soviet *rapprochement*. This is expressed both in suggestions made by Potyomkin (Litvinov's deputy) to Ambassador Grzybowski, and in rumours discretely disseminated by the NKID among members of the diplomatic corps in Moscow.

According to the Ministry, the vital reason for Schnurre's visit to Moscow, in addition to the incidental desire to increase the recently flagging German-Soviet trade and to neutralise the political effect of the Polish-Soviet economic negotiations now underway, is above all Berlin's effort to create the appearances of a general *détente* in the east of Europe.

Berlin and Rome are presently preparing themselves for stronger moves in the West (the issue of colonies, the Spanish question, etc.) and for this reason they wish to be assured of momentary calmness in the East.

This *détente* in the East does nothing to change the fundamentally Anti-Comintern direction of Berlin's policy and is rather of a short-term and opportunist nature.

...  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
OF THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

PDD 1939/I, doc. 28

## 36

29 January.<sup>10</sup> *Consul in Marienwerder to the Embassy in Berlin  
about the local population's attitude towards Poland*

Marienwerder, 29 January 1939

S E C R E T .

To the E m b a s s y of the Republic of Poland  
i n B e r l i n

The press in West Prussia has refrained entirely from discussing Polish-German relations in connection with the visits of Minister Beck in Berchtesgaden and Minister Ribbentrop in Warsaw. Shorter or longer laconic notes only contained summaries of dispatches from Berlin or, in the case of the Warsaw visit, some dailies also gave summaries of voices from the Polish press prior to and during the visit.

This restraint of the local press is the result of revisionist agitation conducted here by the party in relation to Polish Pomerania and Danzig, as well as of the forceful popularisation of the idea that 'Germany's future lays in the East'.

Notwithstanding the voice of the press and official stance of party circles, it should be emphasised that both visits gave rise to enormous interest among the wider masses of the population and the short news from the dailies, and also from the radio, were very widely commented on. At the lower and intermediate party ranks, there was some surprise at the fact that Ribbentrop's visit didn't lead to any concrete results for Germany, such as, for example, the annexation of Danzig or the motorway through Polish Pomerania, which in the minds of local Germans was to be the first step toward the annexation of Pomerania and Danzig. Appropriate accents were expected here in Hitler's speech of 30 January, but he only stressed, speaking of Poland, both countries' will to maintain good relations. All this turned against the leading local party organs, which had previously been clamouring *urbi et orbi* that Hitler was able to annex Pomerania to Germany even without war. In trying to avert a loss of credibility, the party will undoubtedly defend

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<sup>10</sup> This report was supplemented and sent after this date, as it contains information about Hitler's speech of 30 January 1939.

itself with the thesis that this moment has only been postponed, etc., but such claims will no longer be as credible as the previous ones.

Consul of the Republic of Poland  
*Edward Czyżewski*

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 30*

## 37

### *31 January. Circular of the Minister of Foreign Affairs about Ribbentrop's visit to Warsaw*

Minister Beck to all agencies of the Republic of Poland

31 January 1939

The results of Minister Ribbentrop's visit are the following:

- a) Both governments will continue the policy of non-aggression based on the act of 1934 and will strive to turn this relation into a lasting one.
- b) An exchange of views about Russia and the ascertainment that there are no contradictions between the Eastern European policy of Germany and Poland.
- c) The Ukrainian question is not presently topical, and the significance of Carpathian Ruthenia in it is non-existent.
- d) In Danzig there will be no surprises.
- e) There are no issues between the two countries that can't be settled through negotiations with regard for mutual interests.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 32*

## 38

*3 February. Letter of the Ambassador in Berlin to the Chef de cabinet  
of the Minister of Foreign Affairs about Hitler's speech*

Berlin, 3 February 1939.

S e c r e t .

To Director Łubieński

Dear Mr. Łubieński,

In connection with my report of 2 February, No. N/49/22/39,<sup>1</sup> on the subject of Chancellor Hitler's speech given at the Reichstag on 30 January. I was quite surprised to read in the Polish press, especially in *Gazeta Polska* of 1 February, that in the section on frontiers it was stated that Germany has appeased frontiers also in the East.

If such a change of text were carried out by the editors at PAT in Warsaw, I would consider this as most harmful misleading of Polish public opinion. The thought comes to mind that perhaps the Chancellor's speech was broadcast in a different version abroad than in the Reich, as it is transmitted directly from Berlin to individual capitals.

I would be grateful if you could verify and inform me about this.

With warm regards,  
Józef Lipski

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 36*

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<sup>1</sup> In the report of 2 February, Lipski drew attention to a fragment of Hitler's speech about frontiers, quoting '*Deutschland ist glücklich, heute im Westen, Süden und Norden befriedete Grenzen besitzen zu dürfen*'. The ambassador went on: 'The above passage about frontiers is typical because it omits eastern frontiers. Even though the relationship with Poland is treated separately and though the passage about frontiers is interrupted by other questions, a certain constant trend can be observed here. I wish to recall that in his speech of 12 September 1938 on the occasion of the closing of the Reichsparteitag in Nuremberg, Hitler used the expression "*Deutschland hat nach allen Seiten hin heute vollständig befriedete Grenzen*", which was later changed by the D.N.B. to "*nach vielen Seiten*".' PDD 1939/I, doc. 35.

## 39

*4 February. Note by the Assistant Under Secretary of State  
on his conversation with the Ambassador of Great Britain*

*Secret*

Note on the conversation of Minister Arciszewski  
with the Ambassador of Great Britain, Mr. Kennard, on 4 February 1939

Mr. Kennard, the English Ambassador, called on me on 4 February, mainly to, as I gathered, discuss the question of Danzig.

I. The question of Danzig. Ambassador Kennard asked me about the further development of the Danzig issue, stating that, as he understands it, this matter had found itself at an impasse of sorts following Minister Beck's discussion with Minister Ribbentrop. The Committee of Three<sup>2</sup> counted on the emergence of new facts which, as he understands it, never took place. In this situation, the English Government can justly fear that other types of new facts could emerge in Danzig that would damage the prestige of both the League of Nations and Great Britain.

I replied to the Ambassador that I was familiar with this way of presenting matters by the English and I was somewhat surprised that, following Ambassador Kennard's conversation with Minister Beck, the English side continued to fear 'dangerous facts' in Danzig.

The English Government must see perfectly clearly that the state of Polish-German relations is such that there is no need for fear that the Germans would risk creating any *faits accomplis* in the Free City. On the other hand, London obtained an assurance from us that no understanding with the Germans about Danzig will be concluded without informing England *en temps utile*.

Poland, as has been pointed out on many occasions, has no special interest in maintaining a League of Nations mandate in Danzig *à la longue* and, at the very least, such an interest cannot form, and has never formed, a fundamental basis for the English Government in its decisions in the matter of Danzig.

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<sup>2</sup> The Committee for the Free City of Danzig, created by the League of Nations, was made up of representatives of France, Sweden and Great Britain.



In this state of affairs, any *décision précipitée* on England's part about the further fate of the League of Nations mandate would give rise to a most regrettable impression in all Polish circles as a sign of weakness and panic on the part of the English. I think that the English Government shouldn't be interested in producing a similar reaction in Poland, something that would have to have an impact on the attitude of the Polish public opinion toward the League of Nations.

To that, Ambassador Kennard replied that the factors that made it a pressing matter to definitely clarify the situation is Minister Sandler and the fact that the Committee of Three finds itself under his continual pressure.

I replied that we did not have the impression that Minister Sandler's position was so categorical as to cause some final decisions to be taken prior to the session of the League of Nations Council in May, which was only three months away.

II. The matter of the motorway. The Ambassador asked me if Germany was continuing to pressure us in the matter of the motorway through Polish Pomerania.

I replied that there could be no talk of pressure, given that in recently held discussions, during which this issue wasn't raised by Germany as a political problem, we pointed out that we couldn't treat questions pertaining to the motorway as an issue in bilateral Polish-German relations and, doubly so, there can be no question of any extraterritoriality of this motorway. However, the question of the construction of a convenient auto road through Polish Pomerania and facilitations for German transit on it is a matter of consideration for the Polish Government within the framework of its general Polish road network construction plan.

III. The visit of the Duke of Kent. The Ambassador communicated to me that he would wish for the Duke and Duchess of Kent, who are stopping over for one night in Warsaw, to be able to spend the evening at the Embassy for a private reception along with Minister Beck and that he had sent a cable to London in this vein.

## 40

*6 February. Note on the Under Secretary of State's  
conversation with the German Ambassador*

Top secret

Record of Count Szembek's conversation  
with the German Ambassador, Mr. von Moltke, on 6 February 1939

We discussed the visit of Minister Ribbentrop in Warsaw. I stressed that given the minute results of this visit, it was a good thing that it took place on the fifth anniversary of the conclusion of the non-aggression pact, as in this manner at least its significance was accentuated. The Ambassador pointed out that if it were not for this anniversary, Minister von Ribbentrop's visit in Warsaw would have been postponed, given that there was a tendency in Berlin to see the visit as an opportunity to sign a wider agreement regulating Polish-German relations. The conclusion of such an agreement turned out to be a still distant possibility, however. Nevertheless, the fact that a sincere exchange of views between the two ministers took place on a number of most important issues of interest to both sides has to be seen as a positive moment. The Ambassador stressed the permanent and close contact between the Chancellor and Minister von Ribbentrop, who will undoubtedly give Hitler a detailed *compte rendu* from his visit in Warsaw.

Commenting on the Warsaw discussions, the Ambassador pointed out that he considered as a positive moment the complete understanding by Minister von Ribbentrop, after the situation in Russia had been laid out to him by Minister Beck, of why Poland couldn't join the Anti-Comintern Pact. The Ambassador added that, for him, the reason for Poland's reserve on that point had always been clear.

Speaking then about the problem of the return of the colonies, the Ambassador observed that 'no one wants war, but we will get the colonies after all'.

Moving on to the problem of Danzig, I stated that the discussion with Minister von Ribbentrop on this subject had, in fact, brought negative results. The Ambassador replied that he didn't have the slightest illusions about the difficulty of resolving this problem, but he was of the opinion that from the point of view of our general relations and '*vom sekulären Standpunkt*' one should strive for a definite settlement on this point. I declared to the Ambassador that I was entirely

in agreement with his reasoning, but I had to admit that I did not see a real solution that could be acceptable to us. The proposals he had put forward to Ambassador Lipski about the sovereignty and customs area I found to be entirely unrealistic concepts. Such a condominium would not stand the test of time. If one were to assume that Danzig could become detached from Poland, I ask the Ambassador, then how would he imagine its further existence? In my opinion, it would be mechanically condemned to playing the role of some Elbing. The Ambassador replied that he was entirely aware of this, but that Berlin paid too little attention to economic issues, unfortunately. At this point I told the Ambassador that there was yet one more factor which Germany should always remember: The Poles are a nation ready for anything and no reflection could hold them back, they immediately reach for radical measures. I recalled that during 1938, Poland issued an ultimatum twice.<sup>3</sup> The Ambassador reacted very briskly, stating that this trait of the Poles was well known to him and that he was aware of all its consequences.

We then discussed the gentlemen's agreement made on the subject of Danzig by the two ministers. The Ambassador pointed out that, insofar as he knew, the two ministers arrived at an understanding that should the League of Nations decide to withdraw from Danzig, the present state of affairs would be provisionally maintained. I clarified and specified the substance of the above-mentioned gentlemen's agreement to the Ambassador in the spirit of the information I had personally been given by Minister Beck. The Ambassador did not negate my clarifications.

Speaking then of the matter of the motorway, I categorically declared that its extraterritoriality was absolutely out of the question, that it was not worth thinking about it at all or raising this subject. The Ambassador, as if wanting to obtain yet another confirmation of my words, asked briskly if I truly upheld this opinion. He added that earlier, when he had dealt with this issue and no one had yet put forward demands of extraterritoriality, it was possible to resolve it smoothly. I told the Ambassador that they were probably incited to raise demands of extraterritoriality by their successes with the Czechs. I must state, however, that in the case of the Poles, the matter presented itself completely differently, as the Poles were not Czechs.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 40; a shorter version also in PWB, doc. 56*

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<sup>3</sup> Towards Lithuania in March (in the matter of establishing diplomatic relations) and towards Czechoslovakia in September (about Teschen Silesia).

## 41

*18 February. Report of the Deputy Commissioner General  
of the Republic of Poland in Danzig for the International Organisations  
Section about the dispute between Polish and German students*

DANZIG, 18 February 1939

To the MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
Section P.I.  
in WARSAW.

At the end of last week there was an incident that led to understandable agitation among Polish students at the Danzig Polytechnic and which will have to have a negative impact on attempts at Polish-German *rapprochement* in academic spheres.

The background and course of the incident were as follows:

On 29 January, the proprietor of Café Langfuhr (Adolf Hitlerstr. 49), one Bruno Nordwig, organised a so-called *Hausball* in his establishment, during which several Polish students were present. When two Polish students went to the cloakroom to pick up their coats and go home, they were accosted by two Germans who were unknown to them and who had tried, back in the hall, to provoke them with taunts like '*hier wird nicht polnisch gesprochen*', '*hier gibt's keine Polen*', and such like. One of those Germans, for no reason and without any prior verbal altercation, suddenly struck with his fist the face of the Polish student, who returned the blow at once. The ensuing brawl ended victoriously for the Poles, who forced the Germans to withdraw. A week or two after the incident, the proprietor of the café, most assuredly submitting to pressure exerted on him, turned to the Fraternal Assistance of the Polish Students of the Danzig Polytechnic. He wrote a letter, dated 10 February, in which he asked the Fraternal Assistance to take steps to prevent Polish students from coming to his café in connection with the undesirable incidents (*unliebsame Zwischenfälle*) that took place in his establishment on 29 January between German and Polish students. The Fraternal Assistance deduced from this letter that the culprits of the incident were German students, while Ukrainians had been initially suspected. Polish students decided not to react to this letter and continue visiting the café, as they thought that acting according to the wishes of the proprietor would be tantamount to 'ceding the field'. On the night of 11 February, several Polish students went to the café. At one of the tables they noticed a group of young Germans, probably

students, one of whom got up from the table for a moment, and returned to his comrades shortly. No clash took place. It was only upon leaving that the Poles noticed a sheet of paper with an inscription insulting Poles that had been pasted to the window of the main door. Naturally, the students immediately tore it down and took it to the Fraternal Assistance, where it was photographed. I am appending a copy of it. While I presume that it had been placed there by the above-mentioned individuals, I have no evidence to that effect. There are also no reasons to presume that the proprietor of the café knew about the pasting of the sheet of paper, given that the Polish students in the café only noticed it upon leaving the establishment. In the group of the presumed culprits, the Polish students noticed a German student whom they knew by name—a fact that would seem to justify the presumption that other persons from this group were also students of the Danzig Polytechnic.

The agitation which this incident aroused among Polish students is even greater since the inability to confirm the identity of those responsible for the insult—those suspected had left the establishment earlier—makes any reaction impossible. Under the circumstances, the intervention of the Fraternal Assistance with the academic authorities or with the main German academic organization *Deutsche Studentenschaft Danzig* is pointless, as it would undoubtedly be met with the reply that the accusations against German students are not supported by any evidence. In any case, Fraternal Assistance does not maintain any contacts with German organisations ever since the latter passed the *Satisfaktion-Unfähigkeit* of Polish students resolution in 1923.

For the same reason, it seems to me that an official intervention of the General Commissariat in the Senate seems uncalled for, as it wouldn't lead to any positive result. On my part, I will merely draw the attention of Mr. Greiser (upon his return to Danzig), in a semi-official letter and during our earliest conversation, to the unhealthy atmosphere which reigns among the body of German students, expressed in provocative and insulting behaviour with regard to their Polish colleagues, and to the harmful effects of this state of affairs on Danzig-Polish and German-Polish relations.

The Fraternal Assistance of the Polish Students of the Danzig Polytechnic took steps aimed at stirring academic milieus in Poland with this incident and has turned to the League with a plea to inform the *Reichsstudentenführung* that the conclusion of a Polish-German academic agreement was, naturally, set back, given the failure thus far to settle the dispute about the *Satisfaktion-Unfähigkeit* of Polish students of the Danzig Polytechnic by the

submission of an appropriate declaration by the *Deutsche Studentenschaft Danzig*, as well as evidence of new provocations since the understanding with the *Reichsstudentenführung* about the need to liquidate this dispute. So far, I have restrained the local Polish press from writing about the above incident, all the while receiving different reports about it that were contrary to its factual course as it has ultimately turned out. I don't doubt, however, that given the actions taken by the Fraternal Assistance, papers in Poland will write about it, something I have no means or reason to counteract.<sup>4</sup>

I would like to take this opportunity to point out that, as I am being informed, in November, the *Reichsstudentenführung der Deutschen Studentenschaft* supposedly committed itself to the League to pressure the *Deutsche Studentenschaft Danzig* into issuing a declaration to the Fraternal Assistance to the effect that the *Danziger Deutsche Studentenschaft* has nothing to do with the 1923 resolution and, therefore, doesn't share the view expressed in it concerning the *Satisfaktion-Unfähigkeit* of Polish students. Thus far, it has not carried out this obligation, however, and representatives of the *Reichsführung* have shied from further discussions on the subject during the last meeting of the C.I.E. in Krynica.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GENERAL  
Tadeusz Perkowski

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 51*

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<sup>4</sup> The events described in the report became the subject of official protests and numerous press articles in Poland. They led to the removal from lecture halls and beating of Polish students at the Danzig Polytechnic and, from 24 February onwards, to anti-German demonstrations in several Polish cities.

## 42

*18 February. Note by the Assistant Under Secretary of State  
on his conversation with the Reichsführer SS*

Secret

N o t e

on the conversation between Minister Arciszewski and Mr. Himmler  
on 18 February 1939<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Himmler's point of departure was to affirm Hitler's absolute loyalty in relation to all the obligations he had undertaken in treaties or in his enunciations, and for this reason Poland can have absolute confidence in Hitler's good will towards us and to his firm intention to maintain Polish-German relations in a spirit of friendly and good-neighbourly collaboration.

I replied that, indeed, Polish governing circles have trust in Hitler, something that must undoubtedly constitute a firm and lasting basis for our co-existence. It is not only the governing circles, but perhaps even in equal measure the mood of public opinion at large which has undergone a great evolution over the last few years, even if the public can see on the German side a number of symptoms causing concern and hampering the growth of a much desired and proper atmosphere in Polish-German relations. At this point, I pointed out that our relations could be based either on deep mutual trust and a proper understanding of each country's political aims, or on a relationship of force. There is a gap between the two. Of course, both Germany and Poland can make use of either of these methods. We are of the opinion, however, that only the first method can address the important interests of both states. As regards the second method, our entire policy of recent years shows that we have not wished to enter any collective security combinations, mutual assistance pacts, etc., whose doors stood open before us. While speaking of certain symptoms that are disagreeable to our public opinion and leaders, I can cite, if only, the German action in Carpathian Ruthenia.

Mr. Himmler interrupted me, saying that Polish public opinion showed an exaggerated sensitivity on this point. The question of Carpathian Ruthenia is

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<sup>5</sup> The Reichsführer SS visited Poland on 18–21 February 1939. He was received by, among other persons, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

not a German political problem and we are improperly gauging German activity in that country.

I replied that we have excellent information about the fact that a number of German elements were striving until recently to create '*Polen feindliche Stimmungen*' in that country. We know that entire units of '*Militärische Ausgebildete*' Sich men were sent from Germany to Ruthenia.<sup>6</sup> Himmler interrupted me again, stating that he knows nothing about training camps for Ukrainians in Germany. I replied that we know with full certainty that similar units were transported from Vienna, upon which Himmler corrected himself, saying that, indeed, such units could have been transported from Vienna.

I went on to state that recently, as we know from various sources, rumours are being disseminated in Hust about supposed preparations for an assassination attempt against Minister Beck. We are not according much weight to this information, but if one were to assume that there will be an attempt of this sort whose traces lead to Hust, we can imagine what tensions would ensue in Polish-German relations. We know, of course, that there can be no question of German inspirations here but, in any case, this will concern elements under Germany's powerful influence.

Mr. Himmler returned anew to the statement that the problem of Carpathian Ruthenia is not, in itself, a significant matter. As Germany sees it, it can only constitute something of a 'moral detonator' for the Ukrainian question. There is no doubt that Germany can easily come to an understanding with Poland in the matter of Carpathian Ruthenia. This matter could be raised among a number of issues that have to be resolved between Poland and Germany.

I asked Mr. Himmler if speaking of a number of issues he had Danzig in mind.

Mr. Himmler confirmed this, stating that the issue of Danzig had to be definitely solved some day. Germany has lost a number of provinces on Poland's behalf. In the Führer's view this loss is definitive, but German public opinion has not yet entirely come to terms with it. Of course the word of the Führer is law for the German nation, but he can only speak that word when he feels that the ground has been psychologically prepared. Settling the matter of

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<sup>6</sup> Members of the so-called 'Carpathian Sich', a military formation subject to the government of the autonomous Carpathian Ukraine based in Hust.



Danzig would give the Führer the ability to gain from the German nation its ultimate sanction for the Polish-German border.

I replied that first of all the question of Danzig and of Carpathian Ruthenia must not be placed on the same plane. Danzig is a matter of unalienable Polish rights arising from history, from the fact that Poland is the Vistula, and Danzig is the Vistula's estuary, from the stipulations of the Versailles Treaty and, finally, from the exercise by the Republic of Poland of its rights with regard to Danzig during the past 18 years. We do not meddle in Germany's assessment of the Peace Treaty and we are not concerned at all with its further fate, but our rights inscribed into that treaty constitute the substance of our position and our Western policy. This substance can take on other legal forms, but its essence cannot in any way be altered. We do not deny that Danzig is a German city and in recent years we have placed no barriers to Danzig's *Gleichschaltung* with Germany. This is an indication of the respect that we have for the Führer's German doctrine. But all that is outside the *Gleichschaltung* and what constituted the absolutely unfettered and uncontrolled access to the sea represents Poland's *Unantastbare Recht*. On this point, Poland's public opinion is at all times ready for a clash. The question of Carpathian Ruthenia, in contrast to that of Danzig, is only a matter of Poland's greater or lesser political interests.

Mr. Himmler replied to this that the estuary of the Rhine also lies on a foreign territory and Germany has to come to terms with this, while the growth of Gdynia testifies to the redundancy of Danzig.

I replied that it is not worthwhile for either side to roll out arguments and try to convince the other side. It's not about that, but about becoming more cognizant and aware of each other's positions. As far as his arguments are concerned, could the Führer declare from the tribune a doctrine that when an 80-million strong Germany has 15 ports, the 35-million Poland has to settle for one? Presenting the matter of Danzig as Mr. Himmler does automatically shifts Polish-German relations from a basis of mutual trust to the basis of a relation of force, with all its inherent consequences.

We would like to know if the Führer's political program was a great one, the only one that would be commensurate—as we think—with his genius and mission, or a small one, limiting the role of the German nation in Europe?

Mr. Himmler asked what I meant by a small program.

I replied that a small program would be, say, ending Nazi revindications after the issue of Vienna and the Sudetenland, i.e., Danzig, Memel, South Tyrol, Alsace, Lorraine and Switzerland.

Himmler protested briskly, stating that the Germans have no use for such a wavering element as the Alsatians. This matter has been finally settled. Switzerland, '*das sind lauter Hoteliers und Hirte*' who can't constitute a worthwhile element for the German spirit. I asked about South Tyrol, to which Himmler answered with uneasiness that it was impossible.

Given this, I stated that Hitler's small program would thus come down to a microscopic one, i.e., Danzig and Memel, that is, to a clearly negative discrimination of Poland. This is something we can't believe in because, above all, we know Hitler's genius and the breath of his political horizons and, moreover—as I pointed out—on account of the shock that would threaten prospects in Central and Eastern Europe.

Himmler moved on to the subject of Ukraine, stating that while in German eyes Poland is '*eine starke Realität der Gegenwart*', Ukraine is '*eine dunkle und unsichere Zukunft*' and that here Germany cannot even reflect on the choice to make. Germany and Poland cannot mutually play the Ukrainian question against one another.

To Himmler's grudges about agricultural reform in Poland I responded with recriminations about German policy towards the Polish minority in Germany (problems with schools, teachers, unions, etc.). I pointed out that on 27 February the Polish-German commission was meeting in Berlin and that Polish competent circles were hoping that the deliberations of this commission would contribute significantly to the improvement of the state of affairs and that not only the commission would be bilateral, but that the result of its work would also have a bilateral effect.

Himmler said that he shared this opinion and that he would take a personal interest in the work of the commission upon his return to Berlin.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 53*

## 43

*22 February. Letter of the Counsellor of the Embassy in Berlin  
to the Head of the Western Section on the subject of the visit  
of the Reichsführer SS in Poland*

Berlin, 22 February 1939

Secret

Dear Józef,

General Zamorski probably has already sent you the record of the conversation which he had had with Himmler yesterday on the train on the trip back from Białowieża. During this conversation, following the definition of the framework for the exchange of police officers from Poland and Germany for *stages*, Himmler raised the matter of Danzig in terms of the latest German pronouncements. General Zamorski, warned by you prior to his departure for Białowieża, answered him in keeping with his instructions.

And now the continuation of the matter:

A farewell dinner was planned at Simon & Stecki following the arrival in Warsaw. This dinner took place according to plan, complete with the exchange of presents and courtesies. Nonetheless, Himmler's Danzig speech left a certain trace in the formerly pleasant climate. This certain weakening of the climate of kindness was not visible to all (especially as no one besides myself, General Zamorski and, apparently, General Szalay, knew of Himmler's intention to raise the matter of Danzig). Nevertheless Moltke, showing considerable talents as an observer and shrewdness, asked me during the dinner if, during the conference between General Zamorski and Himmler that he had observed in the train car, the latter did not perhaps raise any unnecessary political questions. As I didn't wish to give Himmler the impression that I had complained about him to Moltke, I denied this, but I deliberately did so lightly. This was enough for Moltke to declare that his scent had not betrayed him and that Himmler must certainly have raised the matter of Danzig with General Zamorski and that he will confirm this during his conversation with Himmler on the way from the Eastern Station to the Main Station. I didn't think, given the circumstances, that it was desirable to continue keeping Moltke in the dark so I said that Himmler had recently made certain allusions about Danzig to General Zamorski. Such pronouncements are pointless and only harm the pleasant atmosphere. A mere year and a half

ago, when the Polish side showed readiness to discuss the matter of the Free City's political regime, the Chancellor of the Reich clearly stated that the matter shouldn't be touched (*an der Sache nicht rütteln*). Meanwhile, the German side 'rüttelt' the matter at every convenient opportunity. Moltke sharply criticised the German side's continual return to this matter and cherishing illusions on this point, and asked if at least General Zamorski gave a clearly negative answer (I wish to add here that as of late, Moltke has confidentially been pointing, at least with regard to the Embassy in Berlin, to the necessity to adopt a clear stance in the face of German pronouncements about Danzig). I replied that General Zamorski, surprised as he was since he hadn't been informed at all about any matters or discussions about Danzig, replied as any person on the street in Poland would have, namely that there are things that are simply impossible, and others that are entirely unfit for discussion.

Boarding the German salon car at Eastern Station, I noticed after the train started rolling that Moltke had remained in a compartment alone with Himmler.

After the train's departure from Main Station, I was to meet Himmler and his retinue in the car's main salon for a drink. When I entered the salon, where the Germans had already assembled, it seemed at first that Himmler was not in an entirely good mood. Not wishing for him to leave with some personal negative impressions in connection with this matter, I immediately shifted to a pleasant and jovial mode, pointing out that we were now celebrating the *Fastnacht*. Himmler took up on this and the general discussion went on in the best of atmospheres. After a while, the discussion shifted to political matters. Himmler talked at length about Soviet matters (he noted the recent work on putting in order and reinforcing the organisation of their army), and Spanish and Japanese ones, without mentioning anything particularly new. However, at a certain point, while expounding on the thesis that international Jewish and Masonic forces, unable to Bolshevise Europe through communist agitation, as this would meet with the counteraction of the states of order, now intend to combat these countries by means of other capitalist countries under the guise and slogan of defence of liberty and democracy, Himmler pointed out that in the formation of the ideological front against totalitarian states, these forces were unscrupulous in the means they resort to. One of these is to set states living in harmony against one another and for this reason dark international elements are trying, for example, to set Germany against Italy in connection with South Tyrol and the Brenner Pass, and 'for example,

Poland and Germany in connection with this Danzig matter, or with the matter of Carpathian Ruthenia'. Of course, I nodded at these points and I could see that these arguments made an impression on his entourage. I think that there was a causal relation between these words and his conversation with General Zamorski and later with Moltke.

Since General Zamorski told me that he would present the substance of his talk with Himmler to Minister Beck, it would perhaps be a good thing if you were to relate its further course to Minister Beck as well. As far as Himmler's expedition to Poland itself is concerned, everything went very well. The organisers, especially General Zamorski, as well as General Szalay and Minister Kościalkowski, spared no effort for everything to go as well as possible. Himmler was very satisfied with his stay. In truth, he is no hunting ace, but was nevertheless glad to get some rest, enjoying the beautiful natural surroundings and the impressions he had. He asked me to convey his thanks to all who had made this stay pleasant for him, above all to Generals Zamorski and Szalay. From my own observations, I get the impression that Himmler took a positive view of many things in Poland and I am certain that this trip was worthwhile.

With greetings and warm regards,  
/–/ St.

Personally, I unfortunately had no '*Anlauf*'. I didn't fire a shot for the first two days. It is only on the last day that I managed to shoot 5 young boars in the last litter.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 54*

## 44

*28 February. Cable from the Ambassador in Berlin  
about his conversation with Ribbentrop*

Berlin, 28 February 1939

Received on 28 February 1939, 10:25 P.M.

Mr. Lipski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

Secret

To Minister Beck.

Ribbentrop invited me today for a discussion. He pointed out that he had been ill and this is the reason why he mentions the matter of the Anti-German incidents only now. The German Government was displeased with the events in Poland.<sup>7</sup> Firstly, the demonstration before the Embassy: The Polish Government had expressed its regrets and gave assurances that such events would not recur. The following day, however, an even greater demonstration took place before the Embassy, during which the police remained passive. Thus far, Ribbentrop has restrained the German press, in keeping with the line of maintaining and deepening relations. He warned, however, that should anti-German demonstrations take place again and, according to his information, they are undoubtedly probable, he will have to give the press a free rein, something that would inevitably worsen mutual relations. This also concerns the Polish press. He asked that this be communicated to you.

In response, I briefly presented the Danzig events to him while emphasising that the provocation had come from the German side. Ribbentrop pointed out that there are different versions of the events. I stressed that the goings on before the Embassy had been very unwelcome for the Polish Government and that preventive measures had been taken. I stressed, on several occasions, the necessity to calm down and resolve the matter of students in Danzig. Ribbentrop incidentally said that it is difficult for him to speak out about Danzig student matters. I took the position that this matter had to be ended by taking it in hand by Warsaw and Berlin on the one hand, and by settling it locally in Danzig.

**PDD 1939/I, doc. 60**

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<sup>7</sup> This is a reference to the anti-German demonstrations in the last days of February 1938. See footnote 4 p. 102.

## 45

*2 March. Report of the Ambassador in Berlin  
on discussions with Hitler and Göring*

2 March 1939

Top secret

Yesterday at the Chancellor's reception for the diplomatic corps I had occasion for a casual exchange of opinion with Chancellor Hitler and also with Göring with regard to the recent student incidents in Poland caused by the situation in Danzig.

Immediately after the reception I sent you a short telegraphic account describing only the background of the two conversations,<sup>1</sup> which I am now supplementing more extensively.

In my conversation with the Chancellor I followed the instructions contained in your telegram of 1 March. I first mentioned the regrettable student demonstrations before the Embassy in Warsaw, stressing that they were being exploited by the elements of the opposition.

The Chancellor replied that Danzig problems are ticklish. That is why he thinks that they should be determined by a solution which would totally remove all complications. In the course of his deliberations he stressed that as long as he, as a partner of Marshal Piłsudski in the Polish-German agreement, is in charge of the Reich's policies, there will be no conflict. In Poland, at the head of Polish foreign policy, stands Minister Beck, 'a very clever and noble man'. Nevertheless, in the future someone might take the Chancellor's place in Germany, just as some changes may occur in the political leadership in Poland. Therefore, it would be desirable to reach an agreement on this matter before then. Such an agreement, though bilaterally painful, would remove forever all misunderstandings—as was done at the Brenner Pass. The Chancellor remarked that Germany's approval of the Corridor is not an easy decision. He added that there are more Germans in Pomerania than Poles in Danzig. He also mentioned that some time ago he was strongly attacked by the *Deutschnationale* for his policy toward Poland. Such an attack on him by Oldenburg-Januschau took place at Neudeck, while the late Field Marshal Hindenburg extended his support to him. If he had not removed the

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<sup>1</sup> PDD 1939/I, doc. 65.

*Deutschnationale* from rule, he could not have reached an agreement with Poland. Naturally, Socialists and Communists did not take any interest in these matters.

The Chancellor also mentioned that it is quite natural that many elements desire to spoil Polish-German relations. He stressed that he understands that you also came upon elements who attack you for your policy toward Germany.

The Chancellor closed the conversation in a positive tone concerning our relations.

Next, I had a conversation with Göring. He remarked that the student demonstrations in Warsaw as such would not have meant much to him if they had not coincided with Minister Ciano's visit to Warsaw. As he learned from the Italian side, Ciano was greatly embarrassed to hear shouts for the Italians and against the other partner of the Axis.

He discreetly inquired whether it was true that some military elements took part in the demonstrations, which I denied. Göring replied that he also thought it to be impossible, since the demonstrations were conducted against the government and you.

For my part, I laid pressure on the necessity of promptly liquidating student incidents in Danzig by acceptance of a Polish proposal to settle the matter by way of a commission.

Göring said that he sent a special clerk to Danzig to investigate who the author of the offensive inscription against Poland was. If we are in possession of any information, he would be obliged if we would share it with him. I understood that he might suspect the possibility of a provocation against Polish-German relations.

For my part, I underlined the sensitivity and hurt feelings of Polish public opinion with regard to the situation in Danzig.

Göring showed understanding. He said that he personally is always trying to iron things out and check such incidents. Stressing that he spoke as a friend, he said that, in his opinion, these matters should be discussed on some occasion. He added that, as long as the Chancellor and he control the government, these matters can always be balanced (*ausbalancieren*). Following the trend of his ideas, he declared that it cannot be denied that Danzig is a German city, while it is a known fact that Poland needs the port of



Danzig. If Poland, he went on, had not built Gdynia, this would be even more obvious. Nevertheless, even so Poland's interest is sufficiently evident.

Göring understands the great difficulties this problem is causing inside Poland. He added that it was a misfortune that Marshal Piłsudski died too early, for only a person like him could make a decision on such a problem. Göring closed this point by stating that he is hoping for the best, since we always did find a solution, even in difficult situations.

Göring also added that he is often approached by people from East Prussia and Silesia with many claims and complaints. However, he pays no attention to them. In order to illustrate how the Chancellor cares for our interests, he stressed that, when decision was taken regarding Bohumin,<sup>2</sup> many local Germans tried to influence the Chancellor to reunite that territory with Germany. However, the Chancellor took the position that Poland's interests had to be taken into consideration there.

Göring remarked that rumours spread by the Western press about alleged German plans for a Great Ukraine are sheer fiction. About Carpathian Ruthenia he said that this problem could still be resolved.

The above conversations of yesterday, which, as I already mentioned, were conducted rather casually in a loose exchange of opinion, made it clear that the Chancellor did not feel personally hurt by the Warsaw anti-German demonstrations, as I had first feared, since he might have suspected that they constituted a reply to his suggestions with regard to Danzig. On the other hand, these demonstrations must have shown both to the Chancellor and to Göring how very irritating the Danzig problems are for public opinion in Poland. From this angle, the demonstrations might even be of some use; under the condition, however, that they will not be repeated and will not result in consequences undesirable for this opinion.

It is rather characteristic that both the Chancellor and Göring laid pressure on the fact that as long as they are directing the Reich's policy there will be no conflict over the Danzig problem. It could be gathered from this that no drastic solution is planned, and that the Chancellor remains willing to come to an understanding with Poland on this issue.

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<sup>2</sup> Bogumin (Bohumin, Oderberg), a railway junction in Teschen Silesia. In October, it became the object of both German and Polish claims. After Polish-German negotiations, it was attached to Poland.

My aim was to prove to the Chancellor and to Göring how very strongly our public opinion is reacting on these matters, so that no illusion would remain in this respect among top elements here.

Finally, I was under the impression that the Party elements in Danzig and those on our border undoubtedly exerted pressure on the political leadership to obtain concessions for the north-eastern region of the Reich, which must feel to a certain extent overlooked and neglected after the reunion of Austria and the Sudetenland. This might also be felt as a reaction in the territory.

I would also like to add that Göring, who just underwent a rigorous reducing regimen (he lost over 45 lbs.), looks very tired and is leaving in a few days for four weeks in San Remo.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
Józef Lipski

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 496–499; PDD 1939/I, doc. 66*

## 46

*7 March. Unsigned note on the conversation  
of the Minister of Foreign Affairs with the German Ambassador*

Top Secret

Minister Beck's conversation with Ambassador von Moltke  
on 7 March 1939

During the conversation, the Ambassador raised, among other issues, the question of recent anti-German demonstrations in connection with the Danzig events. He referred to his first conversation with Marshal Piłsudski, who warned him of the difficulties in working in Poland in the face of the enormous hatred of Germans that had accumulated for decades.

The Ambassador emphasised that the ease with which the recent demonstrations were organised leads in fact to very sad conclusions, creating the impression that the true proponents of a Polish-German understanding number just a few persons in Poland.

Minister Beck replied that he could not agree that the issue should be treated so pessimistically. Undoubtedly Polish-German relations were historically weighed down at the time when Marshal Piłsudski set out to put them in order. Also, initially, the Polish-German *Ausgleich* rested entirely, in Poland, on the Marshal's standing. Ambassador von Moltke can himself observe that today, following the death of Marshal Piłsudski, the conviction about the usefulness of Polish-German policy has become much more universal and is becoming ever firmly grounded. Of course, one can't claim that psychological burdens have been removed entirely. Thus, though the issue of Polish-German policy in Poland is not an easy one, neither is it hopeless. In its attitude towards Polish-German policy public opinion simply has to be guided.

Polish public opinion has been offended by the attitude of some German circles in the Ukrainian question and in that of Carpathian Ruthenia.

At this point, the Ambassador distanced himself from these matters and was very regretful that the question of Carpathian Ruthenia had occasioned so much misunderstanding.

Then Minister Beck moved on to Danzig affairs, which also weigh down Polish-German policy.

Moltke said that he understood the difficulty of this question and stated firmly that in the mind of the Chancellor, the importance of Polish-German policy was emerging into the foreground and took precedence over the Danzig question. Thus, would it not be possible to leave the entire question *telle quelle*?

Minister Beck replied that, for a time, it would be possible to maintain the existing state of affairs based on the League, but it would fall apart in May, during the session of the League Council. It would be advisable to give this issue some thought today.

## 47

*9 March. Cable from the envoy in Prague  
about the future of Slovakia*

Prague, 9 March 1939  
Received on 9 March at 4:00 P.M.

Mr. Papée to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
i n W a r s a w .

No. 58.

My assessment of the situation is as follows:

The fate of Slovakia is in the balance. The Slovaks are undecided and act chaotically. German pressure in the direction of an independent Slovakia under a German protectorate is increasingly strong and insistent. Tiso is clearly looking for support from us. The next few days will decide the stakes. Once again, I am asking for authoritative instructions for tomorrow's discussion with Tiso or for T. to be called to Warsaw immediately. In my opinion, offering the Slovaks our full support could still today influence the situation.

*Instruction sent on the 9<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon*

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*PDD 1939/I, doc. 76*

## 48

*13 March. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the legation in Budapest  
on the conversation with the Hungarian envoy*

Polmission BUDAPEST

I summoned Hory today and told him that the process of Czechoslovakia's break-up,<sup>3</sup> which we have been expecting, could take on an unexpectedly rapid turn, thus creating new difficulties, but also new opportunities in areas of our common interests. I proposed to keep each other closely informed to avoid surprises and to coordinate press campaigns. I asked upfront if they had come to an understanding with the Germans about the present stage of the matter. H. replied that he didn't think so.

BECK

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 80*

## 49

*13 March. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in Berlin  
on the conversation with the German Ambassador*

Polmission BERLIN

I summoned Moltke today and, expressing some surprise that there had not been any contact yet between our ambassador and Ribbentrop, I asked if

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<sup>3</sup> This is a reference to increasing German pressure aimed at the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by means of the full subordination of the Prague government to the Reich and the secession of Slovakia. On 13 March, Hitler called on Jozef Tiso, the Prime Minister of the Slovak cabinet until 9 March, to proclaim an 'independent' (*de facto* dependent on Germany) Slovakia, which the latter did on 14 March. At the same time, Berlin encouraged Budapest to occupy Carpathian Ruthenia without delay. Hungarian troops entered the province on 14 March. The following day, German troops occupied Prague. On 16 March the establishment of the 'Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia' was proclaimed. On 15 March, in a telegram, Tiso declared the desire of placing Slovakia under German 'protection', which Hitler accepted, also by telegram, the following day. The relevant agreement was signed on 23 March 1939.

he had any instructions about the Reich government's position in Czechoslovak affairs. Moltke had no instructions, but is expecting to be called to Berlin in connection with these matters. During the conversation, which Moltke conducted eagerly, I stated that my considerations are based on the conversation in Berchtesgaden, from which I understood that the Chancellor limited the German actions to an ethnographical framework as a result of the general European situation, whereas in case of a political settlement, he would have to define the Reich's position anew. I added that a similar problem also stood before us. I pointed out that from my conversations with the Chancellor and Ribbentrop it followed that there should be no grounds for dispute between Poland and Germany on Czechoslovak matters, but that it would be important to clarify in time how matters of that country are unfolding, so as to define our positions and avoid harmful press campaigns that could easily be instigated, especially in third countries.

BECK

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 82*

## 50

*14 March. Circular of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Poland's position with regard to the expected break-up of Czechoslovakia*

Warsaw, 14 March 1939

Cipher cable No. 39.

Our assessment of the situation in the Czech lands and in Slovakia is the following:

I. The Polish government has always seen the Czechoslovak state as provisional and its internal organisation as unstable.

II. Polish public opinion has always been well inclined towards the Slovak efforts for independence, and the Polish government has always taken the position that the Slovaks should be a subject in politics, not its object.

III. Poland's attitude towards the Slovak state will depend on the degree to which this state will be an expression of the normal development of the Slovak nation's autonomous political life.

IV. We have always felt that Carpathian Ruthenia's attachment to Czechoslovakia only burdened that country needlessly.

V. The Polish government is not bound by the decisions of the Munich Conference.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 83*

## 51

*14 March. Letter from the Chef de cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in Tokyo with an assessment of Poland's position on the international stage*

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

I am availing myself of a moment of quiet at the Ministry in order to write a few words to you. We are presently in the midst of the Slovak crisis. At this very moment information has arrived about the Slovak parliament's proclamation of independence. This operation unfortunately took place under very strong German influence. Since the Czechoslovak crisis of October of last year, Berlin seems to think it can do anything. One gets the impression at times that their veritable plan is to break Eastern Europe *up* into the greatest possible number of little states under the Reich's protectorate, as if some sort of great Roman Empire and its allies. Of course, Eastern Europe, with the exception of Poland, has shown very little resistance towards Germany so far. Nonetheless, the mood on the street in all countries is beginning to turn against Germany. This can be most clearly felt in Yugoslavia, in Hungary and in Romania, and even very clearly in Italy. In France, however, sentiments seem to be more pro-German. They are counting on *la modération de* Hitler to hold back Italy from attacking France. England is showing its teeth, but in actuality it will still try to come to an understanding with Germany.

We are being wooed from all sides. In this game, which may end with a new Munich, everyone wants to be able to make reference to the fact the Poland supports him in order to strengthen his position. This creates a seemingly advantageous situation for us, but one that is in effect very difficult. Any inclination in one direction or another compromises us in the

eyes of the other side and produces no real advantages, as one should expect that in case of an understanding between England, France and Germany, the great powers of this world will not take our interests to heart. We share the greatest number of analogies with Italy, but one cannot talk to them, because they are afraid that the Germans will drop them in the face of a possible conflict with France and they are ready for anything except things that could be understood as weakening the Axis.

In all this I see no room for a policy toward the Soviets that I could offer you in the knowledge that it would satisfy your friends.

*It is, of course, in our interest to continue our German policy for as long as possible, even in case of a conflict in the West that is beginning to take shape, in order not to be at the front line.*

*Polish-German relations are developing well—we have some difficulties with settling the Danzig matter given the withdrawal of the League of Nations from there, but even this could prove possible to resolve. In any case, the Japanese need to be calmed as to our relations with the Germans, which we intend to maintain at the level of 1934.*

*With warm regards,*

*M. Łubieński*

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 84*

## 52

### *15 March. Circular of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the break-up of Czechoslovakia*

Warsaw, 15 March 1939

Cipher cable No. 40.

In the face of the new situation caused by the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and the German intervention, the Polish government respects the decision on Slovakia's independence, but fully supports the Hungarian actions in the matter of Carpathian Ruthenia. In connection with this, military directives were issued.



In relation to the Czech lands, we do not raise any contentious issues, while not seeing any reason to get involved in their defence.

Should the need arise, please support the energetic Hungarian position *vis-à-vis* the government to which you are accredited and establish close contacts with the local Hungarian envoy for this purpose.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 86*

## 53

*16 March. Cable from the Ambassador in Bucharest  
on his conversation with the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Bucharest, 16 March 1939  
Received on 16 March 1939 at 2:10 A.M.

Mr. Raczyński to Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

No. 31.

Received cipher cable No. 27 (P.III. b. Nr).

I gave the substance of the dispatch to Gafencu. I found him to be extremely gloomy at the news, which he obtained from his ambassador in Warsaw, that Poland had extended a guarantee to the Hungarians irrespective of the settlement of Hungarian-Romanian relations in Carpathian Ruthenia—a fact that makes his personal situation as a proponent of a closer alliance between Poland and Romania difficult.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 90*

## 54

*16 March. Assistant Under Secretary of State to the Embassy  
in Berlin about his conversation with the German Ambassador*

Polmission Berlin

I summoned Moltke today and, stating that the exchange of the Hitler-Tiso declarations had taken the Polish government by surprise, asked him to obtain, as quickly as possible, a German government commentary to these declarations and, especially, about German intentions regarding its protection over Slovakia. I stated that, of course, we would ask Bratislava a similar question, but we are expecting relevant comments from Berlin as an active party.

Arciszewski

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 97*

## 55

*17 March. Cable of the Ambassador in London  
on the so-called Tilea indiscretion*

London, 17 March 1939.

Warsaw cipher cable No. 30.

Secret. To Minister Beck in person

The Romanian envoy Tilea informed me that several days ago Wohlthat had demanded that Romania tie its economy entirely with the Reich, that it undertake not to develop certain branches of industry and that it liquidate some existing ones. For this price, Germany would guarantee Romania's frontiers.

In this situation, Tilea anticipates a direct threat to Romania. In his words one could sense fear about whether Romania would offer the necessary resistance.

Lord Halifax asked Tilea today if Romania can, in case of a direct or indirect assault, count on Polish military assistance. Tilea answered that in

keeping with the Polish-Romanian alliance, both countries guarantee all of each other's frontiers, but he is not certain if the military clauses also cover the above-mentioned eventuality. Tilea is turning to you with a personal plea for an urgent answer to be delivered through me that he could communicate to Halifax: Can Romania count in the said circumstances on Polish military assistance?<sup>4</sup> Should this answer be affirmative, Tilea asks if you could communicate it to Bucharest (where there is fear of defeatism).

Tilea is personally of the opinion that insofar as assistance from Poland would be certain, also England would not refuse help.

Despite the profound shock that had undoubtedly taken place here and which found its expression in today's speech by the Prime Minister,<sup>5</sup> so far I have no concrete information pointing to such a stance on England's part.

Raczyński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 98*

## 56

### *17 March. Cable from the Ambassador in Berlin about his conversation with Göring*

Berlin, 17 March 1939

Received on 17 March 1939 at 5:10 P.M.

Mr. Lipski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

No. 54

Secret

From my conversation with Göring, to whom I mentioned that I was speaking without being instructed, the following are the results:

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<sup>4</sup> See docs. 58 and 59.

<sup>5</sup> In a speech given on 17 March in Birmingham, Prime Minister Chamberlain condemned the liquidation of the Czechoslovak state by Germany and announced counter-measures.

I. German-Slovak negotiations in Vienna on the form of the *Schutzstaat* are being finalized.

II. The principles are, approximately, as follows: maintenance of Slovakian sovereignty, defence from external threats, common foreign policy, financial aid, probable customs and currency union.

III. I made clear our relation to Slovakia, which took us by surprise with this decision; bad impression in Poland.

Göring stated that the decision about the *Schutzstaat* is final; he said he will call the Chancellor's attention to Polish interests connected with this problem, so that, for instance, there would be no German garrisons in central and eastern Slovakia.

IV. I could feel in Göring a desire to maintain good relations with us; he referred on this occasion to his last conversations with the Chancellor. Nevertheless, he explained the failure to communicate with us (besides the unexpected, even for Germany, turn of events) by a certain dissatisfaction on the part of Hitler caused by the fact that the Warsaw demonstrations put him in an awkward position with Mussolini.

Details in my report today.

*Diplomat in Berlin, p. 500; PDD 1939/I, doc. 100*

## 57

*18 March. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in Moscow  
about Poland's position with regard to the establishment  
of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia*

Polmission Moscow

STATIM

Received 33.

The Polish government has not yet given an answer to the German note about the status of Bohemia and Moravia.<sup>6</sup> I am rather inclined to limit myself

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<sup>6</sup> The note was handed to Beck on 15 March by the German ambassador.

to a simple *accusé de réception* (i.e., confirm reception of the note without any declarations on its substance). You can declare that Germany's methods do not meet with the approval of the Polish government but, traditionally now, we do not like to issue protests that are not followed by concrete action.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 105*

## 58

*18 March. Chef de cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Ambassador in London in the matter  
of the so-called Tilea indiscretion*

Polmission London

Secret

Received 30.

*The Romanian government*, through its ambassador here, categorically denies.<sup>7</sup> Minister Beck asks that you no longer discuss the matter with envoy Tilea, because questions pertaining to the performance of the alliance can only be raised directly by the Romanian government to the Polish government, and are not suited for official discussions at an embassy in a third country.

Łubieński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 107*

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<sup>7</sup> See doc. 59.

## 59

*20 March. Letter from the Ambassador in London  
about the so-called Tilea indiscretion*

Cipher letter of 20 March 1939

No. 10.

Secret. Received cable No. 41.

I have received the instructions to be carried out.

On the basis of my conversations with Tilea, I have reconstructed the following picture of the matter:

The German demand is a fact. It was made by Wohlthat even before the recent events in the Czech lands. Following these events, it was repeated in a less drastic form. The Romanian government is rejecting them, but negotiations have not been broken off and one can fear that, under German pressure, the more fearful elements in Romania will in the end prevail in the balance towards capitulation. This state of affairs and the increased military threat following the break-up of Czechoslovakia are what caused the *démarche* with regard to England. Almost simultaneously, Tilea (either on the basis of confidential powers from his Minister of Foreign Affairs or at his own initiative) caused the publication of the news in the press. Its undoubted aim was to 'stiffen' both Bucharest and London. It has to be stated that this latter aim was achieved as far as local public opinion is concerned. Bucharest, however, not being certain thus far of the support of the powers and not to burn bridges with Berlin should such support be lacking, decided to issue a *démenti* and instructed its envoy here to deny as well. This is made the easier considering that the news in the press, although true, was not 100% precise. The English government has yet to answer the Romanians in substance, conducting technical meetings and political consultations in the meantime. In a conversation with Tilea, Halifax asked him a number of questions, including the question which led to Tilea's *démarche* towards me. Tilea continues to be convinced that the English government, should it become certain of the existence of a sufficient centre of opposition, will decide to become involved at once. However, he does not hide his serious fears that the Romanian morale will not resist German pressure if the situation is not clarified swiftly.

RACZYŃSKI

Cable received on 21 March 1939

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 111*

## 60

*20 March. Note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in connection with the deteriorating international situation*

20 March 1939

Top SecretNote

1) Germany's recent moves have immeasurably increased and, at the same time, brought closer the threat of war. In their entirety, these moves have the character of a military operation threatening first and foremost Poland's political and mobilisation freedom of action.<sup>8</sup>

2) Passivity on our part will undoubtedly encourage further steps that will paralyse our will and weaken our strength. Particularly hazardous paths include: (a) Hungary and Romania; (b) Memel and Lithuania; and (c) Danzig.

3) The will to resist in Romania and Lithuania can only be enhanced and sustained if there is certainty that these countries will under no account be isolated. Effective certainty can be provided first of all by Poland. Hence the need for far-reaching cooperation with those states—cooperation aimed primarily at *ad hoc* reinforcement of common security elements and at the same time constituting a lasting step towards resting future relations in this part of Europe on cooperation between countries with concordant interests.

4) Anti-German sentiments of Western European states should be used for the purpose of the fastest creation of a strongest possible bloc of mutual guarantees, also including Poland and countries connected with it through closer coordination, such as Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, etc.

5) The present situation is suited for:

a) counteracting German influence in Hungary by pointing out threats to Hungarian independence;

b) enhancing Polish-Italian cooperation aimed at halting the increase of German forces in south-eastern Europe, especially in the Danube Basin. The value of the Polish-Hungarian border will be significant and undeniable only

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<sup>8</sup> This is a reference to the entry of German troops on Czech and Slovak territory.

with the arrival of *détente* in Hungarian-Romanian relations and the extrication of Hungary from present German influence.

6) The key point for Poland in the next few weeks seems to be the question of Lithuania.

7) Polish society is awaiting the further course of events with natural anxiety. While bearing in mind the difficulties involved in shedding light on our international situation at the present time, one can't underestimate the damage that could result from unilateral interpretations by the opposition accompanied by biased comments about the governing circles failing to appreciate the gravity of the situation.

\* \* \*

In my speech to the Sejm on 22 March 1939 (i.e., the day after tomorrow) about the trade treaty with Lithuania, I would like to use, among others, the following sentence:

'The development of relations between the two countries over the past year has brought us, among other things, something of great value: the feeling that in moments of historic significance, the furthest-reaching coordination aimed at securing the Baltic from changes that would be directed against both states' most vital interests, which are particularly and most tightly knit in this area, is something possible and natural.'

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 113*

## 61

*21 March. Report of the Ambassador in Berlin  
on his conversation with the German Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Berlin, 21 March 1939

M. Lipski to M. Beck

(Report)

I saw M. von Ribbentrop to-day. He began by saying he had asked me to call on him in order to discuss Polish-German relations in their entirety.



He complained about our Press, and the Warsaw students' demonstrations during Count Ciano's visit. He said the Chancellor was convinced that the poster in Danzig had been the work of Polish students themselves.<sup>9</sup> I reacted vigorously, asserting that this was a clear attempt to influence the Chancellor unfavourably to Poland.

He mentioned the question of Carpathian Ruthenia, which had particularly troubled Polish opinion, and stated that this question had been settled in conformity with Poland's wishes. This was to be communicated to you by Ambassador von Moltke. He spoke of the experts' negotiations on the Minority questions, and dwelt on the fact of the failure to reach agreement as to a joint communiqué.

At this point I interrupted him to correct his inaccurate statement.

Further, M. von Ribbentrop referred to the conversation at Berchtesgaden between you and the Chancellor, in which M. Hitler put forward the idea of guaranteeing Poland's frontiers in exchange for a motor road and the incorporation of Danzig in the Reich. He said that there had been further conversations between you and him in Warsaw on the subject, and that you had pointed out the great difficulties in the way of accepting these suggestions. He gave me to understand that all this had made an unfavourable impression on the Chancellor, since so far he had received no positive reaction whatever on our part to his suggestions. M. von Ribbentrop had had a talk with the Chancellor only yesterday. He stated that the Chancellor was still in favour of good relations with Poland, and had expressed a desire to have a thorough conversation with you on the subject of our mutual relations. M. von Ribbentrop indicated that he was under the impression that difficulties arising between us were also due to some misunderstanding of the Reich's real aims. The problem needed to be considered on a higher plane. In his opinion our two States were dependent on each other. It must not be forgotten that, by defeating Russia in the World War, Germany had been a contributory factor in the emergence of the Polish State. Obviously they could not forget the shedding of Polish blood, which they held in high honour. Subsequently, thanks to Chancellor Hitler's policy, General Schleicher's plan of German-Soviet collaboration had been smashed. That plan, which would have led to the annihilation of the Polish State, was defeated. It must also be remembered that Danzig and Polish Pomerania had belonged to the Second

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<sup>9</sup> This is a reference to the events described in doc. 18 II.

Reich, and that only through Germany's breakdown had Poland obtained these territories.

At this point I remarked that it was not to be forgotten that before the Partitions these territories had belonged to Poland.

M. von Ribbentrop replied that it was difficult to appeal to purely historical conceptions, and he stressed that the ethnic factor was to-day of prime importance.

I remarked that Polish Pomerania certainly was Polish, and alluded to the fact that in regard to the annexation of Bohemia and Moravia the Germans had used historical arguments.

M. von Ribbentrop recalled that after all Danzig was a German city, but he realized that in regard to the Danzig question Poland also was actuated by sentiment.

I corrected him by pointing out that in addition it was a vital necessity to Poland, to which M. von Ribbentrop remarked that that could be settled by way of a guarantee.

Discussing the guarantee which the Chancellor was prepared to give with respect to Poland's frontiers and Polish Pomerania in particular, M. von Ribbentrop stressed the point that no previous German Government had been able to give such a guarantee.

In connection with Danzig, the motor road and the guarantee, M. von Ribbentrop also mentioned the question of Slovakia, indicating that conversations would be possible on this subject. He emphasized that obviously an understanding between us would have to include explicit anti-Soviet tendencies. He affirmed that Germany could never collaborate with the Soviets, and that a Polish-Soviet understanding would inevitably lead to Bolshevism in Poland.

I stated that no Polish patriot would allow himself to be drawn towards Bolshevism. He said he realized that, but in this respect the Jewish element in Poland was a danger.

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Replying generally to M. von Ribbentrop's arguments, I pointed out that so far as our Press was concerned its tone was now quieter than that of any other country. M. von Ribbentrop retorted that he took no notice of the uproar in the British Press. That agitation was entirely without importance. He believed that the Fuehrer always followed the right policy.

Subsequently, I stressed the fact that since 1934 our public opinion had been put to considerable trials. Nevertheless it remained quiet. I recalled that we had adopted a completely understanding attitude on the question of realization of Germany's equality of rights. We had maintained the same attitude in regard to the Austrian problem. After the settlement of the Sudeten problem, the question of Carpathian Ruthenia had come up, and had clouded the atmosphere between our two countries.

I stated that now, during the settlement of the Czecho-Slovakian question, there was no understanding whatever between us. The Czech issue was already hard enough for the Polish public to swallow, for, despite our disputes with the Czechs, they were after all a Slav people. But in regard to Slovakia the position was far worse. I emphasized our community of race, language and religion, and mentioned the help we had given in their achievement of independence. I pointed out our long frontier with Slovakia. I indicated that the Polish man in the street could not understand why the Reich had assumed the protection of Slovakia, that protection being directed against Poland. I said emphatically that this question was a serious blow to our relations.

M. von Ribbentrop reflected a moment, and then answered that this could be discussed.

I promised to refer to you the suggestion of a conversation between you and the Chancellor. M. von Ribbentrop remarked that I might go to Warsaw during the next few days to talk over this matter. He advised that the talk should not be delayed, lest the Chancellor should come to the conclusion that Poland was rejecting all his offers.

Finally, I asked whether he could tell me anything about his conversation with the Foreign Minister of Lithuania.

M. von Ribbentrop answered vaguely that he had seen M. Urbšys on the latter's return from Rome,<sup>10</sup> and they had discussed the Memel question, which called for a solution.

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<sup>10</sup> The Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Juozas Urbšys, met with Ribbentrop on 20 March on his way back from Rome. The German minister demanded that Lithuania immediately hand over the Memel district to Germany. Lithuania was forced to give in to the ultimatum. The German-Lithuanian agreement in this matter was signed in Berlin during the night of 22 March.

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In view of the importance of this conversation I am sending this report through Prince Lubomirski.

Arising out of the conversation, I am prompted to make the following remarks:

The fact that M. von Ribbentrop said nothing on his own initiative about Memel suggests that his conversation with me to-day, proposing a fundamental exchange of views between you and the Chancellor, is perhaps aimed at securing our neutrality during the Memel crisis.

M. von Ribbentrop's suggestion of a conversation and his emphasis on its urgency are a proof that Germany has resolved to carry out her Eastern programme quickly, and so desires to have Poland's attitude clearly defined.

In these circumstances the conversation acquires very real importance, and must be carefully considered in all its aspects.

I assume that you will be desiring to summon me to Warsaw in a day or two in regard to this matter.

*PWB, doc. 61; PDD 1939/I, doc. 115*

## 62

*21 March. Cable from the Ambassador in London  
about his conversation  
with the British Foreign Secretary*

London, 21 March 1939

Warsaw cipher cable No. 35.

Secret.

Lord Halifax has read to me the text of today's instruction to Kennard, containing a proposal for a common declaration, consultations and common

defence.<sup>11</sup> He added the following clarification: the English government intended at first to turn primarily to countries of the Balkan Entente. He then acknowledged that he first had to obtain the cooperation of the powers, i.e., France, Russia and Poland, after which he wished to appeal to the other countries.

The English government hopes that Poland, by way of negotiations with Germany, will be able to successfully resolve the question of Danzig. Should this prove not to be the case, however, and if a conflict connected with Danzig emerges, Great Britain's offer also includes Danzig. As to Memel, the English Government is of the opinion that a compromise with Germany will be achieved through Lithuanian conciliation. However, in the face of a possible German provocation or excessive demands, the offer extends to Memel as well.

During the conversation, Halifax asked: (I) whether, in light of the Polish-German declaration, Poland would conceivably be entitled to take military action against Germany (this issue had been raised at yesterday's cabinet meeting); (II) how far-reaching are our obligations as an ally of Romania?

Ad I. I answered that the declaration took our earlier obligations into account. Its text speaks for itself. Ad II. I replied in keeping with Minister Beck's cable No. 46.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, without dissimulating the

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<sup>11</sup> 20 March, the British Foreign Secretary instructed the British ambassadors in Paris, Moscow and Warsaw to submit a project for a common British-French-Soviet-Polish declaration, announcing the immediate calling of a conference of the four countries for the purpose of deciding on necessary steps to be taken in case of a threat to the independence of any European state.

<sup>12</sup> In his instruction to the Polish ambassador in Paris for his meeting with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs on 20 March 1939, Beck reiterated '... that we can't see any real possibility of German aggression against Romanian territory. This could only take place with Hungarian participation. Without doubt, we will make use of all our influence in Budapest and Bucharest to ensure peace and promote a consolidation of Hungarian-Romanian relations. In our opinion, this should be considered as the most important goal and any difficulties in reaching it caused by actions not dictated by necessity should be avoided. We share a guarantee pact with Romania dated 15 January 1931 and a military convention, which spells out our obligations. Until now, the Romanian government has not turned to us for additional guarantees, given which it is difficult for us to conduct discussions on the subject with a third country'. See PDD 1939/I, doc. 109.

importance we accord to the Polish-Romanian alliance, I underscored Poland's great concern about Hungarian-Romanian relations and our efforts aimed at their improvement.

Raczyński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 116*

## 63

### *22 March. Personal cable of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in London about British proposals*

Warsaw, 22 March at 5:05 A.M.

Cipher cable No. 1. (personal)

Received cable No. 35. Secret

I wish to inform you that, in the matter of the English proposal, I told the British ambassador and Hudson<sup>13</sup> today, as a casual personal opinion, that: (I) The Polish government took into consideration the suggestions as an unusually far-reaching matter with all the seriousness merited by this type of proposals. (II) At first glance, I would like to point out that, in the face of concrete actions of the opposing side, our possible agreements would also have to be concrete and effective. I note further that bringing the Soviets into the discussions could dangerously accelerate the emergence of a general conflict before the contracting parties are ready.

I elaborated on these general considerations with both interlocutors.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 122*

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<sup>13</sup> The British Foreign Trade Secretary met with the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs on 21 March 1939.

## 64

*23 March. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in London  
in connection with British proposals*

Warsaw, 23 March 1939

Top secret

To Mr. E. Raczynski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
in London.

In connection with the English proposal, and in particular with your conversation with Lord Halifax on 21 March, please ask Halifax if, given:

1) the unavoidable difficulties and complications and the resulting loss of time in multilateral negotiations,

2) and, on the other hand, the rapid course of events which could make it necessary, from one day to the next, to arrive at a friendly understanding for the coordination of views and actions,

the English government wouldn't consider the possibility of concluding with us without delay a bilateral and secret understanding in the spirit of the proposed declaration, taking into account the comments given to you by Lord Halifax in the above-mentioned conversation.

I understand that this type of understanding would not have to settle the fate of the general negotiations, whereas it could at once give us a basis for useful cooperation in various areas that represent a certain threat.

I spoke to the English ambassador in Warsaw about my thoughts on such an understanding, adding that we had the 1921 alliance agreement with France, whereas the English, in turn, had their own agreements with the French, so that—should there be an understanding between our two governments—it wouldn't be in contradiction with either Poland's or England's policy with regard to France. I also understand that at an appropriate moment, the French government would be informed confidentially of our possible decisions.

One more argument for the form of a bilateral agreement is that raising the issue of a trilateral accord with France at the outset would be, should there be any indiscretions, considered by the Soviets as an unfriendly step, something we would like to avoid as, while having reservations about tying ourselves to the Soviets, we nonetheless strive to maintain correct relations with them.

We could quickly define the form and scope of the possible accord, or even a gentlemen's agreement, insofar as the English government would consider it acceptable in principle. Secrecy is, as far as I know, rarely used in agreements by England and by us as well, but the unique circumstances and the particularly tense atmosphere incline us to consider this form by way of an exception.

I would like to ask you to present our suggestions *sans insister* so that the English government would understand them as an expression of our good will to work together in a difficult situation, and not as the desire to drag England artificially into matters that exceed the scope of its political program.

MINISTER

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 125; excerpts in PWB, doc. 66*

## 65

*23 March. Letter of the Chef de cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in London about British proposals*

London, 23 March 1939

SECRET.

To Ambassador Raczyński,

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

In supplement to Józef Potocki's letter,<sup>14</sup> I am sending you a few more comments that are Minister Beck's almost literal words, as taken down by myself.

With regard to the English, i.e., Kennard and Hudson, Minister Beck, with the reservation that an appropriate position would be taken by the government in the matter of the English declaration, raised two points in particular:

1) The counterpart (Germany) is acting in a specific area, seeking specific goals and using specific measures, by means of swift decisions; in such

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<sup>14</sup> See PPD 1939/I, doc. 126.



conditions specific methods of action should be decided on in specific matters. The declaration itself is not a preventive measure.

2) I have to draw your attention (the Minister told them) to Russia. I do not mean animosities. Mutual relations *between Poland and the Soviets* after the Czech crisis have entirely levelled. I am deeply convinced, however, that animosities that exist between Berlin and Moscow today are of the type that involving the Soviets in the agreement could, in a violent and unusually rapid manner, cause the outbreak of a general conflict. Such an acceleration of events leading to a conflict may not lie in our (Poland, England and France's) interest.

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From our experience we know that Germany tolerates our relations with France without any objections, and I think that our attitude towards England would also give rise to more than reactions in the press. Cooperation with the Soviets, however, could lead to a violent reaction on the part of Germany.

With warm regards,

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 127*

## 66

*24 March. Record of the speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs made during a political briefing at his office on 24 March 1939*

SECRET

MINISTER: The tension of the situation requires an investigation of the whole complex of problems. The situation is serious and it cannot be ignored. And it is serious because one of the elements hitherto timely for the definition of the state's situation, that is, Germany, has lost its calculability, with which it was endowed even amidst difficult problems.

Therefore a number of new elements have appeared in our politics and a number of new problems in the state.

As far as the basic line of action is concerned, a straight and clear line has been established with the top factors in the state. We defined with precision the limits of our direct interests, and beyond this line we conduct a normal

policy and undertake action dealing with it as with normal current work. Below this line comes our Polish *non possumus*. This is clear: we will fight. Once the matter is put this way, chaos is overcome by a considerable share of calm, and thinking becomes orderly.

Where is the line? It is our territory, but not only that. The line also involves the non-acceptance by our state, regarding the drastic spot that Danzig has always been, of any unilateral suggestion to be imposed on us. And, regardless of what Danzig is worth as an object (in my opinion it may perhaps be worth quite a lot, but this is of no concern at the moment), under the present circumstances it has become a symbol. This means that, if we join that category of eastern states that allow rules to be dictated to them, then I do not know where the matter will end. That is why it is wiser to go forward to meet the enemy than to wait for him at home.

This enemy is a troublesome element, since it seems that he is losing the measure of thinking and acting. He might recover that measure once he encounters determined opposition, which hitherto he has not met with. The mighty have been humble to him, and the weak have capitulated in advance, even at the cost of honour. The Germans are marching all across Europe with nine divisions; with such strength Poland would not be overcome. Hitler and his associates know this, so that the question of a political contest with us will not be like the others.

I started with the extreme problem, in order to establish immediately an outlet for our thinking on this matter. On this basis we shall start international action. We have arrived at this difficult moment in our politics with all the trump cards in our hand. This does not speak badly for us.

I would like you, Gentlemen, to use your influence on your junior colleagues in order to bestow on our Ministry the bearing commensurate with these serious premises.

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 503–504, PDD 1939/I, doc. 131*

## 67

*25 March. Instruction of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
for the Ambassador in Berlin in connection with the conversation  
with Ribbentrop*

Warsaw, 25 March 1939

Top Secret.

To the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
in Berlin.

With reference to the questions addressed to you on 21 March<sup>15</sup> by Herr von Ribbentrop relating to the complex of Polish-German relations, please communicate the following reply:

1) As in the past, so now, the Polish government attaches full importance to the maintenance of good-neighbourly relations to the utmost extent with the German Reich.

The Polish government has given definite proof of this by the fact that in 1933 it was first to adopt a friendly attitude toward the Third Reich by opening conversations with a view to eliminating difficulties—conversations which led to the Polish-German declaration of 26 January 1934.

It will be appropriate, at this moment, to remind the German Reich of the friendly attitude adopted by the Polish government toward the first National Socialist Senate of the Free City of Danzig.

During the five years following, in all its political activity in the international sphere, the Polish government always refused to take any part in action directed against the interests of the German Reich.

Finally, it is a known fact that in 1938 the firm attitude of the Polish government, marked with understanding for national German revindications, contributed in a great measure to the avoidance of the catastrophe of war.

2) In regard to questions on which agreement has hitherto always been achieved, but concerning which the German Reich has recently put forward new proposals, namely, on the question of transit between the Reich and East

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<sup>15</sup> See doc. 61.

Prussia and on the question of regulating the future of the Free City of Danzig, the Polish government considers that:

a) It has no interest in hindering the German government's free communication with the Eastern Province of the Reich. For this reason also, despite many changes which have occurred in recent years by comparison with the previous state of affairs (for instance, the payment of transfers), the Polish government not only has not placed any difficulties in the way of privileged rail transit but has arranged the financial side of this transit in accordance with German interests. This being its attitude, the Polish government is quite willing to study together with the German government the possibility of further simplification and more facilities in rail and road transit between Germany and East Prussia, so that German citizens shall not encounter unnecessary difficulties while using these communications. To this end technical experts could set to work to draw up plans which would by degrees render possible an improvement also in the technical aspect of these communications. All facilities granted on Polish territory could only exist, however, within the limits of Polish sovereignty, and therefore extraterritorial status for ways of communication could not be considered. With this exception, the Polish government's intentions are in the direction of the most liberal treatment of the German *desiderata*.

The solution of the problem, however, depends upon the attitude the German government adopts in regard to my suggestions in the following point.

b) So far as the status of the Free City of Danzig is concerned, the Polish government recalls that it has for a long time now made references to the necessity for a settlement of this issue by way of an understanding between Warsaw and Berlin, this because it would correspond to the essence of the problem, and all the more because the League of Nations is losing the possibility of fulfilling the obligations it has undertaken in the matter.

From previous conversations it is clear that there is no difference of opinion as to the basic approach to the problem, that is, that the Polish government in no way hinders the free national life of the Free City of Danzig, while the German government has declared its respect for Polish rights and interests in the spheres of economy, communications, merchant marine, and the Polish population on the territory of the Free City. As the entire problem is contained in these two points, the Polish government considers it would be possible to find a solution based on a joint Polish-German guarantee to the Free City of Danzig. Such a guarantee would need to meet the aspirations of

the German population on the one hand, and to safeguard Polish interests on the other, which interests for that matter are synonymous with the interests of the population of the Free City, considering that the City's well-being has, for centuries, been based upon Polish maritime trade.

The problem of the superhighway is primarily of a technical nature. In the opinion of the Polish government it should be studied by technical experts. On the question of the Free City of Danzig it would be advisable first to have a discussion of political principles between the government of the German Reich and the Polish government so as to ensure that in this organism, in the Chancellor's words employed in February last year, the national conditions of the Free City on the one hand, and the rights and interests of Poland on the other, would be respected. To ensure a stabilization of conditions in our part of Europe, the Polish government considers it desirable to carry on conversations on all these questions as quickly as possible, so as to find a basis for a lasting consolidation of good-neighbourly relations between Poland and Germany.

I request you to add orally, and with some emphasis, that Marshal Piłsudski explicitly stressed to me that the method of handling the Polish-Danzig problem would be a touchstone of Polish-German relations. I ask you to add that you would be grateful if this opinion were brought to the Chancellor's notice.

You can present your statement, *in extenso* or recapitulated in the form of a memorandum, to the Reich Foreign Minister. On this occasion please add that, if there is a question of my possible meeting with the Reich Chancellor, I always regard this contact as a factor of immeasurable importance, not only to relations between our countries, but to general European policy. Yet I would add that in the present difficult situation I think it indispensable that such conversations should be prepared for by a previous elucidation of the above-mentioned questions, at least in outline form. For, in the atmosphere existing today, personal contacts which yielded no positive results might prove to be a retrogressive step in relations between our states. That my government would desire to avoid.

Please add at the same time that we must now devote great attention to our mutual relations. For owing to Germany's latest steps in regard to both Slovakia and Lithuania, of which the Polish government was not informed even at the last moment, although they concerned territories situated right on the frontiers of the Polish Republic, the general atmosphere demands

clarification, and the methods of progress utilized by both governments must be chosen with particular caution.

In case the conversation turns to the subject of relations with Soviet Russia, please, recalling my conversation with von Ribbentrop in Warsaw and my explanation given to the Chancellor at Berchtesgaden, confirm that we always considered Russia's access to European politics a dangerous thing. Also please stress that we consider blocking the penetration of Communism into Poland one of the supreme tasks of our state.

MINISTER

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 504–507; PDD 1939/I, doc. 137*

## 68

### *26 March. Report of the Ambassador in Berlin on his conversation with Ribbentrop (with appendix)*

Berlin, 26 March 1939

Top Secret

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
i n W a r s a w

I was received today by Minister of Foreign Affairs von Ribbentrop. Our conversation lasted from 12.30 P.M. to 2.00 P.M.

Mr. von Ribbentrop received me with evident coolness.

At the outset, I pointed out that I had been in Warsaw, where I related my conversation with the Reich's Minister of Foreign Affairs on 21 March.<sup>16</sup> In connection with this, I was instructed by my government to communicate our position in the questions under discussion. I then carried out with precision your instructions of 25 March with the exception of the last section

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<sup>16</sup> See doc. 61.

concerning relations with Soviet Russia.<sup>17</sup> I left Mr. von Ribbentrop a note in German containing points 1 and 2a and b. A copy is appended.

Mr. von Ribbentrop began by stating, with some excitement, that there had been news of our 'mobilisation directives'.<sup>18</sup> Certain troop movements have also been noticed in Polish Pomerania. This made a terrible impression. He pointed out that while he had made a certain offer of a wider understanding to us on 21 March, we responded by issuing military directives. This is reminiscent of similar risky moves by another country (he was obviously thinking of Czechoslovakia). He added that any aggression against Danzig on our part would constitute aggression against the Reich.

In response, I stated firmly that our measures are perfectly natural in the existing situation. I added that there is no question of mobilisation. I emphasised that the German government had been making similar provisions for a long time.

Ribbentrop interjected that Germany had not called up year-lists.

I went on to say that it is clear that we have no aggressive intentions. I further emphasised that the German forces, upon entering Czechoslovakia, initially marched on Moravská Ostrava along our western frontier. I then raised Poland's surprise at the matter of Slovakia, which has a long frontier with Poland, the German troop movements in Slovakia, and the fortifications it is building there. Finally, I mentioned that following my discussion of 21 March, there had been the unexpected, for Poland, German ultimatum to Lithuania.

Mr. von Ribbentrop interjected that it hadn't been an ultimatum and explained his conversation with the Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In conclusion, I pointed out that it is understandable that we are also taking certain protective measures in these conditions, the more so as other countries—Hungary, Italy and others—are doing the same.

I am conveying Mr. von Ribbentrop's argumentation in this matter and my replies as a whole, despite the fact that during the conversation this question arose several times. I had the impression, however, that our arguments were decisive.

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<sup>17</sup> See previous document.

<sup>18</sup> This refers to the secret, partial mobilisation conducted by means of draft cards, as a result of which four infantry divisions, one cavalry brigade and a number of smaller units were put on a war footing. As a result of these directives, Poland's armed forces increased from about 282,000 to about 374, 000 men.

I take the liberty to draw your attention to a characteristic formulation in Mr. von Ribbentrop's arguments about Danzig, which would seem to indicate that the German side was expecting us to take steps against the Free City.

The discussion then turned to the question of the motorway and Danzig.

Of the arguments concerning the facilitation of communications between East Prussia and the rest of the Reich, Mr. von Ribbentrop took up the passage which states that the extraterritoriality of communications arteries couldn't enter into question. His thoughts pointed in the direction that the separation of East Prussia from the rest of the Reich, a fact so painful for the German nation, should be soothed in a manner that would produce the psychologically desired effect. For this reason—in his opinion—this matter can't be treated solely in a technical and communications framework, but on a wider political plane. In the German view the extraterritorial motorway is seen as such an element. It is a sort of a corridor within a corridor, though this term is not entirely accurate. In the German public's viewpoint it would, however, constitute a certain link between Prussia and the Reich, a link that belonged to Germany.

As to our position on Danzig, Mr. von Ribbentrop also views it critically, and he returned to his earlier statements about the possibility of guaranteeing all of Poland's interests and rights in extending German sovereignty over the Free City. He placed the strongest stress on such sovereignty. He indicated that the entire concept is viewed by the German side within the context of a very wide Polish-German *Ausgleich*, based on the assumption that Poland and Germany are dependent on one another and that Poland is a factor of first importance in the East. He recalled here that the German government, for example, recognises Poland's priority in Ukrainian matters, though this may not please certain elements of German public opinion much. In the same way, he indicated that it would be possible to discuss the Slovak question within the framework of such an *Ausgleich*.

Despite the fact that, in keeping with the instructions, I stressed firmly that Marshal Piłsudski considered the matter of Danzig to be the gauge of Polish-German relations, von Ribbentrop let slip that had the Marshal been alive, an understanding would have been found in the matter of Danzig and the motorway on a wider political plane (I am only citing this as a characteristic contribution).

In my reply about communications between East Prussia and the Reich, I strove to show that we are ready to be quite liberal in the sphere of all transit



facilitations. About Danzig, I mentioned several arguments. Above all, I pointed out that we did not interfere with the life of the German population of the City at a time when the word of the League mattered, by which we gave our concessions upfront. I then underlined that in the Free City there is a German Senate, a German *Gauleiter* and all manner of freedom of development for Germans. Therefore, I can't understand in what way German feelings could be hurt. I stressed that with the new legal forms that the Reich was finding, it would probably not be difficult to find a mutually acceptable way out in keeping with our proposal.

Nonetheless, Mr. von Ribbentrop continuously kept returning to the question of German sovereignty over Danzig. When he pointed out that the Chancellor supposedly said that Danzig had no significance from a military point of view, I said that he should glance at the map to understand our position, adding that the Statute provides for the demilitarisation of the Free City. This argument seems to have impressed Mr. von Ribbentrop.

Mr. von Ribbentrop said that he would communicate our answer to the Chancellor, who is in Bavaria presently, and that he himself would have to view our answer critically. He fears that the Chancellor could become convinced that there can be no understanding with Poland—something he would like to avoid. As my words entailed that a meeting between you and the Chancellor could only take place after the framework for such a meeting will have been appropriately defined, he can see no possibility for the meeting for now. For this reason, he was wondering what to do. I replied that it would be advisable, above all, to strive to calm public opinion down.

As Mr. von Ribbentrop was complaining about our press, I bluntly told him a few facts. First of all, I stated with 75% certainty that Poland is now calmer than other states. This arises from the fact that we struggled for 150 years for our freedom during the insurrections. It also arises from our pro-independence attitude, which gives us inner calm. I did not hide from Mr. von Ribbentrop that the Reich's recent surprising us with the matter of Slovakia and Lithuania led to understandable agitation among our public opinion.

As we were speaking on this subject, Mr. von Ribbentrop sort of asked why there is such distrust in Poland, so I said vaguely that the latest swift developments have altered so many treaties and understandings that a changing public opinion isn't surprising.

At the end of our conversation, Mr. von Ribbentrop attempted to get a clarification about whether, once public opinion has calmed down, there are chances that the questions of the motorway's extraterritoriality and German sovereignty over Danzig could be accepted by the Polish government in the foreseeable future. I gave him no grounds for hope in this respect, but I reiterated the statement that transit arrangements in practice meant an extraterritorial motorway, and in the matter of Danzig I strongly insisted that he once again study the problem, whose difficult nature the Chancellor himself recognised in his conversation with you at Berchtesgaden, when he said that something new should be sought through the creation of a certain organism (*Körper*).

I would like to add that during the course of my arguments, Mr. von Ribbentrop made a certain allusion to rumours which are being spread in Poland, by which I understood that he meant certain anti-German combinations. He added that he personally didn't believe it.

It is characteristic that he didn't ask about our attitude towards Soviet Russia.

In summary of the above conversation, I think that it will be reported to the Chancellor, who will decide on the reply that will be communicated to us. I wish to point out that, despite the fact that Mr. von Ribbentrop was evidently cool at the outset of our conversation, he then in the course of a wider conversation took up a tone indicative of a willingness to overcome Polish-German difficulties. He kept repeating that there are psychological moments here which statesmen are called to overcome. This time his tone departed from that of the conversation of 21 March.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
Józef Lipski

1 appendix

*Submitted to Germany on 26 March 1939*

I.

Presently as in the past, the Polish government attaches great importance to maintaining, for the longest possible time, good-neighbourly relations with the German Reich.

The Polish government gave clear indication of this stance by the fact that, as early as 1933, it was the first among foreign governments to adopt a friendly

attitude towards the Third Reich and took up negotiations which led to the Polish-German Declaration of 26 January 1934.

The positive stance adopted by Poland with regard to the National Socialist senate in Danzig should also be recalled here.

During the five years that followed, the Polish government, in its political actions on the international stage, continually avoided taking part in actions directed against the German Reich.

Finally, it is a known fact that in the autumn of 1938, Poland's firm position to a significant degree contributed to averting armed conflict in connection with the realisation of German demands.

## II.

With regard to the issue of transit communication between the German Reich and East Prussia, and also the issue of the Free City of Danzig, in which both governments have always succeeded in reaching an agreement, and in connection with which the German government is raising new suggestions, the Polish government's position is the following:

a) The Polish government has no interest in hampering communications between East Prussia and the rest of the Reich. With this in mind, despite the many changes that have taken place in recent years in comparison to the previous state (in the transfer of payments, for example), the Polish government not only refrained from causing difficulties in privileged rail transit, but also undertook to conduct the settlement of this transit taking German interests into account.

Based on this position, the Polish government is ready to examine, along with the German government, further possibilities of simplifying and facilitating rail and road communications between East Prussia and the rest of the Reich, so as to reduce obstacles to German travellers in their use of this communications artery. For the purpose of realising the above aim, technical experts could undertake the preparation of proposals.

At the same time, all concessions granted by Poland could only take place within the framework of Polish sovereignty—the extraterritoriality of the communications routes is thus out of the question. With this reservation, the Polish government is willing to take German wishes into consideration as much as possible.

b) As far as the Free City of Danzig is concerned, it should be recalled that the Polish government, in its understanding of the necessity for an agreement

concerning this issue by way of an exchange of opinions between Warsaw and Berlin, has been making relevant suggestions for a long time. This seemed particularly warranted given the situation of the League of Nations, which was no longer in a position to fully carry out the obligations it had taken upon itself in the Free City of Danzig.

As follows from Polish-German discussions so far, there has been no difference of views as to the basic principle that the Polish government is not striving in any way to hamper the internal free existence of the German population of the Free City; and that, on the other hand, the German government respects Polish rights, as well as the economic, maritime, communications and technical interests and rights of the Polish population in the Free City. As these two questions are of a fundamental character, the Polish government believes that it would be possible to find a solution that would rest on a common Polish-German guarantee extended to the Free City of Danzig. Such a guarantee would, on the one hand, satisfy the free development of the German national group and its internal political life and, on the other, make Polish rights and interests secure. In any case, Polish interests are consistent with the economic interests of the Free City's population, just as its prosperity, for hundreds of years, has been dependent on Polish overseas trade.

In contrast to the already-mentioned communications facilitations problem, which, in the opinion of the Polish government, is overwhelmingly technical in character and could be a matter for the experts, in the matter of the Free City political principles would first have to be discussed between the Polish and German governments, namely in the sense that in this organism, in keeping with the words of the Reich Chancellor of February 1938, Poland would respect the nationality relations in the Free City, while the Free City and Germany would respect the rights and interests of Poland.

The Polish government thinks it desirable, for the purpose of stabilising relations in this part of Europe, to proceed as quickly as possible to an exchange of views in connection with both the above problems, which should be considered jointly in order to find a basis for future reinforcement of good-neighbourly relations.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 139; excerpts in PWB, doc. 63*

## 69

*27 March. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in Paris  
about Polish objections with regard  
to the British four-state declaration*

Warsaw, 27 March 1939

S e c r e t .

To the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
i n P a r i s .

Please inform the French Government confidentially, best of all M. Daladier personally, that the Polish Government has raised certain objections to the British proposal for a joint declaration by Great Britain, France, the U.S.S.R. and Poland. These objections are induced by a lack of faith that a step of this kind would be adequate. However, the Polish Government does not decline bilateral discussions with the British Government on matters which were to have been the subject of the said declaration.

Furthermore, the Polish Government desires to make it known to the French Government that it regards any Polish-British discussion of this kind as running parallel with Polish-French relations, and treats it as a strengthening of the alliance between Poland and France.

M i n i s t e r

*PWB, doc. 67; PDD 1939/I, doc. 140*

## 70

*28 March. Record of the conversation between the Minister  
of Foreign Affairs and the German Ambassador*

Warsaw, 28 March 1939

SECRET.

Record of the conversation between M. Beck and M. von Moltke

M. Beck made the following declaration to the German Ambassador:

Dans une conversation qui a eu lieu entre l'Ambassadeur de Pologne à Berlin et Mr. de Ribbentrop – ce dernier (il s'agissait d'une conversation évidemment) a dit, qu'une agression polonaise contre la Ville Libre de Danzig serait considérée par le Gouvernement du Reich comme une agression contre l'Allemagne.

Sans insister sur le bien fondé de cette déclaration, au point de vue du droit international, je dois déclarer au nom de mon Gouvernement, que toute intervention du Gouvernement Allemand pour changer le status quo existant à Danzig sera considérée par le Gouvernement Polonais comme une agression contre la Pologne.

A titre de commentaire j'ajoute, qu'une tentative analogue faite par le Sénat de la Ville Libre trouverait une réaction immédiate du Gouvernement Polonais.

Néanmoins vous pouvez dire de ma part à votre Gouvernement, que le Gouvernement Polonais n'a nullement l'intention de commettre un acte de violence contre la Ville Libre et il est toujours d'avis que le sort de cet organisme doit être réglé par voie d'entente entre le Gouvernement Polonais et celui du Reich.

The Ambassador, in earnest: Vous voulez négocier au bout des bayonnettes.

Minister Beck: C'est d'après votre système.

*The Minister then expressed hope that the line of 1934 can nonetheless be maintained.*

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 143, also in PWB, doc. 64, without the last sentence*

## 71

*28 March. Letter from the Chef de cabinet of the Minister  
of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in Paris in connection  
with the British proposal and Polish-German relations*

28 March 1939

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

You already know of the proposal submitted by the British government to us in the matter of the Declaration of the Four. In this matter, I wish to inform you privately that we have raised certain reservations with regard to the English government. These reservations concerned the participation of the Soviet Union, not on account of any present tensions in our relations with Russia, but because we think that Russia's participation could lead to unexpectedly quick counter-actions by the Germans at a most inconvenient moment for us all. The Germans view our relations with France rather calmly and would most probably countenance the establishment of closer London-Warsaw relations, whereas they would view any ties between Warsaw and Moscow as an overly direct threat.

Of course our position is not a refusal, but it is an attempt to draw attention to the specific situation of Poland, which is without a doubt threatened militarily to a greater extent than France, and even more so than Russia or England.

As to the matter of Danzig, which has now once again come to the fore, it remains unchanged:

- 1) legal difficulties, but not catastrophic, in Danzig;
- 2) avoiding any discussion with us on the subject of extending guarantees to the existing state of affairs, i.e., Danzig's separateness from the Reich;
- 3) promising us, in exchange for resolving the Danzig difficulties and the issue of the motorway across Polish Pomerania, great benefits in a common anti-Russian policy, with recognition for the priority of our interests in Ukrainian matters.

So far, both sides are keeping to their positions. Our military directives activating a couple of divisions made it clear to the Germans that we will defend our Danzig affairs. There are no signs that this might lead to a direct

short circuit—rather it should be expected that the Germans will attempt to soften us up by striking in other areas (Eastern Galicia, minority affairs, etc.).

It rather seems as if the Polish-German contest, which Berlin traditionally strives for following each of its successes, has once again misfired and the game will most probably be put off.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 144*

## 72

### *29 March. Report of the Ambassador in Paris on his conversation with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Paris, 29 March 1939

Top Secret.

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

Today at 3:30 P.M., I called upon Minister Bonnet to repeat the declaration I had made to Prime Minister Daladier and to share with him my impressions of the conversation I had this morning with the Prime Minister.

From what Minister Bonnet has told me, I take it as my duty to communicate to you what follows.

1) Fifteen days ago, immediately after Germany's occupation of the Czech lands, Minister Bonnet submitted to London a project of a diplomatic initiative whose aim was to oppose Germany's further expansion and which was to be conducted in a discrete manner, through the following three stages: the first—specification and tightening of the French-English alliance (I assume that this concerned guarantees for the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland); the second—conclusion of a guarantee treaty between France, England, Poland and, possibly, Romania; and the third—establishing contacts with Russia on the subject of the needs voiced in this respect by Poland and Romania, with the possibility of leaving Warsaw the role of a representative of sorts of France and England with regard to Moscow.



As we know, Prime Minister Chamberlain, on account of internal policy, while admitting in whole the spirit of Minister Bonnet's initiative, deformed it entirely in its practical application, by coming forward with an initiative of a public nature and unnecessarily engaging himself with regard to Moscow. The French government could not respond to Chamberlain's proposal negatively as, on the one hand, this would not have been understood by French public opinion and, on the other, it could have led to the English government's withdrawal from the desire to assume obligations with regard to the states of Eastern Europe, a desire that was undoubtedly part of the draft declaration. Minister Bonnet considers that the position taken by you with regards to Chamberlain's proposal was not only understandable and correct, but also beneficial both for Poland and for the matter as a whole. Thus, during Minister Bonnet's sojourn in London, when our first response—which was, in effect, a veritable *non possumus*—arrived, Minister Bonnet most firmly declared to Chamberlain that he considers that the Polish government is right and that it is necessary to continue the negotiations already begun, considering the necessity to both specify England's obligations and to create conditions for their execution by introducing military conscription.

2) Minister Bonnet received this morning from London the texts of the instructions sent from the Foreign Office to England's ambassadors in Warsaw and Bucharest. He thinks that these instructions reflect England's wholehearted intention to take on specific reciprocal guarantee obligations with regard to Poland and Romania and he believes that it is presently necessary to take on all possible efforts in order to incline England to introduce new military legislation. He personally thinks that from this point of view the situation in England is unfolding relatively successfully, making it possible to hope that continued pressure will lead to positive results.

3) Minister Bonnet has no fears about the possible actions of England's Germanophile and isolationist circles as expressed by Prime Minister Daladier in his conversation with me. He is of the opinion that England cannot go back on the path it has embarked upon and that the present moment should be used to ensure its firmest and furthest possible involvement of responsibility in continental politics.

*J. Łukasiewicz*  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

## 73

*29 March. Note by the Assistant Under Secretary of State  
on his conversation with the Italian Ambassador*

Secret

Note on Minister Arciszewski's conversation with the Italian Ambassador  
on 29 March 1939

On 29 March, the Italian Ambassador, Mr. Valentino, called on me, and asked at what stage Polish-German talks about Danzig and the motorway were at present. He was particularly interested in the question of whose initiative it was to begin the talks.

I replied to the Ambassador that, as he well knew, an exchange of views on the subject of Danzig, though very general in nature, had been going on between Warsaw and Berlin for several months and that these talks arose, as he may recall, in connection with the League of Nation's clear tendency to liquidate its mandate in the Free City. Recently the matter of Danzig has been raised again by the Germans during discussions in Berlin.

I stated that I couldn't say anything definite about the prospect of these talks yet, given that we wished to treat what had taken place thus far as a *prise de position de départ*. I emphasised very firmly that our position could not allow for a discussion about the abolishment of the separateness of the Free City.

The Ambassador expressed his admiration for such a staunch position on the part of Polish public opinion, of which he takes note and which comes to him as a surprise. He then asked me how one was to understand the military directives we had taken. I answered that these directives—of very modest degree—are but *un minimum de précaution* in relation to the known movements of masses of German troops around our frontiers within the last three weeks. These masses of troops, as we know, have been transferred from deep within Germany, even from Bavaria. Moreover, we have to take into account the fact that—contrary to all the calculations of our Staff until now—a new segment of the border has emerged in Slovakia, one that is permanently and strongly manned by German troops, which even have clearly begun to entrench themselves near our frontier. It is obvious that these new dislocations of German troops had to lead to a rethinking of our fundamental staff plans and of all directives related to them.

Further on during the conversation, the Italian Ambassador, speaking of Mussolini's last speech, told me that it should be viewed as an opening of the door to negotiations with France; he fears that France may not understand this correctly. Daladier's speech, scheduled for today, makes him anxious. It would be better for Daladier not to say anything rather than to make some gaffe that would spoil the climate once again. *Il faut que monsieur Daladier comprenne que si Mussolini a parlé, ce n'est pas pour que M. Daladier lui soit obligé d'une réponse.* The French have committed so much foolishness in the past that chances of one more foolishness being repeated are certain.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 154*

## 74

### *30 March. Note by the Head of the Western Section on the British guarantee offer to Poland*

During Ambassador Kennard's discussion with Minister Beck on 30 March 1939, Mr. Hankey came with a *further* instruction from the British Government to the Ambassador, to ask the Polish Government whether it had any objection to a *declaration* of the English Government guarantee extended to Poland in case of aggression or a threat to its independence. Mr. Chamberlain plans to make a declaration in this vein to the House of Commons the following day, on 31 March.

Mr. Beck took note of the above without raising any objections.

*Józef Potocki*

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 157, different version in PWB, doc. 68*

## 75

*31 March. Cable from the Ambassador in London  
about the British guarantee for Poland*

London, 31 March 1939.

Warsaw, cipher cable No. 49.

The Prime Minister's declaration has been well received in the House.<sup>19</sup> A certain degree of disorientation could be felt, especially among opposition members, caused by the lack of information about the position of the Soviets, who, for many members of Parliament, have been until recent days the desired strongest partner for Great Britain in the East of Europe. Despite the declaration, public opinion does not yet fully realise the far-reaching nature of the British action and of the obligations it has assumed.

Raczyński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 158*

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<sup>19</sup> In answer to the question of the opposition leader, Chamberlain declared on 31 March 1939 in the House of Commons that '... in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power'.

## 76

*31 March. Cable from the Ambassador in Moscow  
about his conversation with the Deputy People's Commissar  
for Foreign Affairs*

Moscow, 31 March 1939  
Received on 31 March at 10:30 P.M.

Mr. Grzybowski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
i n W a r s a w .

No. 42.

On Tuesday I went to see Potyomkin and told him that though I understood the absorption of all Soviet authorities with the party congress,<sup>20</sup> I nevertheless observe a protraction of the settlement of our outstanding issues. Today, P. summoned me and stated that the Soviet government was ready to begin settling the following issues without delay: (1) strive for the swiftest practical realisation of the trade agreement; (2) begin negotiations on air communications between Moscow and Warsaw; (3) proceed to a review of the arrests of Polish citizens; (4) initiate archive preparations (there will be difficulties on this point); (5) settle the matter of the priest.

I took note of these declarations. He then said, with some melancholy, that while matters are crystallising in London, Poland and Romania are rejecting Soviets assistance. He is worried about the possibility of German aggression against the Baltic States.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 159*

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<sup>20</sup> This is a reference to the 18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (b).

## 77

*1 April. Unsigned note from the Minister of Foreign Affairs' briefing  
in connection with the Danzig conflict*

1 April 1939

*Chef de cabinet*

Conference in Minister Beck's office on the Danzig problem.

Present: Messrs. General Stachiewicz, Vice-Minister Szembek, Minister Arciszewski, M. Łubieński, T. Kobylański.

Minister Beck does not think that we face an immediate decisive conflict over Danzig. However, we must be prepared for that eventuality and be in possession of emergency means which represent a compromise between military action and diplomacy.

The Minister envisages the following possibilities of a conflict:

I. Direct German military intervention in the form of trespassing of troops or landing of detachments. In that case our immediate counteraction follows in accordance with principles established by the General Staff. Entry of the fleet alone, without landing of detachments, would be dealt with as a diplomatic incident. In case of illegal entry of the German fleet into the Danzig harbour, our navy will not salute it in this port.

II. An internal Danzig putsch, that is, a case where initiative remains in the hands of the Senate or the Danzig Party.

Version A. Political declaration for reunion with the Reich. In the first stage only a diplomatic incident is created. On our side a protest is lodged in Danzig and in Berlin. Note to the German government should be formulated as follows: the Polish government supposes it to be only a sally of the local authorities; the German government should recognize that this cannot be tolerated by the Polish government. If the German government does not take this declaration under consideration, we shall consider this a violation of Polish rights and interests. Recognition by the Reich results in a Polish-German incident and our reaction as *ad p. I* (hypothetically).

Version B. Attack on Polish state organs in Danzig takes place, active reaction follows as *ad p. I*, but in proportion to the extent of the attack.

In case of an incident, railway orders are issued (Chief of the General Staff):

I. If the incident is confined to the Danzig territory only, transit communication at the sector of all transit lines across the Danzig territory is closed;

II. if Germany participates in the incident, all privileged transit is closed;

III. active reaction follows and mobilization orders are issued; a complete halt in communications.

General principles:

1) We are interested in maintaining the incident, as long as possible, within a local frame. Transfer of the quarrel to the level of Poland-Germany should not occur on our initiative but on the Reich's.

2) In case of a German ultimatum, answer that we cannot take it into consideration. In general do not get involved in any discussion as to yes or no. Act only on the basis of the Danzig or German *Uebergriff*.

3) In any case, the Minister is interrupting his trip and is returning to Warsaw.

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 526–527; PDD 1939/I, doc. 160*

## 78

### *1 April. Unsigned note from the Embassy in London about the British guarantee to Poland*

On 31 March, Prime Minister Chamberlain made the known declaration in Parliament. That same afternoon, the *Evening Standard* carried information from its diplomatic correspondent stating that the British guarantee with respect to Poland does not extend to the matter of Danzig or to the so-called 'Corridor'. In connection with this information, the *Standard's* diplomatic correspondent telephoned the Embassy privately, in order to communicate that he wasn't responsible for the note in the paper. He added that it had been written personally by the owner of the *Standard*, Lord Beaverbrook, who, in doing so, made categorical reference to information originating from the Prime Minister's closest circles! At 8:00 P.M. Reuters aired the known communiqué in the same spirit.

In connection with the information of the *Evening Standard*, Ambassador Raczyński immediately contacted the Foreign Office and demanded to see Sir Orme Sargent, one of the permanent Assistant Under Secretaries of State, the very next morning.

On 1 April, *The Times*—a paper, as we know, close to the Prime Minister, adopted the same line in its editorial as that of the *Evening Standard*, emphasising in even more categorical terms that the English guarantees did not apply to the entirety of Poland's frontiers, but only to Poland's independence, thus making a clear allusion to the necessity of negotiations between Poland and Germany on contentious issues, such as Danzig or the Corridor.

Ambassador Raczyński called on Sir Orme Sargent in the morning and protested in categorical terms against giving such an interpretation to the Prime Minister's declaration. The Ambassador laid out in detail the Polish point of view and did not hide that, according to his information, the interpreters who narrow the sense of the declaration are making reference to the authority of the Prime Minister. Sir Orme Sargent informed the ambassador of the substance of the conversation that took place between Minister Beck and Ambassador Kennard in Warsaw on the subject of the Reuters communiqué, adding that this matter made a deep impression at the Foreign Office, which gave instructions at 3:00 A.M. to withdraw the Reuters communiqué and to give the agency a dressing-down on that occasion. As a consequence of this incident, Sir Orme proposed that the Foreign Office provide the journalists with an official line rectifying the character attributed to the declaration in certain dailies. Following consultations with Warsaw, the Ambassador expressed his agreement for such a settling of the matter, on the condition that the text of the official line is consulted with us. As a result, on 1 April at 2:00 P.M., the Foreign Office issued the following declaration:

'Surprise has been expressed in official quarters that attempt should have been made in London to minimize the Prime Minister's statement of yesterday. The statement is regarded as an utterance of outstanding importance, the meaning of which is perfectly clear and categorical. No doubt is felt in official quarters that in present conditions the Polish Government will wish to keep His Majesty's Government fully informed though the latter does not seek in any way to influence the Polish Government in the conduct of its relations with the German Government'.

The above text was accepted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in a telephone conversation with Ambassador Raczyński. At the same time, Sir Orme Sargent asked the Ambassador to call on him again at the Foreign Office. During this visit, Sir Orme declared that the Foreign Office News



Department had been instructed to influence the press so that it would treat the communiqué with highest significance. Sir Orme then read out a note that he had drawn up for the Prime Minister on the basis of his morning conversation with the Ambassador and which contained precisely the basic line of the thought expressed.

Sir Orme went on to read to the Ambassador the note drawn up by the Foreign Office for possible use by the Prime Minister in his Monday declaration adding, however, that the Foreign Office couldn't be certain that the Prime Minister would wish to take it in consideration. Sir Orme asked if such a passage in the Prime Minister's speech would satisfy us. The Foreign Office's suggestion contained the following thought: The English government attaches and continues to attach great importance to the Polish-German treaty of 1934; it emphasises its conviction that this treaty will remain in force and expresses the hope that all contentious issues, as they arise, will be successfully settled by both Governments through negotiations. Referring to a certain confusion that arose in the public opinion as a result of the misunderstanding as to the significance of the term 'negotiations', the Ambassador replied that he can personally see no need for such a passage to be included in the Prime Minister's speech, but it could be used beneficially in the form of an answer to a question raised on the subject in Parliament, for example.

In the end, Sir Orme added that Lord Halifax had asked his colleagues from the House of Lords to settle for as short a debate as possible on Monday, in order to allow him to greet Minister Beck at the station personally.

London, 1 April 1939.<sup>1</sup>

P.S. The above matter was the subject of discussions in Parliament on 3 April. It was raised by a couple of opposition deputies, especially MP Dalton, who demanded to know who was responsible for the appearance in the press of such an interpretation of the Prime Minister's declaration. According to MP Dalton, such inspiration could theoretically have come from four sources: (1) the Foreign Office; (2) 10 Downing Street; i.e. the Prime Minister's residence—in connection with which Dalton mentioned the name of Sir Horace Wilson; (3) 11 Downing Street, i.e. the residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—Sir John Simon; and lastly (4) the Home Office, which is headed by Sir Samuel Hoare.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 161*

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<sup>1</sup> This note was supplement and sent after this date, as it contains information about discussions in Parliament on 3 April.

## 79

*1 April. Cable from the Ambassador in London  
about his intervention at the Foreign Office*

London, 1 April 1939

Warsaw    cipher cables Nos. 51 and 52.

Berlin    cipher cables Nos. 5 and 6.

Paris    cipher cables Nos. 4 and 5.

Rome    cipher cables Nos. 2 and 3.

Secret.

In the face of the partial comments on the subject of the Prime Minister's declaration in yesterday's and today's press, I intervened today with Under Secretary Sargent, to whom I said what follows:

Poland greeted the declaration as a far-reaching and positive fact. At the same time, however, I must stress that given certain expressions which are indicative of its collective origin and heterogeneous character, the declaration does not rule out the possibility of an interpretation threatening to make it worthless, if not downright harmful. The seriousness of the present situation does not in the least lay in the existence between Poland and Germany of important problems requiring resolution through negotiations. Direct relations between the two states have for the past five years been based on the Polish-German declaration and have always been regulated by agreement in a satisfactory manner.

The English side's present stress on the desirability of Polish-German negotiations reflects a poor understanding of the factual situation. Moreover, through its 'Runcimanist' flavour,<sup>2</sup> it can at best have a constraining and hindering effect. It is precisely in the interest of maintaining proper Polish-German relations for the English government to refrain, as it offers us its possible assistance, from calling upon us to negotiate. Certain comments of the press are entirely wrong and harmful. Given this, I would like to ask the Foreign Office News Department to take immediate steps to inform public opinion in an appropriate manner.

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<sup>2</sup> In August 1938, Lord Runciman headed the mediation mission sent to Czechoslovakia in connection with the Sudeten crisis. His name has become one of the symbols of the policy of appeasement.

Sargent replied with a solemn assurance about the absolute good intentions of the English government, stressing that this government, in extending its guarantee in case of a threat to us not only isn't thinking of exerting any pressure on us for concessions towards Germany, but doesn't even advise any negotiations, leaving this matter entirely to our discretion, only expecting to be fully informed by us.

Sargent then showed me an internal official report from the incident involving the biased Reuters correspondence, containing instructions that were issued to give Reuters a dressing-down.

I am convinced that your firm stance in the matter and my intervention here were very convenient for the F.O. and reinforced its position with regard to the Prime Minister. In the afternoon, Sargent asked me to see him again to show me a memorandum for the Prime Minister that he had drawn up as a result of my morning intervention. In addition, the Foreign Office, with Halifax's approval, issued the known declaration to the press, promising me to give it the widest publicity possible.

Raczyński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 162*

## 80

*1 April. Cable from the Ambassador in Moscow  
on his conversation with the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs*

Moscow, 1 April 1939  
Received on 1 April 1939 at 8:05 P.M.

Mr. Grzybowski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

No. 44.

Litvinov invited me today and showed me a dispatch from Maysky, to whom Cadogan had communicated that Poland would not participate in any declaration and in any consultation together with the USSR. L. asked me to explain this position to him. I stated, first and foremost, that we were dealing

with an English formulation, not a Polish one. I then said that if we were to add the words 'against Germany' we would obtain a formula which had been known for a long time as fundamental for our policy. I laid out to him the situation in September, when Soviet troops were moved closer to our frontiers.<sup>3</sup> Potyomkin denounced the non-aggression pact and daily demonstrations were organised. Had we then sought support from Berlin, our policy would have turned to a game of seesaw. I added that we were not seeking guarantees as such and we certainly had no intention of searching for them among our great neighbours.

Please send instructions as to whether I can present the above as our official point of view, or should I add other comments.

Please send me information as to whether the news about Hungary's upcoming inclusion in the Reich is probable.<sup>4</sup>

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 164*

## 81

### *1 April. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in Moscow about Poland's position with regard to the USSR*

Polmission Moscow.

Received 42.

The plan of negotiations proposed by Potyomkin is basically acceptable.<sup>5</sup> Please take the opportunity to tell Potyomkin or Litvinov that in all

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<sup>3</sup> This refers to the actions of the USSR during the September 1938 Czechoslovak crisis.

<sup>4</sup> In response, the under secretary wrote: '(1) The Minister wholly approved of the position you have taken in your conversation with Litvinov. Our negative position about our participation in the Anti-Comintern Pact is generally known to both Western European governments and Anti-Comintern Pact governments. We have not discussed the matter with the British government lately. I will send you the answer to L.'s second question after I obtain the instruction from the Minister in London. (2) The rumor about the Hungarians is false. German pressure on Hungary is great.' PDD 1939/I, doc. 170.

<sup>5</sup> See doc. 76.

discussions presently underway in the West, Poland stresses its satisfaction with the normal course of Polish-Soviet relations.

Should either of them raise the matter of our reservations about participating in new multilateral arrangements along with the Soviets, please reply that the Soviets have to appreciate that we have also firmly refused and continue to refuse to participate in any aggressive arrangements directed against them.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 165*

## 82

### *4 April. Record of the conversation between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the British Foreign Secretary*

Report from the conversation between Minister Beck and Lord Halifax at the Foreign Office on 4 April 1939, 11:00 A.M.

Present were:

Lord Halifax, Sir A. Cadogan and P. Strang on the English side,

Minister Beck, Ambassador Raczyński and Director J. Potocki on the Polish side.

Minister Beck stated that, since in his last conversation with Sir H. Kennard he reserved his final answer to the British proposals, he thinks that it would be best if he were now to begin the conversation by giving the above answer.

Above all, he wishes to refer to the question put forward to him by Sir H. Kennard about whether Poland intends to defend its political and economic independence. He considers this question a rhetorical one; otherwise he would not have come to London.

He is of the opinion that the need for the present conversation arises from the fact that Germany's policy in recent times has lost all moderation. The Polish government continues to be ready to seek peaceful solutions, but can't

turn a blind eye to dangers that have become obvious. The proposal made by the English Government is an important one and was received warmly by the Polish Government, not only on account of its substance, but also given the form in which it was announced. Minister Beck wishes to declare that the moment HMG announced that it was ready to assume obligations with regard to Poland it became clear that these obligations must be mutual. This is the light in which the Polish Government understood these matters.

As far as the West of Europe is concerned, the matter seems clear. In Eastern Europe, however, the situation is somewhat less clear. Three issues arose there, two of which were addressed in the British proposal, whereas the third has not yet been touched upon. They are: (1) Soviet Russia, (2) the Danube Basin, and (3) the Baltic States.

Beginning with Soviet Russia, Minister Beck repeats what he has already communicated to the English Ambassador in Warsaw, namely that given the great tension that exists between Moscow and Berlin it would be dangerous to draw Russia into any discussions. Minister Beck recalled what Marshal Pilsudski once said, namely that when one speaks of Germany and Russia, not only interests, but also ideological passions come into play. For this reason, the question of Soviet Russia requires a particularly careful treatment and special methods.

Two things are impossible from the Polish point of view, namely making Poland's policy dependent on either Berlin or Moscow. Minister Beck is glad that this has been reflected in the last British proposal. As far as the Danube Basin is concerned, we have two close countries: Romania and Hungary, an ally and a friend. The Polish-Romanian alliance only comes into play in case of an attack from the East. It is Poland's policy not to allow a conflict between Romania and Hungary and limiting our influence to Romania would throw Hungary into Germany's arms. For this reason, Poland considers an act of this nature as premature. Moreover, given that Romania is Poland's ally, all extension of Poland's obligations with regard to Romania would require direct negotiations between Warsaw and Bucharest, as it is only on this axis that the interests of both countries could be discussed.

Minister Beck pointed out that this summed up the declaration of his government. He would now wish to add a few personal observations of a more general nature.

From recent contacts with Count Ciano and with the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Polish government is under the impression that both

Italy and Hungary are seriously worried by German projects. Even though the signs of this anxiety are not very visible, the Polish government thinks nonetheless that this is deep anxiety. Though the matter is delicate, the Polish government thinks that this factor should not be overlooked. In any case, Minister Beck is of the opinion that the door should not be closed, and no political action should be taken that would close this door. He is asking that the last observations be treated as strictly confidential.

Lord Halifax is asking if he has understood Minister Beck correctly, namely that in his [Beck's] opinion Romania's situation should be studied very carefully for fear not to throw Hungary into the hands of the Germans. At the same time, and in the same vein, he is asking if Minister Beck thinks that if Hungary finds itself in the German camp, this will reduce the possibility of a possible common Italian-Hungarian effort in relation to the Germans.

Minister Beck expresses agreement and raises the question of the Baltic States by pointing out that in this region the Polish Government has observed a higher degree of resistance to German pressure than was the case in Czechoslovakia. Poland is highly interested in those states, particularly in Lithuania. Minister Beck has already spoken of these matters with Ambassador Kennard, considering that it would be appropriate to assist those countries and support their resistance discreetly—by careful means, of course—without irritating German circles bordering on the Baltic States. Such is the position we have adopted with regard to Lithuania, without announcing this to the outside world.

Lord Halifax expressed his thanks for the above information. In connection with Minister Beck's declaration he primarily wishes to declare in the name of HMG that he values Minister Beck's comments concerning the British proposal. He wishes to ask what the view of the Polish Government is on the news and forecasts we have witnessed during the last few weeks.

Minister Beck replied that the Polish Government had not observed a military threat on the part of Germany, but it had increased its own preparations, so as not to be in a position of having to give in to German threats. Of course, we have our own local Danzig affairs, yet these are not in such a state that would warrant their negotiation. In any case, Poland will not agree to negotiate under threat or to accept imposed solutions.

Lord Halifax declares that he would wish to return to the matter of Danzig with Minister Beck and asks if he understands correctly that Minister Beck considers these matters unripe for negotiations.

Minister Beck states that in the face of the fact that the League of Nations had in mind to withdraw from some of its responsibilities in Danzig, the matter would require a discussion with Germany and such could prove topical, though Poland will not accept *faits accomplis*; on the other hand, it will not close the door to proper and free negotiations.

Lord Halifax returned again to discussing the British position, saying that he understood Minister Beck in the sense that with regard to the first binding English declaration, Poland was ready to give *mutual* obligations to Great Britain in exchange.

Minister Beck confirms this while pointing out that this attitude is the only possible one for a self-respecting state.

Lord Halifax declares that he has expected such as answer from Minister Beck (1) given Poland's situation, (2) because the interests of Poland and Great Britain are identical in this respect, both their direct interests and their common interest in maintaining European peace.

Before ending this point, he would like to touch upon one issue. He understands that the Polish-French treaty obligates Poland to assist France should France be attacked by Germany.

Minister Beck confirms the above, adding that on Poland's part, the interpretation of the Polish-French treaty has always been clearer as far as immediate assistance is concerned than the interpretation given from time to time to this treaty by the French side. Poland, on its part, considered the French-Polish Treaty of 1921 as fundamental. Minister Beck recalled that in 1936, on the day of the meeting of the League Council in London following Germany's occupation of the Rhineland, he adopted a clear position on the way in which Poland interprets its obligations in relation to France.

Lord Halifax declares that Great Britain presently sees the matter in a somewhat different light. What is presently important is to make a common effort against any domination whatsoever. For this reason, the *English proposal leads to further questions*. Namely, if France and Great Britain were to be directly attacked by Germany, or if they were to be drawn into war by Germany as a result of a German attack on the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, or even Yugoslavia, could they count on Poland's assistance in such a case?

Minister Beck answers that at present, from a legal point of view, Poland is obliged to come to France's assistance solely in the case of a German attack on France. As far as the other questions are concerned, we could admittedly



discuss them, with the probable exception of Yugoslavia, which belongs to a different region, one rather connected with Italy and Hungary.

Lord Halifax says that an attack on, for example, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland or Denmark would be a prelude to an attack on England and France and for this reason it is important for him to know whether England can count on Poland's assistance in such a case.

Minister Beck replied that the Polish Government will not refuse to discuss this matter if a general agreement can be reached on the other points of the British proposal.

Lord Halifax concludes that Minister Beck does not disagree with the rule that if a German attack in Western Europe were to take place—leaving Yugoslavia out of this reasoning for a moment—France and Great Britain would have to resist, and Poland's interests would also to be engaged, considering that fact that—should the strength of France and England be reduced as a result of the fight—the danger to Poland would be correspondingly greater. He realises well the significance of his question.

Minister Beck replied that he understands well the general principle raised by Lord Halifax, yet there is a difference between a general principle and individual questions that ensue from it. If the matter of the Western countries in question were to be discussed, he would have to ask about the nature of the obligations concerned with regard to each of those states. In addition, if Poland were to become interested in matters concerning those states, it would also like to know how they themselves would behave in the given circumstances.

Lord Halifax replied that he would try to inform Minister Beck of these matters. As far as Belgium is concerned, British obligations are spelled out in detail in the agreement. Great Britain and France undertook to come to Belgium's aid if it were to be attacked by Germany. There is no doubt that it would defend itself in such a case.

Minister Beck interjects that it seems important to him that only states ready to defend themselves should receive assistance.

Lord Halifax is of the opinion that the Netherlands would also defend itself. Great Britain and France have agreed among themselves that they would be ready to come to the Netherlands' aid if it were to be attacked by Germany, yet neither Great Britain nor France are under treaty obligation with regard to the Netherlands and the Dutch Government has not been

informed of the agreement that took place between the British Government and the French Government about the defence of the Netherlands.

As far as Switzerland is concerned, HMG has declared to the French Government that it would help Switzerland resist a German attack. Both Great Britain and France were bound by the 1815 Vienna Treaty, though evidently the full extent of these obligations is not clear. Switzerland would undoubtedly defend itself if attacked. Nothing was communicated to the Swiss Government about the agreement that had taken place between France and Great Britain about the defence of Switzerland.

As for Denmark, a detailed exchange of views between HMG and the French Government has not taken place. Nothing has thus been communicated to the Danish Government. The relevant conclusions are not as clear as they are in the other cases. He thinks, however, that—should Denmark be threatened—the English Government would consider such a threat as one of the same nature as similar threats in the other cases.

The English Government's conclusions that ensue from the premise are that if an act of aggression were to take place at present, the issue of its arising in Eastern or Western Europe would not change its character as an act of aggression. With this in mind, the common interest requires common resistance and not allowing for a division of forces. Lord Halifax expressed the hope that Minister Beck would consider the possibilities discussed and, should he not be ready for providing an answer, he would state this, so it would be possible to return to the issue at a later time.

Minister Beck assured Lord Halifax that he fully understood the motives of HMG. In doing so, he pointed out that Poland had few obligations of this type and that it would be a matter of considerable importance to take on new obligations in this respect.

Lord Halifax then raised the matter of Soviet Russia and expressed satisfaction at what had been said by Minister Beck, namely that HMG had assessed Poland's position in relation to the Soviets in making its latest proposal. Is he right in thinking that the Polish Government would not be displeased if HMG was able to maintain proper relations with Soviet Russia?

Minister Beck replies that Poland attaches great importance to maintaining proper relations with Soviet Russia and has a non-aggression pact with it. After the period of tension last autumn, appropriate steps have been taken to produce a *détente*. The two countries have concluded a satisfactory

trade agreement.<sup>6</sup> For these reasons, the Polish Government understands that HMG values the maintenance of good relations with Soviet Russia. Minister Beck wishes to point out, however, that any mutual assistance agreement between Poland and Soviet Russia would immediately produce an unfriendly reaction in Berlin and would undoubtedly bring the outbreak of a conflict closer. Poland was able, in 1934, to place its relations with Germany on a normal and satisfactory footing despite the existence of a Polish-French alliance, of which no one has ever made a secret. However, the Polish Government realises that should similar obligations arise with regard to its eastern neighbour, this would undoubtedly lead to a crisis.

Lord Halifax asked if, in the opinion of Minister Beck, a mutual assistance agreement between Poland and Great Britain would be seen as provocative by Germany.

Minister Beck stated that he could not give a clear answer on this point. An agreement of this type would be very important for Germany, though it would not have the same consequences as a Polish-Soviet agreement. He thinks that it would be possible to interpret a Polish-English agreement in an analogous manner to the Polish-French treaty and recalled that Chancellor Hitler had said that he had nothing to say against this treaty given the circumstances, and that he had no intention of attacking either France or Poland. The same could be the case with a Polish agreement with Great Britain.

Lord Halifax declares that, considering the above comments, which he understands well, it could be possible for Poland, Great Britain, and France to all find themselves involved in a conflict and that in such a case it would be important for Poland to have the possibility of using the Soviet path for the supply of war materials. So is it not that the question arises as to how to obtain a maximum of cooperation from Soviet Russia without provoking dangerous consequences?

Minister Beck states that he understands Lord Halifax's argumentation. He emphasises, however, that the aim of the present efforts is to maintain peace and one should be very careful not to do anything that could increase the threat of war. Poland, on its part, is ready to improve relations with the Soviets without extending their scope. It is not easy to say if the conflict is unavoidable. It is very important, however, to avoid provoking it.

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<sup>6</sup> 19 February 1939.

Lord Halifax asked in what measure would it make things more difficult for Poland and in what measure would it give rise to reservations on the part of the Polish Government if relations between France and Soviet Russia, or even between Great Britain and Soviet Russia, were to become closer.

Minister Beck recalled that during the negotiations between France and Russia that led to the Franco-Soviet Pact, the Polish Government issued a declaration, previously consulted with Prime Minister Laval, stating that no new obligation of France with regard to Russia can entail an enlargement of Poland's existing obligations. Should France and Great Britain presently take on obligations with regard to Russia, Poland would consider it necessary to make an analogous declaration. Minister Beck added that France had not benefitted from the Franco-Soviet Pact, which brought minute results and made *détente* in French relations with Berlin and Rome more difficult.

Lord Halifax asked if, should France decide to simplify the Franco-Soviet Pact in a more autonomist direction, Minister Beck would think it necessary to specify Poland's reservations in the matter.

Minister Beck confirms.

Lord Halifax then asks how Minister Beck appraises Soviet military strength and Russia's transportation possibilities as a means of transit.

Minister Beck replies that the latter question is rather the domain of experts; however, he can say that the Polish Government does not have too high an opinion in either of these areas. In the autumn of 1938, four Soviet army corps came closer to Poland's frontiers. Poland did not find it necessary to move even one military unit.

Lord Halifax concludes from the above that the Red Army could be good for defensive purposes, but not for offensive ones.

Minister Beck, on his part, states that this is also the opinion of the Polish General Staff.

Lord Halifax explains that one of Britain's difficulties with the USSR is the fact that certain Labour Party members think that if Great Britain and Russia were to unite their efforts, the world would be safe forever.

Minister Beck expresses doubts about such a theory.

Moving on to Romanian issues, Minister Beck states that he would wish to consult with the Romanian minister of foreign affairs before taking a definite stand on the Romanian aspect of the British proposal.

Lord Halifax fully appreciates Minister Beck's opinion concerning Romania and Hungary. On the other hand he thinks that it would be very dangerous not to have a decided plan in case Romania was to be subjected to direct or indirect aggression on the part of Hungary.

Minister Beck thinks that it would be desirable to give some assistance to Romania. Poland, on its part, does so in the military field. Great Britain could do the same in the economic and other spheres. This would be entirely distinct from some rigid political system of the type of the Little Entente, which would automatically throw Hungary into the opposite camp. Poland attaches importance to good relations between Hungary and Romania and has *recently* threatened Hungary with complications if Hungary were to adopt a threatening stance in relation to Romania. On the other hand, Poland disposes of a certain political capital in Hungary and would not wish to waste it on any account.

Lord Halifax expressed his conviction that it is equally in Great Britain's and Poland's interest for Romania not to be absorbed by Germany like Czechoslovakia had been.

Minister Beck agrees.

Lord Halifax explains that the intention of HMG's suggestion was for the preliminary understanding between Poland, Great Britain and France to remove the possibility of an attack on Romania. He understands that Minister Beck is of the opinion that this would worsen the situation on the Hungarian front. Lord Halifax asks, however, if it would not be important, in Minister Beck's view, for the Polish Government, HMG and, if possible, the French Government, to come to a common decision about their possible actions in the case of a threat to Romania.

Minister Beck replied that he would wish to consider this point and expected further information from Bucharest about Romania's position.

## 83

*4 April. Note from the Ambassador in London  
on his conversation with the British Foreign Secretary*

Note from the conversation between Ambassador Raczyński and Lord Halifax on 4 April 1939, during breakfast at the Savoy.

In conversation with Lord Halifax, I raised the following points forming a part of the negotiations on the subject of Polish-English mutual assistance:

1) Lord Halifax explained that, in the present situation, Great Britain considers it important and necessary that Poland's mutual obligations, should the negotiations come to fruition, include not only the highly improbable case of Germany's attack on England, but also encompass the case of England's involvement in war as a result of aggression or under pressure of an ultimatum exerted by Germany on one of the Western countries mentioned in this morning's discussions (Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark). It seems that the French-Polish alliance would also have to be appropriately reworked so as to include analogous obligations.

Without discussing the substance of this suggestion with Lord Halifax, on my part I raised the following observations of a formal nature:

The Polish-German declaration of 1934 makes reference to the Kellogg-Briand Pact on the renunciation of war. Within the framework of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, any possible German aggression directed against Poland's partner would formally give us a free hand, given that a state that resorts to aggression *ipso facto* ceases to be covered by the pact. However, the British proposal allows for a situation in which France or England would intervene first (in defence of third states). Such a case, formally speaking, could, in a way, break the bounds of the Polish-German declaration. In order to avoid such an undesirable interpretation, one could perhaps also here refer to the Kellogg-Briand Pact and state that a situation mandating reciprocal assistance would exist, whenever the British (or French-British) intervention ensued from aggression directed against a third state. Halifax was very interested in this idea.

2) In the matter of the mutual Polish-Romanian guarantee, which the English put forward as a postulate, I provided Lord Halifax with a frank clarification in keeping with the theses you had laid out and told him that I saw no possibility for you to make concessions on this point. I added that given our

concordant aims and intentions, this should not preclude an understanding. After a further exchange of views on the subject, we arrived at the conclusion that consultations between Poland and Great Britain (and possibly France) in case of a threat would perhaps be sufficient. Lord Halifax seemed to accept such a way out but, of course, did not do so in an entirely formal manner.

3) On the subject of Russia, we repeated the arguments raised this morning. Halifax assured me, without going further into detail on this point, that the British Government intended to raise the issue in such a manner as not to expose the Polish Government to any inconvenience.

4) To my question if Lord Halifax expects to sign or initial some form of an understanding in London in case of an agreement, he replied that his anticipations did not go that far. For the time being, both parties would announce a relevant communiqué, whereas work on the texts would follow later.

5) Lord Halifax asked that we, on our part, think about the most appropriate form of an announcement informing the public of a possible signing of a mutual assistance agreement by the two states. This issue is a subject for consideration by the English Government and could perhaps also be the subject of a discussion with Prime Minister Chamberlain this afternoon. We agreed that the declaration about a wider or bilateral agreement, or about a number of agreements connected with each other in one form or another, could speak to public opinion in a more emphatic manner, although at the same time it could to a greater degree be provocative in nature. The announcement of a bilateral agreement between Poland and England would give rise to fewer reservations on this account. Lord Halifax went no further in specifying his views on this subject, but I would not be surprised if he were to raise a concrete proposal in this respect during the discussion this afternoon.

## 84

*4 April. Record of the conversation between  
the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
and the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary*

Secret.

Report from the conversation which took place in Prime Minister Chamberlain's office in the House of Commons on 4 April 1939 between the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain on the one side and Minister Beck on the other.

Present were: Minister Beck, Ambassador Raczyński, Director Potocki, Prime Minister Chamberlain, Lord Halifax, Sir A. Cadogan and Mr. Strang.

Minister Beck. Referring to the morning discussions about Romania, he stated that he would like to define in one sentence the main goal of the present discussions. The point is for both governments, while avoiding provoking a conflict in Europe, to take a fundamental stand about the unilateral methods used by one nation to force its will on other nations in Europe.

Prime Minister Chamberlain asked if Minister Beck shared HMG's view that the German action in Czechoslovakia was in glaring contradiction with Germany's earlier assurances and that it was indicative of the German Government's intention to extend these methods to other states.

Minister Beck expresses his agreement, and adds that until 1938 German policy, albeit causing difficulties for other states, could have had its justification, but this is not the case with the latest events. For this reason, the Polish Government greeted with satisfaction the declaration of the English Prime Minister stating that HMG's aim is to try to safeguard against the use of this kind of methods.

Prime Minister Chamberlain replied that this is equally his view.

Minister Beck declares that the Polish Government is decided to resist the extension of the said methods to Poland. This is a matter which concerns not only the Polish Government, however. For this reason, it would be useful for both governments to discuss it.

Prime Minister Chamberlain states that since Poland is closer to Germany than Great Britain is, Minister Beck can perhaps be a better judge of the



situation in Germany. Given that, he asks if Minister Beck has come to any conclusions on the subject of future German actions which could take place if Germany were to continue on the path of the same political moves.

Minister Beck replies that if he were to judge on the basis of what the Germans themselves are saying, he would say that the matter of colonies is of primary importance. In his personal view (he is not in a position to declare this in the name of his government), the German Government, after the latest events, was taken aback by the reaction that it had elicited in the world. The last days, which can be defined as a sort of a pause, can only reinforce this reaction. Poland is a classic example here. Since 1934, Poland has been making an effort to rest its relations with Germany on foundations of friendship; at the present time, its firm attitude and its military directives constitute a serious warning to Germany.

Prime Minister Chamberlain asked Minister Beck to continue his observations about the morning discussions.

Minister Beck points out that he has already stated his view of the situation, but would be very glad if he could now hear the view of the Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Chamberlain states that, as he has heard, the morning discussions addressed several themes, although no clear conclusions have been reached.

Minister Beck declares that he would wish to ask one fundamental question: Is HMG ready to conclude a lasting treaty based on Prime Minister Chamberlain's declaration in the House of Commons on the basis of reciprocity?

Prime Minister Chamberlain replies that if the German Government were to conduct such a policy as he has already talked about, namely a policy of gradually attacking one state after another, this would have to end with the destruction of Poland's independence and would constitute the most serious attack on the British Empire that has ever taken place, an attack that could even attain its aim. In those conditions the interests of Poland and Great Britain are the same. Neither of their countries desires a war or forcing unjust limitations on Germany. On the other hand, they can't allow for such policies to continue without offering active opposition thereto. HMG thinks that the most effective manner of impeding such a policy would be an unequivocal explanation that if Germany were to follow this path, it would have a war on two fronts.

Minister Beck replies that his question was also a proposal. If the principle were to be recognised as the basis for discussions, he is ready to continue the discussion on the subject of basing relations between the two countries on a lasting principle.

Prime Minister Chamberlain pointed out that he had laid out before the Minister a number of views which justify HMG's intended action. His declaration of 31 March was made with the aim of precluding some abrupt strike. At present, HMG strives to work for an understanding with the Polish Government in the sense that the declaration would be one of the aspects of this understanding and that the Polish Government would offer reciprocal obligations on its part.

Minister Beck points out that on this point he has already expressed himself quite clearly.

Prime Minister Chamberlain expresses his consent.

Minister Beck adds that the Polish Government has never considered the possibility of a unilateral understanding.

Prime Minister Chamberlain points out that the project which he has talked about is, for the time being, merely an outline and that a number of detailed points would need to be worked on. One such point is the matter of Soviet Russia, and he understands Minister Beck's position here. He agrees that one has to be cautious. On the other hand, although he has hope that the understanding that might now be reached will contribute to maintaining peace, it should be remembered that we are dealing with a state that—to put it mildly—is subject to strong reactions and, for this reason, one has to be prepared for the possibility that a conflict could be brought about even by the mere fact of concluding an understanding between Great Britain and Poland. If, however, Great Britain, France and Poland were to find themselves at war with Germany, he is asking himself how Poland would conduct this struggle on its part. It has a beautiful army and certain air resources. He understands, however, that Polish artillery is not very strong and that there are no fortifications similar to those that exist in the West. The Polish armed forces would undoubtedly fight with great courage, but if they were to run out of ammunition, how could they replenish such shortages if not by way of Soviet Russia, supposing supplies from Soviet Russia were an option?

Minister Beck explains that Poland finds itself in a situation that requires reconciling two opposing concepts; on the one hand, it has to be well prepared to repulse any possible attack, while, on the other, it must act in such a manner

as to make this attack less likely. The more difficult the situation is, the simpler are the solutions that come to mind. On the one hand, should Poland be attacked, it will defend itself, even if half the country were to be occupied. On the other hand, it will make the greatest efforts to preserve its nation from the catastrophe of war. We are searching for an appropriate path between these two difficulties. Although it is impossible to predict if and when a conflict will break out, that is not a reason for the Polish Government to deprive itself of the political means that would make such a conflict more remote. As Russia's neighbours, we state that between Germany and Russia *imponderabilia* and doctrines play a greater role than in relations between other states. For this reason, these very relations should be treated with utmost prudence. On the basis of personal contacts with Germany, Minister Beck became convinced that Germany will not decide on war against Poland easily. An understanding between Poland and Russia would perhaps accelerate such a decision.

Prime Minister Chamberlain fully understands the view expressed and doesn't press Minister Beck on introducing Russia in an overt manner. However, it seems to him necessary to keep in mind the practical aspect of the question. Namely, if, despite all efforts, the war were to break out, what then? He believes that Minister Beck has thought about this and has his view on this matter.

Minister Beck declared that, as far as HMG's discussions with the Soviet Government were concerned, Poland had no intention of becoming involved or joining them, leaving the matter up to the judgment of HMG while maintaining a certain degree of scepticism towards them.

Prime Minister Chamberlain observed that should Germany and Poland find themselves in a state of war, then the danger of bringing Russia into the discussion would no longer exist. If, in such a case, HMG were to succeed in organising assistance in the form of war materiel from Soviet Russia, would Poland greet such assistance with satisfaction?

Minister Beck notes, as a preliminary comment, that he would like to recall a certain sentence of Marshal Pilsudski, namely that even if some day we were to fight, this is not a sufficient reason to sleep with a rifle in *bed*. For the time being, he is not called upon to express opinions about Great Britain's possible relations with Russia and is not ready to accept any understanding that would in effect tie Poland to Russia, if even indirectly.

Prime Minister Chamberlain points out that he is not speaking for any overt document or a stipulation that would provide for a specific or any other action on Russia's part in the given circumstances. He is thinking about the possibility that HMG would ask the Soviet government about its intentions, adding on its part that it doesn't know if Poland would accept any assistance. The Prime Minister understands Minister Beck's objections about the dangers arising from including Russia, directly or indirectly, but is asking nevertheless if, should war in fact break out, there is any other reason to refuse assistance from Soviet Russia.

Minister Beck defines his position in the following manner: As far as Poland is concerned, two truths due to its geographical situation are vital, namely for its policy not to rest either on Germany or on Russia. Should Poland make its policy dependent on either of those powers, it would cease being an element of peace, and would become a factor capable of provoking conflict. Minister Beck is aware of the practical difficulties of such a position, but this principle has vital significance for Poland and Minister Beck talks about this openly in both Berlin and Moscow.

Prime Minister Chamberlain points out that he would not wish to press Minister Beck on this point, yet he states that in case of war HMG would wish to see Poland as resilient as possible. Still, HMG is continually under attack in the House of Commons for not achieving better relations with Russia. The Prime Minister asks Minister Beck if it would be embarrassing for Poland if HMG would presently attempt to improve its relations with the Soviet Government. This would not entail concluding any treaty with the Soviet Government, but only an attempt to achieve such relations as would make it possible to expect assistance from Soviet Russia in case of war.

Minister Beck responds by saying that the matter is entirely beyond the competence of Poland, it doesn't involve Poland and, as such, he has nothing to say. He wishes, however, to warn that if Russia is introduced, this could only accelerate the conflict. He wishes to add that, as far as Poland's relations with Soviet Russia are concerned, he has safeguarded that these be correct in both the political and the economic sphere.

Prime Minister Chamberlain moves to a point which, as he says, was discussed to a limited degree in the morning. In case of a direct attack by Germany on Great Britain, the significance of Poland's reciprocal obligation would be clear. In truth, there is a series of other circumstances in which there would be no direct attack on Great Britain. Rumours have spread about Germany's plans to aggress Great Britain and France through one of the

neutral countries, for example through Belgium, the Netherlands or Switzerland. If Great Britain were to be drawn into war by Germany in this manner, would the reciprocal obligations that Minister Beck is thinking about cover such an eventuality?

Minister Beck replies that he can only repeat what he said in the morning to Lord Halifax. Should Great Britain and Poland come to a lasting and binding understanding, the Polish Government would not rule out friendly discussions on this subject. In case of the adoption of a principle of lasting cooperation, Poland is ready to talk about it.

Prime Minister Chamberlain on his part points out that such a principle is accepted by HMG.

Minister Beck states that, as there is no difference of opinion as to the danger of the situation and given that the above-mentioned principle is accepted, the Polish Government is ready to take this matter into serious consideration.

Prime Minister Chamberlain expresses satisfaction on that account. He considers that there can be no other approach to the present situation. The forces of the Central Powers could strike in any direction and if the other powers are not bound by an understanding providing for all eventualities, they would always be in a worse situation.

Minister Beck asks the Prime Minister not to take his careful wording as evidence of a lack of good will on his part. The matters under discussion, however, are highly significant and Poland's vital interests are at stake. For this reason, he must carefully weigh his words. He is doing so precisely in order to be certain that what he promises he will be able to deliver.

Prime Minister Chamberlain agrees that most important matters are at stake, namely the future of two countries. The principal issue is not to be exposed to the two bad eventualities, namely not to be in a situation where the Germans would be provoked and our side would be left without planned effective defence.

Minister Beck confirms that this is precisely his government's main preoccupation.

Prime Minister Chamberlain then raises the matters of Eastern Europe. He is wondering about the position of Romania and Yugoslavia. Romania seems to HMG an area of vital importance given its extensive resources. He has recently thought that it is precisely this area that would be the target of the

nearest German attack, although it is true that Germany has no common frontier with Romania. If Germany were to obtain Romania's resources of oil, wheat and other products, irrespective of whether they are obtained indirectly or directly, this would constitute a considerable strengthening of German power and a weakening of the opposite side.

Minister Beck recognises the importance of Romania. Romania is an ally of Poland, which attaches great importance to everything that concerns Romania. In truth, as Lord Halifax has already pointed out, this part of Europe represents positive political possibilities and it is advisable not to close the door on such possibilities by adopting too inflexible a system.

Prime Minister Chamberlain asks if this means that Minister Beck prefers to leave Romania out of any arrangement for the time being.

Minister Beck replies that two factors come into play here. The first is the fact that Romania is Poland's ally and for this reason he would not wish to arrive at any decisions without discussing the matter with the Romanian Government. Secondly, he would like to find more flexible methods that could be applied to this part of Europe without endangering future possibilities.

Prime Minister Chamberlain asks if this means that Minister Beck would want to reserve the entire matter for discussion with the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Minister Beck replies that as Romania's ally, Poland has an obligation to consult it, but would be ready to discuss with HMG a practical action plan in this respect.

Prime Minister Chamberlain asks Minister Beck if he has in mind the conclusion of a treaty, or perhaps an alliance, or a pact between Poland, Great Britain and France and, in such a case, if any agreement concerning Romania (about which Minister Beck wishes to reserve his opinion pending consultations with the Romanian Government), should be concluded in addition to or distinctly from the main agreement.

Minister Beck replies that Poland already has a treaty with France. As far as Great Britain is concerned, it is presently striving to establish principles. About Romania, for the moment it would be best to leave it outside the agreement, until matters concerning the Danube Basin become somewhat clearer.

Lord Halifax recognises the force of Minister Beck's argumentation, but we have learned swift methods from the other side. If, for example, Germany,

searching for a weak point in Europe, were to incite Hungary to a dispute with Romania and support it, what does Minister Beck think should be done?

Minister Beck replies that the Polish Government would not wish to lose its influence in Budapest based on a centuries-old tradition of friendship. As far as the example connected with present developments is concerned, Minister Beck points out that Poland not only advises the Hungarians to avoid disputes with Romania, but lately has given them a warning in this matter. If Hungary were to become a German vassal, the situation would be different. As long as this is not the case, Poland does not want to reject any possibility of resorting to its influence on the Hungarian Government.

Prime Minister Chamberlain points out that it would be advisable to consider yet one possibility; if, for example, the German Government told the Romanian Government what follows: 'We have concluded with you a trade agreement whose terms you do not respect. We presently demand from you the conclusion of another agreement, in which we would gain the right to your oil and your wheat. We give you so many hours in which to say yes or no. If you say no, you have to be ready for the consequences'. Even if Germany does not occupy Hungary, it did occupy Bohemia and Moravia and it has a protectorate over Slovakia. In our days, armed forces can even be transported by air and the air force plays a major role here. Let's say that the German threat consists of the fact that Bucharest will be destroyed if the Romanian Government does not give its consent. This may seem like fantasy, but we have grown accustomed to developments of this kind and they are not entirely impossible. What should be done in such an eventuality?

Minister Beck points out that this eventuality is a theoretical one, but if it were to be realised, the definitive voice would have to be Romania's—if the Romanians have enough courage to say no. In such a case, they should be provided with assistance. Poland is already providing Romania with assistance in certain military areas and Great Britain could help it economically. Poland contributes to the organisation of the Romanian war industry and has its staff officers in Romania.

Prime Minister Chamberlain expresses uncertainty as to whether Poland is ready to grant Romania an assurance of assistance if the latter says no to Germany. In the absence of such an assurance, would Romania not be likely to say yes given that no potential assistance would arrive on time?

Minister Beck repeats that only Romania could answer this question and that without consulting the Romanian Government he is not in a position to

give an answer. Poland has to remember that in case of a conflict between itself and Germany, the assistance that it could count on from Romania would not be great. On the other hand, Minister Beck could not realistically accept the likelihood of a Hungarian march on Poland: this would be evidence of an overly irritating departure from the past.

Prime Minister Chamberlain points out that although the Romanians would probably not be able to help Poland much, in the case of Romania's occupation by Germany Poland would have a longer frontier with Germany.

Minister Beck points out that the additional frontier would not be very long and would run through mountainous areas, so it would not be difficult to defend. As far as oil reserves are concerned, Poland has its own sufficient reserves in this respect. Minister Beck adds that he would not want for his words to be interpreted as some lack of warmth in relation to an ally. His only point is that these issues should be addressed in Bucharest.

Minister Beck then raises the issue of the Baltic States. It is advisable to do all that is possible to strengthen their resistance and, at the same time, to avoid any provocation whatsoever. During the Memel crisis, the Polish Government informed the Lithuanian Government that it could count on Poland's wholehearted sympathy and the Lithuanian Government expressed its gratitude for this declaration.

Prime Minister Chamberlain points out that this failed to save Memel, however.

Minister Beck replies that the Lithuanians gave up Memel without turning to Poland for assistance. Poland's assurances were given somewhat later, when the threat of further German pressure on Lithuania arose.

Prime Minister Chamberlain raises the issue of Danzig and asks if any discussions are being conducted on this issue between the German and Polish governments.

Minister Beck replies that no negotiations are being conducted, although discussions on this subject have been underway for a long time, in fact since the Polish Government found out that the League Council wished to withdraw its High Commissioner from Danzig. The subject of these discussions was the question of instituting a system in which Danzig would not weigh down on Polish-German relations, of course assuming in principle that the situation of Danzig as a free city would be maintained. For eight centuries, Danzig, even though it has a mostly German population, has lived off the Polish hinterland. Minister Beck does not know if we will reach an understanding with the



Germans easily, though this is his intention. In any case, if Germany wanted to create a *fait accompli*, Poland would certainly *react*.

Lord Halifax asks what settlement of the Danzig problem Poland has in mind.

Minister Beck replies that he has in mind a bilateral Polish-German guarantee arrangement which, while guaranteeing the freedom of the local population to govern itself, would, at the same time, protect existing Polish rights in Danzig. The German government has never denied Poland's rights in Danzig and has lately been confirming them.

Prime Minister Chamberlain asks if the arrangement would also contain stipulations about the motorway through Polish Pomerania.

Minister Beck replies that Poland would never tolerate any extraterritorial system in connection with such a motorway. On the other hand, it is ready for transit facilitations affecting visas, customs fees, etc.

Prime Minister Chamberlain asks if the Germans have asked for a motorway.

Minister Beck replies that all these issues have remained at the stage of discussions and that no *formal* demands have been made towards the Polish Government. Undoubtedly, there are people in Germany who would want to demand these things of Poland, though he has doubts whether Germany would risk a conflict in matters of this type, matters of local significance. Minister Beck adds privately and confidentially that the possible architect of this way of thinking might be Ribbentrop. He doubts, however, that this thinking has the full approval of his chief.

Lord Halifax notes that HMG would be naturally glad if the possibility of an understanding between Poland and Germany in the matter of Danzig could be found. As Minister Beck knows, the present situation is difficult both from the point of view of the League and from that of HMG as *rapporteur*. Some form of action should be taken in this matter before the Council meets in May. It would be helpful for HMG if Minister Beck said how, in his view, the matter of Danzig should be treated from the point of view of Polish-German relations.

Minister Beck communicates that he would like to come to an understanding in this matter with Germany, though he is not in a position to say if this will be possible before the Council meets in May. He will keep Lord Halifax informed about the situation and developments. If possible, he will

make practical suggestions before the Council meets. If, however, this proves impossible, he won't make any comments and will leave HMG to proceed in keeping with its own judgment.

Lord Halifax asks if Minister Beck would want the High Commissioner to remain in Danzig.

Minister Beck replies that, given the complicated situation, should the Council take decisions requiring any changes, Poland's situation would be more difficult. If no understanding takes place by May, it would be more convenient for Poland if no changes were to take place at the May Council meeting. Of course, the situation would be different if an understating could be reached before May.

Lord Halifax notes that many feel it advisable for the League Council to be relieved from guaranteeing the constitution which does not function any more. He will not fail to consult with Minister Beck before the Council meets. He points out that it would not be easy to leave matters at their present stage.

Minister Beck states that the Polish Government would be grateful for what the League could do in this matter—it treats it rather as a kindness, however, and cannot expect miracles. The matter as such is not that significant and Minister Beck does not want to burden HMG with every single of its details. If, however, Poland were to take a firm position in the matter of Danzig, especially by standing up to a *fait accompli*, it would not be solely on account of Danzig, but also as a matter of principle. The Polish Government has informed the German Government that it is ready to discuss Danzig in a friendly manner. It is, however, equally ready to stand up, using all the means at its disposal, to any attempt at a unilateral settlement of the Danzig question. In this sense, Danzig has become a symbol of sorts.

Prime Minister Chamberlain states that the main issues have already been raised and thanks Minister Beck for such a sincere laying out of his views. He understands them better than before. A number of questions will require further consultations, such as, for example, Romania, about which an understanding is not possible prior to Minister Beck's departure. It is perhaps advisable, though, to write down something on these matters, for example a list of points to be agreed.

Minister Beck thinks that this would be a proper outcome of the discussions. The proposed document could contain a list of questions about which fundamental agreement has been reached, with the understanding that it would remain confidential. At the same time, a press communiqué could be

issued, stating, among other things, that the principle of reciprocity has been accepted.

Prime Minister Chamberlain agrees that there could be two documents: a confidential one containing the list of points to be agreed, and an official one for the press. The first document would indicate: (1) points on which an understanding has been reached; (2) points requiring further consideration.

Minister Beck points out that he would, of course, want to see the drafts of both documents.

Prime Minister Chamberlain wishes to address one more issue. It should be expected that a formal understanding in writing would follow some time later. If, in the meantime, there was only a unilateral British guarantee for Poland, HMG would be bound to come under fire. Given this, could Minister Beck declare that during that time Poland's reciprocity obligation would be in force as well?

Minister Beck replies that he can give such an assurance and that he has been empowered by the Head of State in this respect. He asks whether this assurance should be confidential or public. On his part he suggests that the Prime Minister declare, in case of a question in Parliament, that HMG has obtained the assurance that all obligations will be treated by Poland on the basis of reciprocity.

Prime Minister Chamberlain noted that in this way the assurance would apply not to the transition period, but to the lasting understanding that would be reached only later. Given the questions that would undoubtedly be asked in Parliament, it would be desirable if he could say that Minister Beck's assurances also cover the transition period.

Minister Beck states that the Prime Minister can most certainly declare that—while awaiting the conclusion of the final understanding—the transition guarantees are reciprocal.

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*5 April. Record of the conversation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs with the British Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary*

SECRET.

## Report on the conversation

between Minister Beck and Prime Minister Chamberlain and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Halifax, conducted at the Prime Minister's office in the House of Commons in London on 5 April 1939

Present were: Prime Minister Chamberlain, Lord Halifax, Mr. Cadogan, Mr. Strang, Minister Beck, Ambassador Raczyński, Director Potocki.

Prime Minister Chamberlain proposed to reflect on matters that had not yet been settled, especially on the possibility of an indirect German attack on Great Britain through some neutral country. In his opinion, discussions have a tendency to lead to a different result than the one expected by public opinion, namely to a Polish-British bilateral understanding, whereas what is expected is a treaty that would result in a certain number of countries joining in the core created by Great Britain, France and Poland.

The Prime Minister assures Minister Beck that he fully appreciates the reasons why he considers such a plan to be inappropriate. The Prime Minister is aware of the importance of not concluding an understanding that would bring the conflict closer. Whatever is done must be closely examined from that angle. He himself, after taking part in these discussions, is aware of these reservations, yet public opinion and members of Parliament who have not had this possibility could be suspicious about the results. The Prime Minister thus takes great care for the results not to be construed as an egotistic understanding reached between states. They must be understood as a step which, while obviously being in our interest, would also be directed against all attempts at domination, wherever they may originate. The suspicions that he mentions could be even more deeply rooted given the existing difficulties with regard to Russia, considering that in such circumstances not facts are being used but prejudice and various other concepts.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister underlined the importance, in any public declaration about the understanding, of showing that it was a part of a wider policy and was not only devoted to certain local or secondary issues or threats. From the British point of view, it would be a very important thing to

be able to explain that the reciprocal obligation taken by Poland in a lasting understanding would cover not only the case of a direct attack on Great Britain, but also the possibility of drawing Great Britain into war in the name of a violation of principles that an attack on other states would entail.

Minister Beck declares that his instructions do not allow him to act in other ways than in stages. He is fully empowered to declare that the guarantee between Great Britain and Poland in case of a direct attack is reciprocal. As far as the question of aggression via a neutral state is concerned, he can say on his part that he is convinced that this question can be discussed by both governments. In the case of Romania and perhaps also Hungary, his powers in this respect do not go that far and he must discuss the matter first with the governments of the interested states. Polish public opinion would not understand why discussions concerning Romania could not be conducted in either Warsaw or Bucharest.

Prime Minister Chamberlain declares that he is more concerned with the first issue than with the second. From the point of view of HMG it would not be satisfactory if it were necessary to publish a document in which, from the British side, there would be no reservations, whereas from the Polish side reservations would exist, even if accompanied by an indication that the question would be subject to further consideration.

Minister Beck points out that there is a difference between that which can be published and that which is in fact the intention of the Polish Government. In the latter case, he can promise a favourable consideration of the matter. In the official communiqué it could be said that both governments are in agreement about holding consultations in case either of them has to face the threat of war.

Prime Minister Chamberlain pointed out that he was not very fond of consultations, because democratic governments are continuously ridiculed for not being able to promise anything more than consultations.

Minister Beck points out that he does not want to insist in this matter, but is only searching for a formula.

Prime Minister Chamberlain states that, be it as it may, the case of the Netherlands and Belgium concerns them immensely. An attack on the independence of the Netherlands or Belgium would be equal to an attack on their (Great Britain's) independence.

Minister Beck states that of the four states in question (the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Denmark), Belgium is viewed particularly warmly

in Poland and he thinks that no efforts will be spared so that the case of Belgium is recognised. He realises that on account of the special geographical situation of the Netherlands and Belgium, these states can be seen as a kind of maritime boundary of Great Britain. Thus his personal opinion is that there are important motives to include these two states in a lasting understanding between Great Britain and Poland. In truth, this is a matter that only the Polish Government can decide, whereas he himself is not empowered to engage his Government in this respect. He repeats once again that he does not want his cautious position in this matter to be interpreted as lack of good will. He simply has to weigh his pronouncements very carefully in the above conditions.

Prime Minister Chamberlain points out that in the case of future complications, Poland's position would be very difficult if it were not able to count on strong support in the West to hold up large German forces. As long as the proposed understanding were not complete, there could be difficulties in reaching that goal. He would wish to find a formula that would not engage Minister Beck further than he would wish to go, but which would indicate that a further consideration of this matter would take place. He thinks that the communiqué could include a sentence that both countries would take on lasting obligations of reciprocal assistance in the case of actions threatening their independence and that they would continue to consider individual circumstances in which a threat to their independence could arise.

Minister Beck says that this thought suits him; he would only like to see the draft on paper.

Prime Minister Chamberlain underlines that when it comes to drawing up the lasting understanding, the point concerning Belgium, the Netherlands, etc., would be vital.

Minister Beck states that he is aware of this. In his personal opinion, the lasting understanding would have to contain something concerning these two states. He has never conceived of it otherwise, though he repeats that he is not empowered to engage the Polish Government in this respect.

Prime Minister Chamberlain then returned to the question of Romania. He understands that, in the opinion of Minister Beck, an attack on Romania would be improbable by any other way than through Hungary, whereas an understanding about the defence of Romania against an attack through Hungary would have a negative impact on relations between Hungary and Poland. For this reason, Minister Beck prefers to leave these matters open for

the time being. Minister Beck then added that if Hungary were to become a vassal of Germany, the situation would be different, so Prime Minister Chamberlain now wishes to draw Minister Beck's attention to this circumstance. It is enough to glance at the map to understand that if Germany were to establish a protectorate over Hungary, it would be in a favourable strategic situation to push forward in the direction of either Romania or Yugoslavia. It would be improvident to rule out the possibility of some plan of this kind, and it is a fact that, when Hitler acts, he acts quickly. Has Minister Beck reflected on the possibility or the likelihood of such developments, and what, in his opinion, should be done in this case?

Minister Beck recognises that such methods have been used lately. In reality, the Hungarians are traditionally very attached to their independence and he does not believe in the possibility of a sudden joint German and Hungarian strike. In any case, nothing should be done that would lead to such a course of events. The Hungarians know that Romania is an ally of Poland and it is difficult for him to believe that Hungary would allow itself to be used as a German tool against Poland. There is a thousand-year tradition of friendship between Hungary and Poland. Both countries declared at the League of Nations in 1921 that neither of them will sign a document directed against the other.

Prime Minister Chamberlain points out that he had something slightly different in mind. Let us say that Hitler has a plan of action against Hungary by a certain date and that he has amassed overwhelming forces on its border. He would initiate a propaganda action on the subject of the suffering of the German minority and the fact that the Hungarians are unable to maintain order. He could even summon the Hungarian regent or prime minister, as he did with Mr. Hácha, and declare that he can stand it no longer and that if the Hungarians wish to live in peace, they must accept the protectorate of the Reich. If they refuse, he would move in with his troops and destroy Budapest. It is likely that the Hungarians would act differently than Czechoslovakia did and that they might resist. The Prime Minister takes into account that the Hungarians would not acquiesce easily to a protectorate, which would have to be forced upon them.

Minister Beck declares that should the Hungarians be faced with such a situation and showed the will to defend themselves, he thinks Poland would support them.

Prime Minister Chamberlain points out that in such a situation France would not have a treaty obligation to come to Poland's aid.

Minister Beck adds that it is not in line with the Polish Government's method to express definite views about third states without consulting them directly. For this reason it is difficult for him to express a definite opinion about the point concerning Hungary raised by the Prime Minister. He can state, though, that Poland has a vital interest in Hungarian independence. For as long as Hungary remains independent, he thinks that this factor should be taken into consideration in any action plan and that all efforts should be made to help the Hungarians maintain their independence.

Prime Minister Chamberlain points out that he does not wish to press Minister Beck on this issue. He has, however, reason to think that some similar plan is being discussed in some German circles. He wasn't asking Minister Beck for a binding answer, he only wished to know his thoughts given the importance of this matter.

Minister Beck points out that German economic plans could be far-reaching in these areas, but, on the other hand, he doesn't want to forejudge on the danger of German political action beyond today's German frontiers. From that point of view, it is interesting that in Slovakia the German action was very prudent and even hesitant. For the time being, it seems to him that economic pressure is more probable than political action.

The Prime Minister observes that one can easily lead to the other.

Minister Beck declares that if Romania were to be subjected to economic pressure and resist it, it should obtain all manner of assistance. Poland is ready to provide assistance from the point of view of military resistance. If strong economic pressure were to be exerted against Romania without military threat, other states should help Romania in this respect, whereas Poland would continue to provide aid in the military sphere. It should be recalled that Eastern Europe has recently gone through a psychosis of fear of sorts. Poland was the first country to react against it, and is ready to help every other country that decides to follow its example. Poland has already, for example, granted certain assistance to Lithuania in the economic sphere through transit facilitations.

Prime Minister Chamberlain asks to what degree Poland was dependent on Czechoslovakia in the sphere of ammunition.

Minister Beck answered that there was no dependence. In this area, Poland is largely self-sufficient and actually 80% of the army's needs are covered domestically. In certain cases, Poland even exports military materiel, for example, a certain transport of cannons has recently been shipped to Great



Britain. Poland produces aircraft, aircraft engines, light artillery and infantry armaments. Marine artillery, however, has been ordered in Sweden, while certain other types of artillery have been ordered in France.

Prime Minister Chamberlain asks if Minister Beck thinks an attack on Yugoslavia is possible.

Minister Beck answers that we do not have an understanding with Yugoslavia, though we maintain close relations with it. He was somewhat surprised when the Prime Minister first mentioned Yugoslavia as a country that could be brought into the proposed understanding. He thinks that Yugoslavia is a state whose most direct interests are connected with Germany and Italy. It is even the cause of some complication in Italian-German relations. The latest news from Albania is striking. Minister Beck used to maintain a lively exchange of information with Prime Minister Stojadinović, whose policy consisted in avoiding extensive obligations and concentrating on *friendly* relations with neighbours. He is not entirely certain if the Yugoslav Government presently maintains this same line. His personal impression is that in times of peace, Yugoslavia would have a tendency to collaborate with Italy rather than with Germany. In times of war, however, the situation would be the opposite.

Prime Minister Chamberlain asks if Minister Beck has been taken aback by events in Albania.<sup>7</sup>

Minister Beck replies that he had information this morning indicating that Italy was ready to take steps in Albania that could worsen Italian-Yugoslav relations.

Prime Minister Chamberlain points out that the following day, i.e., on Thursday, 6 April, he will make a declaration in the House of Commons and proposes to use for this purpose the text of the communiqué from the discussions, and that he would state that the communiqué has been agreed upon.

Ambassador Raczynski, on his part, adds that it would be advisable to add to the communiqué a certain section concerning emigration, particularly Jewish emigration.

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<sup>7</sup> This is a reference to Italy's preparations to invade Albania, which it did on 7 April 1939.

A short discussion on this issue took place and it was decided that the draft of the communiqué would be prepared later in the evening.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 180*

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### *4–6 April. Record of the visit to the United Kingdom paid by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Visit of the Polish Foreign Minister, 4–6 April 1939

#### RECORD OF CONVERSATIONS

[C 5050/54/18]

At a meeting in the Secretary of State's room on the evening of 6 April the following confidential summary of the conclusions of the conversations was drawn up and approved by the Secretary of State and M. Beck. The text was checked and initialled as correct by the Polish Ambassador and Sir A. Cadogan on the following day.

#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. As a result of the conversations held in London on the 4–6 April 1939, between the Polish Foreign Minister on the one side and the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the other, the Polish Government and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom record the following conclusions: -

I

2. The Polish Government and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have decided to place their collaboration on a permanent basis by the exchange of reciprocal assurances of assistance. They are accordingly prepared to enter into a formal agreement on the following basis: -

(a) If Germany attacks Poland His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will at once come to the help of Poland.

(b) If Germany attempts to undermine the independence of Poland by processes of economic penetration or in any other way, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will support Poland in resistance to such attempts. If Germany then attacks Poland, the provisions of paragraph (a) above will apply. In the event of other action by Germany which clearly threatened Polish independence, and was of such a nature that the Polish Government considered it vital to resist it with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would at once come to the help of Poland.

(c) Reciprocally, Poland gives corresponding assurances to the United Kingdom.

(d) It is understood that the Polish Government and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will keep each other fully and promptly informed of any developments threatening the independence of their country.

3. As an earnest of their intention to enter into a formal Agreement to render assistance to Poland in the circumstances contemplated above, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have informed the Polish Government, and have stated publicly, that during the period required for the conclusion of the formal Agreement outlined in paragraph 2 above, in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all the support in their power.

4. The Polish Government, for their part, give His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom a reciprocal undertaking to the same effect, which is, in the same way as the undertaking given by His Majesty's Government, already in force and will remain in force during the period required for the conclusion of the formal agreement outlined in paragraph 2 above.

## II

5. The following points remain to be settled before the formal agreement can be concluded: -

(a) His Majesty's Government desire that the formal agreement should provide that if the United Kingdom and France went to war with Germany to resist German aggression in Western Europe (the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark), Poland would come to their help. (M. Beck appreciated the vital importance of this question for the United Kingdom, and

undertook that the Polish Government would take it into serious consideration.)

(b) The obligations which His Majesty's Government have accepted towards Poland during the period necessary for the conclusion of the formal Agreement have also been accepted by France. It is understood that the obligations to be accepted by His Majesty's Government in the formal Agreement itself should also be accepted by France; the method of arranging this would be a matter for discussion with the French Government.

### III.

6. His Majesty's Government wished it to be part of the formal Agreement that Poland should come to the help of Romania if the latter were the State threatened. The Polish Government, while respecting to the full the obligations of mutual assistance which exist between Poland and Romania, thought it premature to express a definite opinion as to the desirability of including the case of Romania in the formal Agreement. They consider that they should treat the matter in the first instance direct with the Romanian and Hungarian Governments. They will, in the meanwhile, immediately consult with His Majesty's Government should developments in relation to Romania or Hungary render this desirable.

### IV.

7. It is understood between the Polish Government and His Majesty's Government that the conclusions recorded above do not preclude either Government from making further agreements with other countries for the purpose of safeguarding their own independence or that of other States.

8. It is the intention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for their part: -

(a) To continue the exchanges of views which they have already initiated with the Romanian Government, with the object of developing collaboration between the United Kingdom, Romania and other Powers, for the purposes set forth above.

(b) To initiate exchanges of views for a similar purpose with the Governments of the other members of the Balkan Entente.

9. His Majesty's Government, while realising the difficulties standing in the way of associating the Soviet Government with action such as is contemplated above, are further persuaded of the importance of maintaining

the best possible relations with the Soviet Government, whose position in this matter could not be disregarded.

10. The Polish Government for their part declare that, should His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom assume further obligations in Eastern Europe, these obligations would in no way extend the obligations undertaken by Poland.

11. The Polish Government emphasise the importance, in the consideration of any attempt to develop collaboration, of taking into account the position of the Eastern Baltic States.

*DBFP 3/5, doc. 16.*

## 87

### *6 April. Official communiqué on the visit to the United Kingdom paid by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs*

The conversations with M. Beck have covered a wide field and shown that the two Governments are in complete agreement upon certain general principles.

It was agreed that the two countries were prepared to enter into an agreement of permanent and reciprocal character to replace the present temporary and unilateral assurance given by His Majesty's Government to the Polish Government. Pending the completion of the permanent agreement, M. Beck gave His Majesty's Government an assurance that the Polish Government would consider themselves under an obligation to render assistance to His Majesty's Government under the same conditions as those contained in the temporary assurance already given by His Majesty's Government to Poland.

Like the temporary assurance, the permanent agreement would not be directed against any other country, but would be designed to assure Great Britain and Poland of mutual assistance in the event of any threat, direct or indirect, to the independence of either. It was recognised that certain matters, including a more precise definition of the various ways in which the necessity

for such assistance might arise, would require further examination before the permanent agreement could be completed.

It was understood that the arrangements above mentioned should not preclude either Government from making agreements with other countries in the general interest of the consolidation of peace.

*PBP, pp. 26–27*

## 88

*6 April. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs (from London)  
about the conclusion of the preliminary Polish-British agreement  
on mutual assistance*

London, 6 April 1939.

Warsaw, cipher cable No. 2.

Secret.

Today I agreed with the English government on a provisional agreement having the character of an alliance based on reciprocity.

The fundamental points have been formulated in the agreed communiqué, which is also taken as the basis for the declaration that Chamberlain is to make on Thursday at 11:00 A.M. in the House of Commons.

Irrespective of the above, before my departure I am to decide on the points of the *pactum de contrahendo*, which will serve as the basis for the subsequent permanent accord and which will remain strictly confidential.

Please communicate the above immediately to the President of the Republic of Poland and to Marshal Śmigły.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 182*

## 89

*6 April. Report of the Ambassador in Berlin  
about his conversation with the Secretary of State  
at the German Foreign Ministry*

6 April 1939

Secret.

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

I had a telephone call today from the Secretary of State, M. von Weizsäcker, who wanted to see me before the holidays, either today or Saturday. I called on him this afternoon.

M. Weizsäcker on his part had only one issue to go over with me, concerning the recent expulsion of German citizens. I think, therefore, that he was interested in establishing contact with me. I am dispatching a separate report on the expulsions (report No. N/741/43/39 of 6 April 1939).

I took advantage of this opportunity to tell M. von Weizsäcker that although I have not yet had any information regarding the course of your conversations in London, nevertheless I could outline the general principles by which we are governed. In accordance with the instructions you had given me on your journey to London I stressed the point that we were not signing in London anything which would conflict in any way with the Polish-German Declaration of 1934. Our relations with England are taking the lines of a bilateral defensive character. We are not joining any blocs, but are negotiating in London directly on the basis of a certain reinsurance.

Indicating that he took cognizance of the fact that we still adhered to the principle of the 1934 Declaration, M. von Weizsäcker pointed out that this Agreement, made between Chancellor Hitler and Marshal Piłsudski, had had as its task the achievement of an ever closer *rapprochement* by the elimination of difficulties between the two countries. The Chancellor had recently made us a certain offer which could not have been made by any other German statesman, and which obviously could not be repeated. We had replied to that offer by taking military measures.<sup>8</sup> Our counter-offer, as M. von Ribbentrop

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<sup>8</sup> See footnote 18 p. 143.

had indicated in his conversation with me on 26 March, could not be accepted as a basis for discussion.

In reply to these observations, which, incidentally, are repeated by other officials of the German Foreign Office, I confined myself to the statement that insofar as we had cooperated on Czecho-Slovak issues last autumn, the solution had now been effected entirely behind our back. I pointed out that the adoption of a protectorate over Slovakia had made the worst possible impression on our country. With respect to the Chancellor's offer, I reminded him that our attitude had been explicitly defined first and foremost in the conversation between you and M. von Ribbentrop in Warsaw. I pointed that M. von Ribbentrop had returned to this offer in his conversation with me on 21 March. Yet the next day I had learnt of the ultimatum to Lithuania.

M. von Weizsäcker made the correction that it was not an ultimatum. As for military measures, I pointed out that these had first been taken by Germany itself.

The State Secretary retorted that our information must be inexact.

I then emphasized the issue of the entry of German troops into Slovakia, to which he replied that they had halted on the line of the River Waag. I said that even this move transferred German troops right on to our frontier, and that only a few days later German troops had begun to occupy Memel, another area of interest to Poland. In addition, I declared that other States, even Norway and Sweden, had taken military measures.

M. von Weizsäcker returned again and again to our troop concentrations, especially in the North.

At the close he gave quite a general expression to his view that it was difficult to reconcile the Polish-German Declaration of 1934 with our negotiations in London. When I tried to correct this statement by pointing out that we also had an Agreement with France, he said that at least this was not intelligible to the man in the street. So far as the diplomatic side of the problem was concerned, it would depend on their inquiry into our Agreement with London, and he gave me to understand that if certain rumoured details were correct, they would be in contradiction with the 1934 Polish-German Declaration.

We went no further in the discussion, the more so as this was rather only a preliminary exchange following a week long interruption in my personal contacts with the *Auswärtiges Amt*.



In the end, M. Weizsäcker—while emphasizing that the German government remains entirely calm—added that he regrets our relations should have embarked on this path.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
Józef Lipski

*PWB, doc. 70, with fragments added; PDD 1939/I, doc. 183*

## 90

*12 April. Cable from the Ambassador in Paris  
on his conversation with the Prime Minister of France*

Paris, 12 April 1939  
Received on 13 April 1939, at 2:00 A.M.

Mr. Łukasiewicz to the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

No. 50

Secret.

Following your instruction, I presented the course and results of the London negotiations to Daladier. I stated that the issue of adapting our alliance with France to the alliance with England was becoming topical. Daladier asked me to report to you that he personally supported carrying out such a levelling, considering that our understanding with England was significantly better and more rational. He will make the official decision after examining the details. During the conversation, he emphasised that he was fully appreciative of the formula you had proposed—that each country should define by itself what lied in its vital interest and that the partner should fulfil his obligations under the alliance. He considers this formula to be the only basis for rational cooperation between allies. Daladier assesses the present general situation as containing a 50% chance of peace and a 50% chance of war. He is of the opinion that only a very firm stance can tip the balance toward peace. As far as Italy is concerned, the maintenance of 1.5 million men under arms is extremely worrisome. Daladier does not think, however, that a possible conflict would begin with Italy. He seems convinced that any

possible action will be undertaken by Germany, and that it will be an aggression against Romania. He treats this threat so seriously that he has decided to issue a public declaration tomorrow in which he will grant immediate guarantees to Romania. He has informed the English government of this, but does not intend to make his actions dependent on its opinion. I have found out indirectly that Daladier's decision about Romania was taken pursuant to information that Hungary had supposedly agreed to let German troops march across its territory. ... seriously and seeing a chance to maintain the peace only through a stance implying readiness to accept a conflict, Daladier has made military preparations which will be completed tomorrow. They include doubling the strength of the navy in the Mediterranean, the calling up of 400,000 reservists, and putting the entire anti-aircraft defence on alert.

As far as Spain is concerned, Daladier claims that it is not in a condition to take an active part in the war, but it could provide the Italians and Germans with maritime and air bases that would be dangerous for France and England.

... is counting on the possibility of using Portugal against Spain.

From the entire conversation with Daladier I got the impression of full respect and confidence in your policy and of evident friendliness. In relation to the whole situation, his attitude is calm and imbued with manly decisiveness and a certain insincerity with regard to the declarative methods of London's policy.

If only developments permit, I would like to ask for your consent to my coming to Warsaw to discuss the programme of my work for the nearest future. It seems advisable to launch immediate discussions with the French government on matters that were brought up to date by our understanding with England, as well as on the subject of armaments cooperation, as the possibilities for an understanding have been used up, and, lastly, on economic matters, where the present situation creates a number of new possibilities.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 193*

## 91

*15 April. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Ambassador in London on the conversation  
with the Ambassador of Great Britain*

Warsaw, 15 April at 5:21 A.M.

Cipher cable No. 72

Secret.

Received cipher cable No. 53

In today's conversation with the English ambassador:

I. In the matter of Romania, I raised doubts about the effectiveness of the method of declarative guarantees. I would consider some form of effective assistance to be a greater advantage.

II. In the matter of the German minority, I assured the ambassador that we had no intention of provoking tensions with Germany on this front. German propaganda deliberately magnifies insignificant facts. I asked that he impress upon Lord Halifax that in the Polish Upper Silesia, for example, the Germans account for a mere 6%.

I had a lengthy discussion with the Romanian ambassador and proposed to him an in-depth exchange of views on the subject of a possible threat to Romania from the west—an eventuality that is not covered by our alliance.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 199*

## 92

*18 April. Report of the envoy in Kaunas on his discussion  
with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania*

Kaunas, 18 April 1939

Top secret.

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

On the subject of the declaration of the Polish Government on possible assistance in preserving Lithuanian independence.

In order to carry out the instruction which I received today by cipher cable,<sup>9</sup> I called on Minister Urbšys and made the declaration that you had instructed me to deliver.

Urbšys was taken aback and gave me the impression of a rather frightened man. He declared in response that he valued highly the declaration which I had delivered in the name of the Polish government, but that he must point to two elements which the Lithuanian government could not surrender, namely:

1) Absolute neutrality with regard to all states that Lithuania is determined to and will maintain, and

2) The fact that the Lithuanian government has to reserve full discretion to determine the moment when it might recognise that Lithuania's independence is under threat.

I replied at once that it seems German methods, and perhaps Soviet ones as well, had deformed his ability to appropriately analyse and assess the declaration of the Polish government. I pointed out that the declaration itself

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<sup>9</sup> This is a reference to Beck's instructions of 17 April: 'I would like to ask you to come to Warsaw to decide on the further course of action. Before you leave: (I) Please declare to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and, insofar as this is possible *in a non-demonstrative manner* also to President Smetona, that the Polish government is presently considering the situation and desires, in the most effective manner, to help the Lithuanian nation in the maintenance of the independence of its country. (II) Please convey, in the name of Marshal Śmigły, an invitation to come to Poland to General Raštikis, and ask for a possible date *for the visit* during the month of May.' PDD 1939/I, doc. 201.

clearly stressed, as a fundamental element, the possibility of assistance 'in the preservation of the independence of the Lithuanian state'. So, when the Polish government wishes to provide assistance in preserving Lithuania's independence, one cannot suspect it of unfriendly intentions or any *arrière pensée* that would threaten the independence or sovereignty of Lithuania. On the contrary, one should recognise its friendly intention aimed at strengthening the security of Lithuania's independent existence. I pointed out that we were making no demands or propositions, while offering the possibility of counting on Poland's assistance in conditions that could arise at some point, with the form of this assistance dependent on the given situation. Thus, the declaration of the Polish government cannot be viewed otherwise than as a friendly gesture, one that reinforces the sense of certainty and enhances security. Lastly, I mentioned a series of recent facts through which Poland had demonstrated its disinterested desire to offer Lithuania its support and assistance.

Urbšys explained that there were unfortunately many examples, if only that latest one of Albania, showing how various governments interpreted and carried out concluded agreements, promises and declarations. For this reason, and not as a result of any specifically Lithuanian suspicion, his initial reaction was to reiterate the position of the Lithuanian government. He values highly the friendly intention of the Polish government and he thanked me warmly for the explanation offered for an appropriate understanding of the Polish government's declaration.

There are no reservations precluding me from repeating this declaration to the President of the State, but Urbšys would first like to talk to the president and ask him if he would receive me. He is to give me an answer tomorrow or, more probably, not until the day after tomorrow, i.e., on Thursday.

From the conversation I deduced that it was the words 'would wish to ... assist' that caused Urbšys' anxiety. He was uncertain about whether or not they concealed a specific plan that Poland would wish to carry out by drawing Lithuania into it.

Following the audience with the President of the State, I will immediately come to Warsaw, either on Thursday or, more probably, on Friday morning.

F. Charwat  
Envoy of the Republic of Poland

## 93

*19 April. Cable from the Ambassador in Berlin  
about rumours on Polish-German negotiations*

Berlin, 19 April 1939

Cipher cable No. 5

For several days, German circles have been spreading a number of rumours among foreign correspondents on the subject of presumed Polish-German negotiations, emphasising that Poland agrees to the idea of Danzig's incorporation into the Reich. These rumours are apparently meant to mislead public opinion in the West. The Embassy is taking counter-measures with foreign correspondents by rectifying the false claims about the negotiations.

c/c: Paris, London, Rome, Washington.

Lipski

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 210*

## 94

*20 April. Instruction of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
for the Ambassador in Paris on the interpretation  
of the Polish-French alliance*

Secret

To Mr. Juliusz Łukasiewicz, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
in Paris

Re: Interpretation of the Polish-French alliance.

As follows from the declaration made by Prime Minister Chamberlain on 6 April 1939 in the House of Commons, a declaration whose every word had been previously agreed with us and which thus has the character of a common declaration, and also from the exhaustive commentary which I have given to Ambassador Noël, the Polish-English accord contains a clear obligation of mutual assistance in case of a threat to the independence of one of the

Contracting Parties, with the government of the threatened party assessing what circumstances constitute a threat to its independence and by its armed resistance triggering the immediate, significant and full assistance of the other Contracting Party. This means that the Polish-English accord differs from the hitherto interpretations of the Polish-French accords.

Given the declaration made by Prime Minister Daladier in the Chamber of Deputies on 13 April, a declaration in which Prime Minister Daladier adhered in the name of the French government to the principles of mutual and immediate assistance as provided for in the Polish-English accord, and given that we have no reservations to the substance of Prime Minister Daladier's declaration, please propose to the French government to rationalise the texts of the Polish-French alliance by a joint adoption of an appropriate interpretation of allied accords with a view to ensuring immediate cooperation on *conditions no less effective than* the Polish-English accord. Thus, please propose an exchange of confidential notes or the signing of a confidential protocol in keeping with the appended text. Please take all other proposals *ad referendum*.

For your information, I would like to add that I see carrying out the matters that form the subject of the present instruction as a first step towards adapting our allied relations with France to the existing circumstances and mutual needs. It is evident that the projected interpretation does not exhaust all issues that are in need of clarification in this area, so I expect it will be necessary to return to these matters in the near future.

Beck

*Text of the instruction signed by the Minister and dispatched to the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Paris with my semi-official letter on 20 April, without the appendix, which is to be sent tomorrow. 20/4. J. Potocki*

## 95

*20 April. Report of the Ambassador in Berlin  
on the Gafencu-Hitler conversation*

20 April 1939

Top SecretTo the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

Today I had the opportunity to meet at the Romanian Legation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Mr. Gafencu, who informed me of his meeting with the Chancellor so that I could communicate it to you.

1) The Chancellor spoke of Poland in a violent manner. He emphasised that the Polish press was writing negatively about the German army—Mr. Gafencu said that evidently someone was deliberately inspiring the Chancellor against Poland in an unfavourable manner by submitting to him pronouncements from second rank Polish dailies.

Moreover, the Chancellor indicated that through its pact with England, Poland was first to embark on a policy of encirclement of Germany. He further pointed out that he had been willing to pursue the policy initiated with Marshal Piłsudski. He made reference to an unusually far-reaching offer that he had made to Poland recently. It supposedly consisted in that Danzig would be politically German but economically Polish, and in certain connections with East Prussia through Polish Pomerania. In exchange, the Chancellor was ready to guarantee Poland's frontiers. In Mr. Gafencu's words, the Chancellor was also to have mentioned a Polish, Hungarian and German condominium in Slovakia. Poland rejected the Chancellor's offer and naturally it was only a one-time offer. Poland would regret this step. The Chancellor then pointed out that the situation in Danzig could not remain as it was now. Mr. Gafencu sees in this pronouncement a danger that a conflict might arise on account of Danzig.

I must add to this point that I told Mr. Gafencu that I had heard nothing of a condominium in Slovakia until now.

2) The Chancellor spoke against England very violently. He was considerably more restrained in relation to France, however. Of course, his attack was also directed at America for its anti-German propaganda activities.



The sharpest pronouncements in the Chancellor's argumentation were against the policy of encirclement. In case of war, considering the air force that Germany possesses, no stone would be left standing, even if Germany were to lose several cities. Hitler made it understood that Germany was in possession of inventions that would astound the world.

As the Chancellor stressed that the war would end with gains for Bolshevism, Gafencu got the impression that Hitler ultimately didn't want war. From Hitler's arguments, Mr. Gafencu deduced that he was thinking of a partition of the world between England and the Reich, notwithstanding the very strong attack he was conducting at the moment against Great Britain. He thinks that Hitler would nonetheless wish to find some common ground with England in some way.

3) The colonial problem was very firmly stressed by the Chancellor, and even more so by Göring. As the latter had just returned from Libya, Mr. Gafencu thinks that he must have been impressed by the great achievements the Italians have made in that colony. In relation to Romania, he emphasised his economic interests. Mr. Gafencu did not get the impression that Hitler presently had other intentions of a political nature in the south-easterly direction. About the Hungarians, the Chancellor spoke rather without any particular favour. To my question if there was any truth to the guarantees that, according to yesterday's communiqués of the French radio, Germany supposedly gave to Romania, Mr. Gafencu answered that he did not even raise this subject so as not to give the German side any basis to raise political demands.

Mr. Gafencu then informed me about his own arguments with regard to the Chancellor and Ribbentrop in connection with the conversation he had held with you during his trip from Cracow to Katowice. He stated, referring to his conversation with you, that neither Poland nor Romania were entering into any blocs encircling the Reich. Poland agreed to a security pact with London similar to the one it had with France. This pact is strictly bilateral. He knows that you want to maintain good relations with the Germans and to talk with them. Mr. Gafencu further stated that *neither Poland nor Romania wished to tie themselves with the Soviets. With regard to Ribbentrop, Gafencu emphasised that it was important to take into account the reactions of public opinion abroad.* He gave as an example that when he had signed the economic agreement with the Reich, Romanian public opinion greeted it rather positively, whereas when the Czechoslovakian events took place, there followed an

immediate reaction in Romanian society—not under the influence of Jewish elements, as Germany seems to think, but nationalist ones.

Gafencu thinks that his arguments made a certain impression.

In summary, Mr. Gafencu thinks that German demands are directed at the colonies. Danzig is a dangerous point. In addition he fears possible complications in the Mediterranean.

Lastly, I also want to add that Mr. Gafencu, having learned yesterday from Sauerwein of certain formulas that Paris and London would wish to introduce into their accord with Moscow and which would concern Poland and Romania, instructed Ambassador Tatarescu to tell the French government to refrain from accepting any formula that would concern his country prior to his arrival in Paris. In this connection he fears Germany's reaction and, moreover, he claims that if Soviet assistance were to be stipulated in an accord, its rejection by Romania could harm relations between Bucharest and Moscow.

In parting, Minister Gafencu asked me to convey his regards.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
Józef Lipski

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 215*

## 96

*20 April. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the envoy in Stockholm: instructions for the meeting  
with Minister Sandler*

Warsaw, 20 April 1939

No. 17

Please tell Sandler:

1. There are two aspects to the Danzig question: firstly, the one that pertains to Polish interests (see circular cable No. 15); secondly, the European aspect, which consists in our opposition to the method of forcing sovereign states to pursue a specific policy line under the threat of *faits accomplis*.

2. On the accord with Great Britain, please emphasise that it is bilateral in nature and excludes the Soviet Union.

3. The Polish government is of the opinion that by standing firmly on reasonable positions on the Danzig question and through Polish-English cooperation, it is doing a service to all Baltic states, because this policy brings England closer to this region and strengthens Poland itself.

Please ask if this opinion also corresponds with the views of the Swedish government.

B e c k .

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 217*

## 97

### *20 April. Unsigned note about the pronouncements of the Soviet Ambassador in Paris*

20 April 1939

#### THE USSR AND THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION.

Circles close to the Soviet Plenipotentiary Representation in Paris communicate what follows:

Prior to his departure for Moscow, Surits<sup>10</sup> organised a 'tea party' at the *Polpred*<sup>11</sup> for leftist groups, mainly communists, socialists and deputies. During this 'tea party' long discussions were held on the subject of prospects for the USSR's joining international 'guarantee' combinations.

A group of socialist deputies and certain communist members of parliament, Gabriel Pery among them, expressed the desire for Surits to 'personally acquaint Stalin with the situation' and the necessity for the USSR

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<sup>10</sup> Yakov Z. Surits was the Soviet Ambassador in Paris.

<sup>11</sup> *Politicheskoe predsedatelstvo*, political representation—the Soviet equivalent of embassy or legation.

to 'stand on the democratic side of the barricade' categorically and without reservations.

Surits, as usual, remained silent and evasive. However, in a confidential discussion that took place in the salons of the *Polpred* with Lioté and Tesson, left-wing radical-socialist candidates for leading positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in case of a 'Popular Front restoration', Surits expounded at length about some of Moscow's doubts:

1. Personally, Stalin does not want to believe that 'capitalist democratic' countries have once and for all abandoned the idea of 'buying Hitler off' by directing him eastward, in the direction of the USSR, and thus deflecting from the West the threat of Germany's 'dynamism'.

Stalin particularly distrusts the 'Munich appeasers', i.e., Chamberlain and the Bonnet-Daladier pair, considering them to be proponents of the above-mentioned idea of 'mutual embitterment of the USSR and Germany'.

During a discussion with Litvinov, Stalin declared:

'Until the Munich appeasers in the English and French government change into proponents of a determined struggle with fascist Germany, the main task of our diplomacy will be to be vigilant and not give in to provocations'.

Litvinov immediately communicated Stalin's declaration to Surits, Maysky and Umansky, the Soviet *Chargé d'affaires* in Washington.

Among other things, Surits also spoke about this during his confidential meeting with Herriot on the eve of elections for the President of the Republic, advising him to reflect and announce his candidacy for the presidency, as he personally 'enjoys the absolute confidence' of Soviet public opinion, which will immediately strive for a final military and political *rapprochement* with France and England when it sees as head of state such a determined and consistent democrat and enemy of fascism as Herriot.

2. The USSR fears that, having tied itself with strong military and alliance guarantee obligations in relation to countries which could be assaulted by Germany in the east and south-east of Europe, the Red Army would have to bear the brunt of the principal strike of the German armed forces, as the USSR borders on those countries that are the object of German aggression and would immediately have to send its troops onto the territory of those countries, thus showing them absolute support.

In those circumstances, the struggle of the coalition against Germany will be transformed in principle into a Soviet-German war (France will be sitting behind the Maginot line, making demonstrations of cautious proportions from time to time, given that it is tied down by the Italian and Spanish border and the necessity of fighting in Africa. England can limit itself to defending the Netherlands, possibly Belgium, and to fighting in the air).

Surits added that Roosevelt's speech had changed the situation somewhat, yet in principle the point of view of the USSR remains the same, namely:

It is first necessary to determine entirely and precisely the norms of the USSR's collaboration with France and England, as the main members of the coalition. Only in the event of the sufficiency for the USSR of these technical norms (i.e., 'the just distribution of military efforts between all members of the coalition, etc.') will it be possible to talk of the USSR's committing itself to a strong obligation, in the sense of absolute military assistance.

In order to decide on such norms for military and technical collaboration, it would be most desirable, according to the USSR, to call a conference of the Three: France, England and the USSR. The results of this conference would reveal the viability and feasibility of the USSR's taking on new obligations going beyond those that are already covered in the Soviet-French pact.<sup>12</sup>

3. The party and military authorities in the USSR consider it as absolutely impossible, from the point of view of maintaining the Red Army's combativeness and morale, for the Soviet military units located on foreign territory to be subordinated to 'bourgeois norms of wartime criminal law and generally to political norms that are entirely contrary to the socialist credo of a Red Army soldier.

Surits drew the attention of his interlocutors to the recent discussion on the pages of *Sovetskoe Pravo*, the USSR's principal legal daily. In Vyshinsky's argumentation, it was simply stated that 'in the event of the appearance of Red Army units on the territory of bourgeois states pursuant to the USSR's international obligations, the Red Army units can be subject only to Soviet norms of wartime criminal and other law'.

For this reason, Surits thought that even in the case of a basically positive settlement of the matter of Soviet assistance for individual states threatened with German aggression, the technical conditions for the presence of Red

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<sup>12</sup> The agreement on mutual assistance concluded on 2 May 1935.

Army units on foreign territory need to be defined in a thorough and detailed manner so as to avoid 'undesirable misunderstandings and friction'.

4. The USSR thinks it absolutely necessary in order not to 'embolden individual assailants' to give the mutual assistance pact the character of a 'universal pact of general security' that would be applicable everywhere in Europe and in the Far East.

Specifically speaking, this means that the USSR should be secure in case of an attack by Japan.

At the same time, Surits didn't hide from his interlocutors that in Moscow it was generally regarded as highly improbable that Germany would attack the USSR and, for this reason, the USSR's assistance in Europe was considered 'unilateral', one without equivalent from the other side.

The USSR presumes that in the event of aggression on the part of the fascist-totalitarian bloc, at a certain specific stage an assault by Japan on the USSR is a possibility and, for this reason, the Soviet government, before offering guarantees to the European states against German aggression, would like to obtain guarantees for the Far East from England and France.

Surits also said that, in its time, the position of Paris, which did not wish to include in the Soviet-French pact an obligation for the French to assist the Soviets in the Far East, made a very negative impression on Stalin, so he presently intends to avenge the diplomatic setback that the USSR sustained during the Paris negotiations of Potyomkin and Dovgalevsky.

5. Surits also declared to his interlocutors that Warsaw's position makes the worst possible impression on Stalin, as it levels 'absurd allegations' against the government of the USSR and ascribes to it the desire to 'make use of the war to spark a world revolution'.

The campaign in the Polish press in connection with the speech given by Mekhlis on 5 April in Kiev during a meeting of active members of the military and party organisations of the Kiev Special Military District, a campaign which then spread to Paris, 'took Moscow by surprise', as Mekhlis in his speech was merely saying that 'the communist party is not renouncing its program, i.e., the struggle for communism within the framework of a world unification of communist parties', and that 'attempts to provoke a conflict between the USSR and other countries cannot succeed, given that Stalin, at the 18<sup>th</sup> party

congress, said that the USSR would not pull chestnuts out of the fire for anyone else'.<sup>13</sup>

In Moscow it is believed that if one intends, by way of signing a defensive pact with the USSR (something that is necessary not for the USSR but for other states), to force the Soviet government to become estranged from the fundamental norms of its internal and foreign policy, this should be defined as an 'attempt by indecent means', which can in no event be successful.

In the denial of the information given by the press (carried by the Méditerranéen agency, 28 rue du Quatre Septembre in Paris, an agency that belongs to the a group of English provincial papers and which often carries very interesting information about the Balkans and the USSR) that *Polpred*<sup>14</sup> Maysky will submit a report at the meeting of the Supreme War Council in Moscow, chaired by Voroshilov, which is scheduled to take place on 20 April, Surits declared that the significance of the reformed Supreme War Council was exaggerated in those news, and that a Politburo meeting was planned with the participation of Litvinov and all *polpreds* summoned to Moscow.<sup>15</sup>

7. Finally, Surits declared that during the last meeting between Merekalov, the *polpred* in Berlin, and von Ribbentrop, Merekalov obtained far-reaching assurances from the German minister of foreign affairs that Germany considered the Soviet-German non-aggression agreement<sup>16</sup> as binding and was ready to confirm this point of view in a most formal manner, even in the form of a personal declaration by the *Reichsführer*.<sup>17</sup>

Von Ribbentrop then expressed the hope that the USSR would also treat this agreement as binding and would refrain from signing any obligations that would, formally or in practice, annul its significance.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 218*

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<sup>13</sup> Excerpt from Stalin's speech given on 10 March.

<sup>14</sup> Ambassador.

<sup>15</sup> The meeting was held on 21 April.

<sup>16</sup> This may be a reference to the 1926 Treaty of Berlin.

<sup>17</sup> This is undoubtedly a reference to Hitler (The *Führer*).

## 98

*20 April. Circular of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in connection with rumours about Danzig*

Cipher cables: Polmission Paris, London, Rome, Quirinale, Bucharest, Moscow, Washington, Tokyo, Ankara, Stockholm.

Cipher letters: Polmission Berlin, Rome, Vatican, Belgrade, Budapest, Berne, Brussels, The Hague, Riga, Kaunas, Tallinn, Helsinki, Copenhagen, Oslo, Sofia, Lisbon, Athens, San Sebastian, *by air mail Bratislava, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires*

In connection with a new wave of rumours about Danzig, the following is the position of the Polish Government in this matter:

1) The Polish Government irreversibly holds the position that the German population of the Free City should be left in complete freedom of its internal and political development.

2) The Polish Government cannot give up its fundamental entitlements and will not allow the enjoyment of such entitlements to be controlled by a third Party.

3) The Polish Government will not agree to any unilateral decisions with regard to the Danzig question.

This position is known to the German government and it can become the subject of negotiations, for which the German side shows no haste, however.

Danzig is quiet. Germany is confining itself to the dissemination of alarming rumours but is clearly avoiding any incidents.

BECK

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 219*



## 99

*22 April. Note by the Under Secretary of State  
on his conversation with the Ambassador of Great Britain*

SECRET.

## N o t e

from the conversation between Mr. Arciszewski and the English Ambassador  
(22 April 1939).

The English Ambassador communicated to me today a telegram that he has received from his government:

The English government is concerned over the action launched by Berlin aimed at showing that the English guarantees extended to Poland have strengthened our inflexibility in the matter of Danzig. This action could cause great difficulties for the English government with its own public opinion and on the international stage. For this reason, the English government wishes for a compromise about Danzig to be reached as soon as possible between Warsaw and Berlin. The guarantees England extended to Poland naturally strengthened our position *vis-à-vis* Berlin significantly, but the English government is most interested that our inflexibility is not attributed to this very fact. The English ambassador has been instructed to bring this to the attention of the Polish government and to monitor the further development of the Danzig question in Warsaw and the steps taken by the Polish government in these matters, which the English government has received a new and weighty right to by extending the guarantees to Poland.

I replied to the ambassador that the guarantee has not affected our firm position in the matter of Danzig in the slightest degree. Either with or without the English guarantee, we cannot allow for any unilateral *decision* in the matter of Danzig.

As to our supposed inflexibility, which the Germans are accusing us of, this must be a reversal of notions. The aggressive side that is demanding changes and concessions (most probably of a 100% nature, incidentally) is Germany, not us. The spirit of compromise and moderation should be shown above all by the demanding party and not the one of whom the demands are addressed. In counteracting German propaganda, the English government should, therefore, adhere primarily to this point of view and then its task would be all the easier.

We understand perfectly the embarrassing situation in which the English government could temporarily find itself, but our concern is not for a temporary matter, but for our very vital interest.

I ended by expressing the conviction that, in any tactical moves, you would assuredly wish to spare English sensitivities, but our concessions toward London on this point cannot affect the substance of our position on the Danzig question.

The English ambassador expressed the desire to be summoned by you in case any decisions about the English *démarche* were to be made. In leaving, the Ambassador indicated once again that '*la question est très ennuyeuse*', and added that Hitler in his conversation with Gafencu had attacked Poland violently and expressed the presumption that everything would concentrate on us now.

*At the same time, Ambassador Raczyński was talking with Mr. Cadogan on 19 April 1939 (vide ... and the dispatch from London)*

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 222*

## 100

*23 April. Note from the conversation between  
the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Ambassador of Great Britain*

Secret

Note from the conversation between Minister Beck  
and the English Ambassador on 23 April 1939

### Part I (Danzig)

Minister Beck: Mr. Arciszewski reported to me about his conversation with you about Danzig.<sup>18</sup> I can see that this subject can become the object of a German game aimed at paralysing our actions. For this reason, I would like to discuss it with you even though it is Sunday, in a quiet atmosphere. I am of

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<sup>18</sup> See doc. 99.

the opinion that any insinuations and misunderstandings between us on this matter can be very dangerous.

Coming back to Polish-German talks on the subject of Danzig, I think that the point of departure for the present situation is the incident with the cruiser *Leipzig*.<sup>19</sup> During a night session of the League of Nations devoted to this issue, I became convinced that, at the time, Poland was able to count only on itself and no one else in matters pertaining to Danzig. At the same time, a certain political vacuum, caused by the weakening of the League of Nations, was beginning to emerge in Danzig. It is then that I initiated efforts to resolve the situation through Polish-German agreement.

Afterwards, in coordination with the English government I might add, we returned to the talks several months ago. I must stress at this point that until then the Chancellor had always defined Danzig as a provincial town that could not be a serious object of dispute, and it was only in January in Berchtesgaden that the Chancellor suddenly raised the matter of Danzig as a very important issue. We considered this a turnaround in policy. I must point out that whereas the Chancellor used very moderate language, Ribbentrop treated the matter sharply, demanding: (1) German sovereignty over Danzig, (2) an extraterritorial motorway through Polish Pomerania. I replied, in both cases in a form suited to the tone of my interlocutor, as follows:

We have no objections to any sort of communications facilitations through our territory, but we cannot cede sovereignty over any portion of Polish territory. As to Danzig, we fully recognise the rights of the Danzig Germans, but we must reserve full freedom to exercise our entitlements in the Free City.

As Mr. Ribbentrop had reverted to his initial form a while ago, once again our Ambassador presented our suggestions and this was the last act in this matter. I wish to emphasise that the last act in this matter was a Polish suggestion, to which we have not yet received any answer.

Ambassador Kennard stressed the importance of this fact.

Minister Beck: Please tell Lord Halifax confidentially that it is obvious that we cannot agree to any unilateral concessions toward Germany. For this

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<sup>19</sup> During the *Leipzig's* official visit in Danzig on 21 June 1936, the German destroyer's commanding officer refused to pay the habitual visit to the High Commissioner of the League of Nations, Sean Lester. This led to a serious political crisis.

reason, Germany has proposed various forms of compensation: on the one hand, Slovakia, and, on the other, Berlin has clearly hinted that Poles were in Kiev on many occasions during the course of history, that the last time this happened was in 1920,<sup>20</sup> and that through Ukraine they had reached the Black Sea. I need not comment on these suggestions.

Those are the reasons why Poland had adopted a negative stance with regard to the entirety of this concept even before the issue of Polish-English guarantees emerged. We reject and will continue to reject this kind of negotiations, irrespective of what Great Britain intends to do.

I am telling you all this because the matter is incomprehensible without it.

Following the annexation of Memel, Danzig is doubly important. Germany intends to push Poland away from the Baltic in order to preclude our cooperation with the West and incite a row in the East. My government has decided to oppose this by all available means and wants the English government to know on what negotiation platform our recent discussions with Germany have taken place.

I wish to reiterate that Danzig has always been a city that had developed thanks to the Polish hinterland and its organisation is not a new idea. The existence of Danzig is an integral part of our maritime policy.

I understand well Great Britain's concern about points where conflicts could emerge. If, however, we were to acquiesce to Ribbentrop's plan, we would then have no need for the English guarantee, because in such a situation the Germans would grant us the furthest-reaching concessions. But we cannot agree to it, because this would deform our policy. It is for this reason that I responded to the English proposal for collaboration at once.

Today, Danzig seems to be a danger point, but perhaps Poland and Germany can sort out this problem, and what will remain then of Polish-English collaboration? Only our dangerous and far-reaching engagement in the matter of England's security in the West.

Ambassador Kennard: This entire matter arose as a result of the confusion in English public opinion.

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<sup>20</sup> This is a reference to the Polish-Soviet War of 1919–1920. Polish troops entered Kiev on 4 May 1920, following a successful so-called 'Kiev offensive'.

Minister Beck: It is not for me to judge the English government's possibilities in the realm of foreign policy or in relation to its own public opinion. The *bases de l'arrangement* have to be spelled out precisely, however. If you mention English public opinion or the difficulties encountered by the English government in Parliament, then I, on the reservation that the basic argumentation remain confidential, see no obstacles to the government's declaring in Parliament that the latest proposal in the matter of Danzig was initiated by Poland and that this took place before the agreement with Great Britain.

We cannot close our eyes to the danger that German imagination will be excited.

Ambassador Kennard: Indeed, German megalomania exceeds all imagination.

Minister Beck: We have to be aware, however, that a decision to bluff against a weaker party is one thing, whereas a decision to go to war is quite another. We have to state clearly that either Germany accepts *une convenance internationale* or it is risking a war. A German rejection of the first possibility without a response on our part would be very dangerous. We presently feel an attempt to bluff against us, but we know that this bluff will not succeed. For example, Hitler's conversation with Gafencu was a typical inspiration calculated to produce effect in Romania, in Poland and in England.<sup>21</sup>

#### Part II (financial matters)

Having listened to Minister Beck's *exposé* in connection with matters of general politics, Ambassador Kennard said that he could see that Poland had undertaken *un effort très dur*, which cost millions a day according to his information. This entails certain loans or financial needs, whose clarification by Minister Beck the ambassador would be interested in.

Minister Beck: News of these costs are often imprecise or even exaggerated. You understand that in considering the possibilities of our cooperation in the West, I first took into account the possibilities of our army and I worked in close contact with it.

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<sup>21</sup> This is a reference to the conversation between Hitler and Gafencu on 19 April. See doc. 95.

Marshal Piłsudski taught our army to be rigorously realistic and forbade all manner of 'paper calculations' and counting on units that, in a given case, could not be fully outfitted. Minister Beck mentions the example of Ciano, who—when recently in Poland—saw an air unit and was very surprised at its high headcount. Our army is so equipped that it is ready for all types of combat, not only defensive, but also manoeuvring. We are not making full use of human resources, however, so as not to create incomplete units in terms of equipment. Moreover, the functioning of our great units would be more effective through greater use of auxiliary weapons. This requires time and money, however.

I am asking the English government if, in principle, a discussion would be possible about assistance to enlarge the potential of our army. This would take the form of: (1) a cash loan, (2) a loan for the purchase of raw materials.

Given our political *rapprochement*, a number of people wish to add certain needs in other areas, and even interests of a legal nature, to the political dimension. I have nothing against it if, through some unofficial channel, such relations were to grow as a parallel expression of our closer contacts. As far as the government's position is concerned, then I, as minister of foreign affairs, would like to treat it as a financial operation between our governments at the level of state defence. I would perhaps add some issue of material assistance to that, such as in the area of our navy. I would thus like to ask you if, in principle, your government would consider this as material for discussions. Of course, the English government's assistance would have to be of appropriately large proportions. Mixing money with politics is not a pleasant exercise and can be conducted only for some entirely clear purpose. The importance of this matter is emphasised by the fact that, regardless of various temporary irritants on individual fronts, we have to expect that the game will not end soon and that the assistance should be calculated for a longer period.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 225*

## 101

*25 April. Cable from the Ambassador in Paris  
about his conversation with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Paris, 25 April 1939.

Received on 25 April 1939 at 1:00 P.M.

Mr. Łukasiewicz to the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

No. 59

Minister Bonnet summoned me today to inform me of developments in talks with Moscow. The situation is as follows: Bonnet proposed to the Soviet government to complement the existing mutual assistance pact with an understanding that would obligate Soviet Russia to come to France's assistance in case of a conflict with Germany in connection with France's obligations towards us and Romania, and would confirm France's obligations should Russia be attacked by Germany. Bonnet's proposal was based solely on the existing French-Soviet pact and in no manner did it involve either us or Romania. The English government, which probably wished to avoid the necessity of being tied through any accord with Moscow, proposed that the Soviet government announce in a unilateral declaration that, in case of aggression against Poland or Romania, it would come to the assistance of those two countries, as England and France did with regard to Romania and Greece.<sup>22</sup> The Soviet government responded to the French and English government with a counter-proposal, containing the following commitments:

- I. to conclude a French-British-Soviet alliance,
- II. to add the Baltic States to the *casus belli*,
- III. to renounce the alliance with Romania,
- IV. not to conclude a separate peace.

In his first conversation with Ambassador Surits, Bonnet spoke very critically of the Soviet proposal, pointing out that France could not think of going to war on Estonia's account and could not in any way get involved in existing relations between Poland and Romania. Personally, Minister Bonnet

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<sup>22</sup> On 13 April, Great Britain and France extended guarantees to Greece and Romania.

holds the view that the Soviet government thinks that the recent international understandings have seriously reinforced Russia's security and, therefore, it will place a high price on cooperation or simply engage in a policy of blackmail. Ambassador Surits indicated in our last conversation that the Soviet government was not certain of further development of our policy and, consequently, it either has to obtain guarantees of its positive attitude towards Soviet Russia by the renunciation of the anti-Russian accord between Poland and Romania, *or reserve for itself a free hand to come to an understanding with Berlin against Poland*. As Bonnet asked me for my personal opinion about all of the above, I replied that I considered the Soviet proposals to be a move aimed at undermining the negotiations and weakening the existing agreements. I pointed out that:

I. in case of a limited agreement with the Soviets in keeping with Minister Bonnet's plan, we would have to reiterate the reservations raised during the conclusion of the French-Soviet pact,<sup>23</sup>

II. in case of the realisation of the English project, we would be forced to declare that we would not accept any unilateral assistance,

III. I did not see anything in the Soviet project that could be carried out and I thought it a tactical manoeuvre full of ill will. As an aside, I pointed out a characteristic circumstance of the fact that our relations with Moscow were entirely satisfactory. Bonnet fully agreed with my opinion and from the entire conversation I became convinced that he fully appreciates the irritability of the Russian question and is convinced of Moscow's ill will.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 226*

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<sup>23</sup> On 11 May 1935, during the Polish and French foreign ministers' conference, speaking to Pierre Laval, Minister Józef Beck made the reservation that the French-Soviet mutual assistance agreement of 2 May 1935 can not entail any changes to the Polish-French alliance of 1921 and to the Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact of 1932.



## 102

*29 April. Report of the Ambassador in Berlin on Hitler's speech*

Berlin, 29 April 1939

Secret.To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
i n W a r s a w

I am evaluating as follows Chancellor Hitler's speech delivered at the Reichstag on 28 April, which had been anxiously awaited by German and international opinion:

1) Chancellor Hitler followed the trend of diplomatic, rather than military, action.

2) The chief aim of this action is to weaken or else loosen the united front which was formed (between the Powers of the East and the West) after the occupation of Bohemia, the extension of the *Schutz* over Slovakia, and take-over of Memel.

3) While the polemic with England and the breach of the naval agreement constitute two of the principal features of the speech,<sup>24</sup> it nevertheless resulted in direct pressure being brought to bear on Poland.

The fact that the Chancellor decided on tactics designed to loosen the front created to counteract German aggression indicates that the method adopted by the Powers of granting mutual support to each other in case of aggression proved to be effective. Its future success, in my opinion, depends on the partners' consistent willingness to keep their previously adopted positions.

Here I would like to mention that in my conversation today with the French ambassador<sup>25</sup> we came to the same conclusions, and he assured me very definitely, on the basis of his constant contact with Prime Minister Daladier, that the French government would keep firmly to its adopted line. At the same time he urged that efforts be made to see that London, owing to Chamberlain's inclination for negotiations, does not stray from the adopted path. The ambassador stated that the principle that Poland alone has the right to define the limits of its concessions to Germany should be respected.

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<sup>24</sup> This is a reference to the British-German maritime agreement of 18 June 1935.

<sup>25</sup> This was Robert Coulondre.

Analyzing yesterday's speech of the Chancellor in a general review, I would like to call attention to the following details:

I. *The reply to Roosevelt*,<sup>26</sup> which was to constitute a significant part of the speech, is shaped in the form of skilful propaganda polemics, while essential political aspects relate to other fields.

II. Most striking is the paragraph concerning German-*English* relations. It is conciliatory, reiterating Hitler's old concept of maintaining the best of relations with the British Empire. It might be possible to read between the lines an idea with regard to a partition of the world between England and the Reich. This had already been told to me by Minister Gafencu after he met with Hitler. At the same time, Hitler attacks England for the policy of encirclement and on this basis revokes the naval agreement.

Beyond any doubt, action undertaken by Great Britain against German aggression and the decision of Parliament to introduce conscription are the reasons for the change of tone toward Great Britain. This tone, compared with invective cast by the German press and statesmen against England, is most striking.

III. Although Hitler is sticking to his previous attitude toward *France*, namely, that upon settlement of the Saar problem territorial questions have been resolved, nevertheless there is a slight warning to France that renunciation of Alsace-Lorraine cannot be taken for granted, but that it stems from the desire to surrender national demands to higher international interests.

IV. Arguments justifying the occupation of Bohemia are clearly lacking in logic. The argument that the Czech element insinuated itself within the German tribe to create an enclave is groundless from the historical point of view. All this portion of the speech, barren of real arguments, is the weakest part.

V. The paragraph about a possible *guarantee for Romania's frontiers* (about which I reported in my telegram) is not contained in the speech. Instead, Hitler used an unguarded expression uttered by the Romanian King to him at Berchtesgaden<sup>27</sup> that Romania should be entitled to a direct corridor through Carpathian Ruthenia and Slovakia toward the Reich. He used it to deny his aggressive intentions toward that country.

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<sup>26</sup> This was a reply to Roosevelt's 15 April address to the leaders of Germany and Italy about preserving peace.

<sup>27</sup> King Charles II met with Hitler on 24 November 1938.

VI. Lengthy deliberations about *Lithuania* might not be explained solely by the question of uniting Memel with the Reich. Here tendencies should be considered for economic subordination of this country, as well as of the *Baltic states*.

VII. Through the speech runs a clear note that *Western Powers* should keep away from *Central and Eastern Europe*. The Chancellor explains that he could envisage their financial collaboration. Nevertheless, he adds that financial aid, as in the Czech instance, would result in military action of the Eastern states against the Reich.

VIII. A characteristic statement in confirmation of my earlier observations that the Chancellor felt that *without the Munich Agreement* a more favourable *solution of the Czechoslovak* problem could have been achieved by the Reich.

The statement that the Chamberlain-Hitler consultative agreement<sup>28</sup> dealt exclusively with German-British relations, and that the Munich Agreement has nothing to do with Czech and Moravian problems, as well as that the appeal for arbitration made by the Hungarians and Czechs on the matter of frontiers for Slovakia excluded the other two partners of Munich, might only be evaluated in the light of documents. Prime Minister Chamberlain himself will be the most competent interpreter of whether the Chancellor is right or wrong in his deliberations.

IX. In his speech the Chancellor returns repeatedly to the idea of *Lebensraum*. Explaining the annexation of Austria and Bohemia to the Reich, he states that within the frame of the present Great Reich there is not a single territory which had not long ago belonged to the Reich, had not been connected with it, or had not been under its sovereignty.

X. While there is a traditional paragraph about friendship *with Italy*, and praise for *General Franco* as the conqueror of Bolshevism, *Japan* is mentioned only by a single word, which undoubtedly results from the negative attitude Japan took with regard to efforts to transform the Anti-Comintern Pact into a military alliance directed against England and France. Here I might mention in passing that, contrary to its previously employed practice, the German press for the first time printed information about Chinese successes in their offensive against Japan.

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<sup>28</sup> This agreement was signed on 30 September 1938, the morning after the ending of the Munich Conference.

XI. The Chancellor made a characteristic statement that war would end in the destruction of European culture by *Bolshevism*.

XII. The portion devoted to Poland this time is particularly extensive; it maintains a rather realistic tone and is devoid of a clearly aggressive note. It is, however, bent to conform to the German thesis.

In *other* parts of the speech Poland is only mentioned in connection with the Teschen Silesia problem and Carpathian Ruthenia, as striving for a common frontier with Hungary.

In the main paragraph about Poland the following points are worth noting:

1) Reference by the Chancellor to the provision of the 1934 declaration which reads as follows:

‘Each of the two governments, therefore, lays it down that the international obligations undertaken by it toward a third party do not hinder the peaceful development of their mutual relations, do not conflict with the present Declaration, and are not affected by this Declaration’,

and reference to the fact that in practice the provision had only been granted to Poland.

This statement is inaccurate, inasmuch as in 1934, as well as now, the German government was bound by the Treaty of Rapallo and the Berlin agreement with the Soviets.<sup>29</sup> The fact that the negotiators in the 1934 declaration mentioned the hitherto accepted international obligations in relation to third parties is self-explanatory, since they could only make declarations in respect to contracted agreements. Besides, and this we have to bear in mind, these agreements were not disclosed to the parties, and it was only considered that these agreements were not in contradiction with the declaration.

The Chancellor speaks on this occasion about the Polish-French alliance but does not mention the Polish-Romanian alliance, which, as a matter of fact, refers to Soviet Russia. However, he also fails to mention obligations under Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. I pass over here the legal argumentation to ascertain the conformity of the 1934 Declaration with the Polish-British Pact.

2) With regard to *Danzig*, I draw attention to the fact that the following is mentioned:

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<sup>29</sup> This is a reference to the German-Soviet accords of 1922 and 1926.

'The Danzig problem must at the latest, with the gradual extinction of this disastrous institution [the League of Nations], be discussed at any rate'.

This might explain why the Chancellor opened a discussion on the subject of Danzig. At the same time this is also a loophole to postpone the settlement of the problem.

3) The statement that the Corridor and the superhighway through the Corridor have no military importance; their meaning is only of a psychological and economic nature.

4) At point 1 of the German offer, mention that Danzig returns 'as a free state' to the Reich, which was not spelled out in conversations by the German side, while in the German note is only mentioned 'return of Danzig to the Reich'.

5) At point 2 of the offer, underlining that Germany had to obtain a *superhighway* and *railway line* for its use across the Corridor, of the same *extraterritorial* character as the Corridor is for Poland. The editing is not clear; it may be designed for a German audience, to show that the problem of the Corridor would thus also be settled.

6) At point 1 of the German concessions, it is said that all *economic rights in Danzig* would be granted to Poland. This would mean that this concerns also the customs union.

Note here that mention is also made of 'the safeguarding of Poland's economic interests in Danzig' and of the 'far-reaching settlements of the remaining problems for Poland in the field of economy and communication with the reunion of Danzig with the Reich'.

7) The Chancellor states that he offered us a *twenty-five-year pact of nonaggression*.

In my report on my conversation with Ribbentrop of 21 March, I only find an offer as to the guarantee of our frontiers. The question of the extension of the nonaggression pact had been brought up in previous conferences by the German side. I fail to remember whether von Ribbentrop, talking about the guarantee on 21 March, also referred to the possibility of extending the pact. If so, he did it only very casually.

8) Also in connection with *Slovakia*, von Ribbentrop in the conversation of 21 March only mentioned that it would be possible to discuss it.

The Chancellor, however, speaks about guaranteeing the independence of the Slovakian state by Germany, Poland, and Hungary, which in practice would mean withdrawal of Germany's unilateral position in that country.

The note states Germany's readiness to consider also Poland's interests when securing Slovakia's independence.

9) Both paragraphs regarding our answer as to Danzig and the superhighway are inaccurate and minimize our counteroffer. Here we have to keep to my note handed to Ribbentrop on 26 March.

10) The final statement of the Chancellor in the paragraph regarding Poland, of basic importance, is worded quite inexplicably, for an explanation is required to clarify the meaning of 'readiness for a new agreement with Poland under the condition that such a *solution would be based on a quite clear obligation equally binding for both parties*'.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
Józef Lipski

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 530–535; PDD 1939/I, doc. 234*

## 103

*29 April. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassy in London in connection with Hitler's speech*

Warsaw, 29 April 1939

Cipher cable No. 89

In connection with Hitler's speech yesterday,<sup>30</sup> as well as with the memorandum of the German government on the subject of the violation of the 1934 accord by the Polish-British agreement, the press has received the following instructions through the Press Department:

I. Threats and pressure tactics will not work with Poland.

II. During negotiations, Germany cannot assume the right to define what lies in Poland's interest.

III. We do not agree with the interpretation of the 1934 accord as precluding the possibility of peaceful collaboration with Western states.

IV. Providing the above premises are taken into account, Poland is not against negotiation.

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<sup>30</sup> This document was drawn up on 28 April.

In addition, the opposition press is to emphasise that Hitler is demanding real concessions from Poland: Danzig and an extraterritorial motorway, in exchange for German guarantees that have lost any value today.

I also wish to mention that the passage of the speech in which Hitler proposes to extend the non-aggression pact for 25 years and a common guarantee for an independent Slovakia are untrue.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 235*

## 104

*29 April. Cable from the Ambassador in Moscow about  
his conversation with the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs*

Moscow, 29 April 1939

Cipher cable No. 3.

Received telegram cable No. 58 Numbering with Warsaw

Litvinov told me that after he had received proposals from France and England that differed in substance and scope, he presented a project linking both proposals into one whole. Litvinov doesn't deny that it is to be a military alliance including the Baltic States. He does not question the guarantee given by England and France to Romania. However, he would like to clarify whether the Polish-Romanian alliance, which contains guarantees of frontiers, applies also to Germany or only to the Soviets. In the latter case, he thinks the alliance cannot be reconciled with the Soviet obligation to provide assistance to Poland and Romania.

Litvinov denies categorically that there should ever have been any mention of a free hand for the Soviets to come to an understanding with Germany against Poland and treats such a position as pure fantasy.

To Warsaw with c/c to Paris, London and Bucharest.

Grzybowski

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 237*

## 105

*2 May. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Ambassador in Paris about the Soviet guarantee*

Warsaw, 2 May 1939

Received 59. (Paris)

Please draw Bonnet's attention to that fact that even a unilateral guarantee declaration from the Soviets I would consider unacceptable for us. I would also advise against this form of guarantee for the Baltic States. Of course, this reservation is not in the least intended to influence the shaping of French-Soviet relations. We are only acting on our assessment of the realities and of the political *opportunité*.

According to information from Halifax, the English take our position into account and strive for an impersonal Soviet declaration, i.e., one that ensures an amicable attitude toward every state that may become the object of aggression.

Sent to Paris, c/c London, Moscow, Bucharest.

BECK

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 242*

## 106

*3 May. Note by the Under Secretary of State  
on his conversation with the Ambassador of Great Britain*

Secret

Minister Szembek's note on his conversation with the British Ambassador,  
Sir William Kennard, on 3 May 1939

I announced that I had invited him in order to draw his attention to certain rumours circulating through the city about discussions conducted by the English Embassy and by him personally. These rumours could lead to undesired consequences. They concern the matter of Danzig. According to



those rumours, which are an interpretation of certain conversations held with important Polish personalities, no one in England will be able to understand Poland's going to war over a German city, such as Danzig. In case of such a conflict, England will not be able to intervene on the side of Poland, which would find itself isolated, and Minister Beck would then find himself facing serious difficulties. The above rumours have led to surprise in government circles. It is claimed in those circles, not without reason, that this does not correspond to the high-level declarations made to Minister Beck during his last visit to London<sup>1</sup> by members of the English government. Given this, these circles are asking themselves if this does not signify a change of the English government's decision, especially following Hitler's last speech.<sup>2</sup>

I further pointed out that I had no need to explain to him what Poland's interests in Danzig were, as Minister Beck had on many occasions clearly presented them and as he knew them as well as I did. No one in Poland denies that Danzig, from an ethnic point of view, is a German city. By no means are we striving either for the creation of a new *voivodship*<sup>3</sup> in Danzig. The point here, however, is the great plan of German hegemony in Europe, one of its main aspects being the effort to push Poland away from the Baltic. Therein lies Poland's vital interest in the matter of Danzig. This was also the source and the cause of the latest accords in London. In Poland, we are fully aware of the significance of our collaboration with England. We know that the English resources, its fleet and air force, are among the most powerful in the world. But we also know that we bring to this collaboration the valour of our army, one of the most outstanding in Europe in terms of numbers and spirit, the qualities of its leaders and soldiers, in addition to the valour of the decisive, united, and guarded attitude of the entire nation—all of which constitutes a factor of the highest significance. We see in this collaboration the most powerful barrier against the Germanic thrust, and anything that can give the impression that this barrier is weakening can only incite enhanced aggression of the Fourth (sic!) Reich, something that does not lie in either our interest or theirs.

The Ambassador replied that he was at a loss to explain what could have caused the rumours that I had mentioned. He himself had not held any talks in the past week on account of ill health. Perhaps this is an allusion to certain talks conducted on his instruction by people from the Embassy. He has

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<sup>1</sup> 3–7 April. See docs. 82, 84–86, 88.

<sup>2</sup> 28 April. See doc. 102.

<sup>3</sup> Highest level of local administration in Poland (headed by a *voivod*).

noticed certain articles in the Polish press of the past few days mentioning a Polish protectorate over Danzig, about claims with regards to East Prussia (especially in IKC<sup>4</sup>), and thought that such articles could generate impressions negative for us in segments of English public opinion. For this reason, he has given instructions, even recently to Counsellor Norton, to bring this moment to the attention of Director Łubieński.

I confidentially told the Ambassador that it was specifically about his conversation with Prof. Kucharzewski.

He then declared that he recalled that, indeed, on 22 April, i.e., a week prior to Hitler's speech, he had lunch with him at Consul Savery's. In a casual conversation he did tell him that one should appeal to 'the common sense' of English public opinion and explain Danzig's significance for Poland, because German propaganda operates using arguments about Danzig's German makeup and the injustice that the city does not belong to the Reich. He doesn't rule out that such a conversation, deformed upon being repeated several times, could have given rise to the interpretation I described. He is grateful that I should have spoken frankly with him on this matter.

I noted in reply that this type of rumour, which must undoubtedly reach German ears, cannot but also affect adversely the goals of our common policy.

Further into the conversation, the Ambassador communicated to me in total confidence that he had received a telegram today from Ambassador Henderson in Berlin, who stated that the entire world was nervously awaiting the pronouncements of Minister Beck, on whom war or peace would depend. With the reservation that getting involved or making any suggestions is the last thing on his mind, the Ambassador pointed out that he hoped that Minister Beck's speech would not close the door to a certain *détente*.

He further stated that, according to his information, Ribbentrop was leaving for Italy, where, along with Ciano, he was going to listen to Minister Beck's speech and discuss the consequences that would arise for the Axis states from this speech.

At the end of the conversation, the Ambassador mentioned General Raštikis' visit to Warsaw. I took this opportunity to draw the Ambassador's attention to the economic pressure that Germany is exerting on Lithuania within the context of trade negotiations.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 247*

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<sup>4</sup> This is a reference to one of the largest national dailies, *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* [The Illustrated Daily Courier], IKC for short.

## 107

*4 May. Note from the Chef de Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Chargé d'affaires in Berlin on the memorandum for the German government (with appendix)*

Warsaw, 4 May 1939

To Mr. Stefan Lubomirski  
*Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Republic of Poland*  
in Berlin.

Enclosed please find the memorandum of the Polish government for the Reich government. Please submit the memorandum in the Polish language on 5 May at the *Auswärtiges Amt*.

In submitting the memorandum in person, please confine yourself to the indication that it is the response to the memorandum of the Reich government submitted by the German *Chargé d'affaires* in Warsaw to Mr. J. Szembek, Under Secretary of State, on 28 April.

MINISTER  
*p.p. M. Lubiński*

*I delivered the memorandum on 5 May at 5:00 P.M. I submitted it to Secretary of State Weizsäcker....*

[Appendix]

MEMORANDUM

1. As appears from the text of the Polish-German Declaration of 26 January 1934, and from the course of the negotiations which preceded its conclusion, this declaration had as its object to lay the foundations for a new framing of mutual relations based on the following two principles:

- a) The renunciation of the use of force as between Poland and Germany, and
- b) The friendly settlement by means of free negotiations of any contentious questions which might arise in the relations between the two countries.

The Polish Government have always understood in this manner their obligations under the declaration, and it is in this spirit that they have always been prepared to conduct neighbourly relations with the German Reich.

2. The Polish Government had foreseen for several years that the difficulties encountered by the League of Nations in carrying out its functions at Danzig would create a confused situation which it was in Poland's and Germany's interest to unravel. For several years the Polish Government had given the German Government to understand that frank conversations should be held on this subject. The German Government, however, avoided these and confined themselves to stating that Polish-German relations should not be exposed to difficulties by questions relating to Danzig. Moreover, the German Government more than once gave assurances to the Polish Government regarding the Free City of Danzig. It is sufficient here to quote the declaration made by the Chancellor of the Reich on 20 February 1938.

The Chancellor made publicly in the Reichstag the following declaration regarding Danzig:

'The Polish State respects the national conditions in this State, and both the city of Danzig and Germany respect Polish rights. And so the way to a friendly understanding has been successfully paved, an understanding which, starting from Danzig, has to-day succeeded in spite of the attempts of certain mischief-makers in finally taking the poison out of the relations between Germany and Poland and transforming them into a sincere, friendly co-operation'.

It was only after the events of September 1938 that the German Government suggested the opening of Polish-German conversations regarding an alteration in the situation in Danzig and regarding the transit routes between the Reich and East Prussia. In this connection the German memorandum of 28 April 1939 refers to the suggestion put forward by the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his conversation of 21 March 1939, with the Polish Ambassador in Berlin.<sup>5</sup> In this conversation emphasis was laid on the German side on the necessity for a rapid settlement of these questions, which was a condition of the Reich maintaining its proposals in force in their entirety. The Polish Government, animated by the desire to maintain good relations with the Reich, although surprised at the pressing form in which these proposals were put forward, and by the circumstances in which they were advanced, did not refuse conversations, although they considered the German demands thus couched to be unacceptable.

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<sup>5</sup> See doc 61.

In order to facilitate endeavours to reach an amicable solution of the question, the Polish Government on 26 March 1939 formulated their point of view in writing to the German Government, stating that they attached full importance to the maintenance of good neighbourly relations with the German Reich. The Polish point of view was summarized in the following points:

- a) The Polish Government propose a joint guarantee by Poland and Germany of the separate character of the Free City of Danzig, the existence of which is to be based on complete freedom of the local population in internal affairs and on the assurance of respect for Polish rights and interests.
- b) The Polish Government are prepared to examine together with the German Government any further facilities for persons in transit as well as the technical facilitating of railway and motor transit between the German Reich and East Prussia. The Polish Government are inspired by the idea of giving every possible facility which will permit the citizens of the Reich to travel in transit across Polish territory, if possible without any hindrances. The Polish Government emphasize that their intention is to secure the most liberal treatment possible of the German desiderata in this respect, with the sole reservation that Poland cannot give up her sovereignty over the belt of territory through which the transit routes would run. Finally, the Polish Government indicate that their attitude in the question of facilitating communications across Polish Pomerania depends on the attitude of the Reich regarding the Free City of Danzig.

In formulating the above proposals the Polish Government acted in the spirit of the Polish-German Declaration of 1934 which, by providing for direct exchange of views on questions of interest to both countries, authorized each State to formulate its point of view in the course of negotiations.

The Polish Government received no formal reply to their counter-proposals for a month, and it was only on 28 April 1939 that they learned from the Chancellor's speech and from the German Government's memorandum that the mere fact of the formulation of counter-proposals instead of the acceptance of the verbal German suggestions without alteration or reservation had been regarded by the Reich as a refusal of discussions.

It is clear that negotiations in which one State formulates demands and the other is to be obliged to accept those demands unaltered are not negotiations in the spirit of the Declaration of 1934, and are incompatible with the vital interests and dignity of Poland.

In this connection it should be pointed out that the Polish Government were unable at that time to express an opinion regarding the Polish-German-Hungarian guarantee of the independence of Slovakia which was alluded to in a general way in the German memorandum and more precisely stated in the Chancellor's speech of 28 April 1939, since a proposal of this description and in this form had never been made to them before. It is, moreover, difficult to imagine how such a guarantee could be reconciled with the political and military protectorate of the Reich over Slovakia which had been announced a few days previously and before the German Reich formulated its proposals to Poland.

3. The Polish Government cannot accept such an interpretation of the Declaration of 1934 as would be equivalent to a renunciation of the right to conclude political agreements with third States and, consequently, almost a renunciation of independence in foreign policy. The policy of the German Reich in recent years has clearly indicated that the German Government have not drawn conclusions of this sort from the Declaration so far as they themselves are concerned. The obligations publicly accepted by the Reich towards Italy and the German-Slovak Agreement of March 1939 are clear indications of such an interpretation by the German Government of the Declaration of 1934. The Polish Government must here recall that in their relations with other States they give and require full reciprocity as being the only possible foundation of normal relations between States.

The Polish Government reject as completely without foundation all accusations regarding the alleged incompatibility of the Anglo-Polish Mutual Guarantee of April 1939 with the Polish-German Declaration of 1934. This guarantee has a purely defensive character and in no way threatens the German Reich, in the same way as the Polish-French Alliance, whose compatibility with the Declaration of 1934 in its introductory paragraphs clearly stated that both Governments have 'decided to base their mutual relations on the principles laid down in the Pact of Paris of 27 August 1928'. The Pact of Paris,<sup>6</sup> which constituted a general renunciation of war as an

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<sup>6</sup> The Kellogg-Briand Pact.

instrument of national policy, just as the Declaration of 1934 constituted such a renunciation in bilateral Polish-German relations, contained the explicit reservation that 'any signatory Power which shall hereafter seek to promote its national interests by resort to war shall be denied the benefits furnished by this treaty'. Germany accepted this principle in signing the Pact of Paris and reaffirmed it in the Declaration of 1934, together with other principles of the Pact of Paris. It appears from this that the Declaration of 1934 would cease to be binding on Poland should Germany have recourse to war in violation of the Pact of Paris. Poland's obligations arising out of the Polish-British understanding would come into operation in the event of German action threatening the independence of Great Britain, and, consequently, in the very circumstances in which the Declaration of 1934 and the Pact of Paris ceased to be binding on Poland as regards Germany.

The German Government in making a complaint against the Polish Government for undertaking obligations to guarantee the independence of Great Britain and in regarding this as a violation by Poland of the Declaration of 1934, ignore their own obligations towards Italy of which the Chancellor spoke on 30 January 1939, and in particular their obligations towards Slovakia contained in the agreement of 18 and 23 March 1939. The German guarantees to Slovakia did not exclude Poland, and, indeed, as appears from the provisions of the above agreement regarding the distribution of garrisons and military fortifications in Western Slovakia, they were directed primarily against Poland.

4. It appears from the above that the Government of the German Reich had no justification for their unilateral decision to regard the Declaration of 1934 as not binding. The pact was, indeed, concluded for ten years without any possibility of denunciation during that time. It should be pointed out that the decision to regard the 1934 Declaration as not binding was taken after the previous refusal of the German State to accept explanations as to the compatibility of the Anglo-Polish guarantee with the 1934 Declaration, which it was the intention of the Polish Government to furnish to the representative of the Reich in Warsaw.

5. Although the Polish Government do not share the view of the German Government that the treaty of 1934 has been violated by Poland, nevertheless, if the German Government attach importance to the fresh regulation, by means of a treaty, of Polish-German relations on a good neighbourly basis, the Polish Government would be prepared to entertain

suggestions of this kind with the reservation of their fundamental observations contained above in the present memorandum.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 250, Appendix from PWB, doc. 78, pp. 88–92*

## 108

### *5 May. Speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Polish Parliament*

1. This session of Parliament provides me with an opportunity of filling in some gaps which have occurred in my work of recent months. The course of international events might perhaps justify more statements by a Foreign Minister than my single *exposé* in the Senate Commission for Foreign Affairs.

2. On the other hand, it was precisely that swift development of events that prompted me to postpone a public declaration until such time as the principal problems of our foreign policy had taken on a more definite form.

3. The consequences of the weakening of collective international institutions and of a complete change in the method of intercourse between nations, which I have reported on several occasions in the Houses, caused many new problems to arise in different parts of the world. That process and its results have in recent months reached the borders of Poland.

4. A very general definition of these phenomena may be given by saying that relations between individual Powers have taken on a more individual character, with their own specific features. The general rules have been weakened. One nation simply speaks more and more directly to another.

5. As far as we are concerned, very serious events have taken place. Our contact with some Powers has become easier and more profound, while in some cases serious difficulties have arisen. Looking at things chronologically, I refer, in the first place, to our agreement with the United Kingdom, with Great Britain. After repeated diplomatic contacts, designed to define the scope and object of our future relations, we reached on the occasion of my visit to London a direct agreement based on the principle of mutual assistance in the event of a direct or indirect threat to the independence of one of our countries. The formula of the agreement is known to you from the declaration of Mr. Neville Chamberlain of 6 April, the text of which was drafted by



mutual agreement and should be regarded as a pact concluded between the two Governments. I consider it my duty to add that the form and character of the comprehensive conversations held in London give a particular value to the agreement. I should like Polish public opinion to be aware that I found on the part of British statesmen not only a profound knowledge of the general political problems of Europe, but also such an attitude towards our country as permitted me to discuss all vital problems with frankness and confidence without any reservations or doubts.

6. It was possible to establish rapidly the principles of Polish-British collaboration, first of all because we made it clear to each other that the intentions of both Governments coincide as regards fundamental European problems; certainly, neither Great Britain nor Poland have any aggressive intentions whatever, but they stand equally firmly in defence of certain basic principles of conduct in international life.

7. The parallel declarations of French political leaders confirm that it is agreed between Paris and Warsaw that the efficacy of our defence pact not only cannot be adversely affected by changes in the international situation, but, on the contrary, that this agreement should constitute one of the most essential elements in the political structure of Europe. The Polish-British Agreement has been employed by the Chancellor of the German Reich as the pretext for unilaterally declaring non-existent the agreement which the Chancellor of the Reich concluded with us in 1934.

8. Before passing to the present stage of this matter, allow me to sketch a brief historical outline.

9. The fact that I had the honour actively to participate in the conclusion and execution of that pact imposes on me the duty of analysing it. The pact of 1934 was a great event in 1934. It was an attempt to improve the course of history as between two great nations, an attempt to escape from the unwholesome atmosphere of daily discord and wider hostile intentions, to rise above the animosity which had accumulated for centuries, and to create deep foundations of mutual respect. An endeavour to oppose evil is always the best form of political activity.

10. The policy of Poland proved our respect for that principle in the most critical moments of recent times.

11. From this point of view, Gentlemen, the breaking off of that pact is not an insignificant matter. However, every treaty is worth as much as the consequences which follow it. And if the policy and conduct of the other

party diverges from the principles of the pact, we have no reason for mourning its slackening or dissolution. The Polish-German Pact of 1934 was a treaty of mutual respect and good neighbourly relations, and as such it contributed a positive value to the life of our country, of Germany, and of the whole of Europe. But since there has appeared a tendency to interpret it as limiting the freedom of our policy, or as a ground for demanding from us unilateral concessions contrary to our vital interests, it has lost its real character.

12. Let us now pass to the present situation. The German Reich has taken the mere fact of the Polish-British understanding as a motive for the breaking off of the pact of 1934. Various legal objections were raised on the German side. I will take the liberty of referring jurists to the text of our reply to the German memorandum, which will be handed to-day to the German Government. I will not detain you any longer on the diplomatic form of this event, but one of its aspects has a special significance. The Reich Government, as appears from the text of the German memorandum, made its decision on the strength of press reports, without consulting the views of either the British or the Polish Government as to the character of the agreement concluded. It would not have been difficult to do so, for immediately on my return from London I expressed my readiness to receive the German Ambassador, who has hitherto not availed himself of the opportunity.

13. Why is this circumstance important? Even for the simplest understanding it is clear that neither the character nor the purpose and scope of the agreement influenced this decision, but merely the fact that such an agreement had been concluded. And this in turn is important for an appreciation of the objects of German policy, since if, contrary to previous declarations, the Government of the Reich interpreted the Polish-German declaration of non-aggression of 1934 as intended to isolate Poland and to prevent the normal friendly collaboration of our country with Western Powers, we ourselves should always have rejected such an interpretation.

14. To make a proper estimate of the situation, we should first of all ask the question, what is the real object of all this? Without that question and our reply, we cannot properly appreciate the character of German statements with regard to matters of concern to Poland. I have already referred to our attitude towards the West. There remains the question of the German proposals as to the future of the Free City of Danzig, the communication of the Reich with East Prussia through our province of Pomerania, and the further subjects raised as of common interest to Poland and Germany.

15. Let us, therefore, investigate these problems in turn.

16. As to Danzig, first some general remarks. The Free City of Danzig was not invented by the Treaty of Versailles. It has existed for many centuries as the result—to speak accurately, and rejecting the emotional factor—of the positive interplay of Polish and German interests. The German merchants of Danzig ensured the development and prosperity of that city, thanks to the overseas trade of Poland. Not only the development, but the very *raison d'être* of the city has been due to the formerly decisive fact of its situation at the mouth of our only great river, and to-day to its position on the main waterway and railway line connecting us with the Baltic. This is a truth which no new formulae can obliterate. The population of Danzig is to-day predominantly German, but its livelihood and prosperity depend on the economic potential of Poland.

17. What conclusions have we drawn from this fact? We have stood and stand firmly on the ground of the rights and interests of our sea-borne trade and our maritime policy in Danzig. While seeking reasonable and conciliatory solutions, we have purposely not endeavoured to exert any pressure on the free national, ideological and cultural development of the German majority in the Free City.

18. I shall not prolong this speech by quoting examples. They are sufficiently well-known to all who have been in any way concerned with the question. But when, after repeated statements by German statesmen, who had respected our standpoint and expressed the view that 'this provincial town will not be the object of a conflict between Poland and Germany', I hear a demand for the annexation of Danzig to the Reich, when I receive no reply to our proposal of 26 March for a joint guarantee of the existence and rights of the Free City, and subsequently I learn that this has been regarded as a rejection of negotiations—I have to ask myself, what is the real object of all this?

19. Is it the freedom of the German population of Danzig, which is not threatened, or a matter of prestige, or is it a matter of barring Poland from the Baltic, from which Poland will not allow herself to be barred?

20. The same considerations apply to communication across our province of Pomerania. I insist on the term 'province of Pomerania'. The word 'corridor' is an artificial invention, for this is an ancient Polish territory with an insignificant percentage of German colonists.

21. We have given the German Reich all railway facilities, we have allowed its citizens to travel without customs or passport formalities from the

Reich to East Prussia. We have suggested the extension of similar facilities to road traffic.

22. And here again the question arises—what is the real object of it all?

23. We have no interest in obstructing German citizens in their communication with their eastern province. But we have, on the other hand, no reason whatever to restrict our sovereignty on our own territory.

24. On the first and second points, i.e., the question of the future of Danzig and of communication across Pomerania, it is still a matter of unilateral concessions which the Government of the Reich appear to be demanding from us. A self-respecting nation does not make unilateral concessions. Where, then, is the reciprocity? It appears somewhat vague in the German proposals. The Chancellor of the Reich mentioned in his speech a triple condominium in Slovakia. I am obliged to state that I heard this proposal for the first time in the Chancellor's speech of 28 April. In certain previous conversations allusions were merely made to the effect that in the event of a general agreement the question of Slovakia could be discussed. We did not attempt to go further with such conversations, since it is not our custom to bargain with the interests of others. Similarly, the proposal for a prolongation of the pact of non-aggression for twenty-five years was also not advanced in any concrete form in any of the recent conversations. Here also unofficial hints were made, emanating, it is true, from prominent representatives of the Reich Government. But in such conversations various other hints were made which extended much further than the subjects under discussion. I reserve the right to return to this matter if necessary.

25. In his speech the Chancellor of the Reich proposes, as a concession on his part, the recognition and definite acceptance of the present frontier between Poland and Germany. I must point out that this would have been a question of recognizing what is *de jure* and *de facto* our indisputable property. Consequently, this proposal likewise cannot affect my contention that the German desiderata regarding Danzig and a motor road constitute unilateral demands.

26. In the light of these explanations, the House will rightly expect from me an answer to the last passage of the German memorandum, which says: 'Should the Polish Government attach importance to a new settlement of Polish-German relations by means of a treaty, the German Government are prepared to do this'. It appears to me that I have already made clear our attitude, but for the sake of order I will make a resume.

27. The motive for concluding such an agreement would be the word 'peace', which the Chancellor emphasized in his speech.

28. Peace is certainly the object of the difficult and intensive work of Polish diplomacy. Two conditions are necessary for this word to be of real value: (1) peaceful intentions, (2) peaceful methods of procedure. If the Government of the Reich is really guided by those two pre-conditions in relation to this country, then all conversations, provided, of course, that they respect the principles I have already enumerated, are possible.

29. If such conversations take place, the Polish Government will, according to their custom, approach the problem objectively, having regard to the experience of recent times, but without withholding their utmost goodwill.

30. Peace is a valuable and desirable thing. Our generation, which has shed its blood in several wars, surely deserves a period of peace. But peace, like almost everything in this world, has its price, high but definable. We in Poland do not recognize the conception of 'peace at any price'. There is only one thing in the life of men, nations and States which is without price, and that is honour.

*PWB, doc. 77, pp. 84-88*

## 109

*5 May. Circular note of the Under Secretary of State  
in connection with speculations about a German-Soviet understanding*

Warsaw, 5 May 1939

Cipher cable No. 98. (circular)

For your personal information:

Ciano, during a conversation about the tension between Poland and Germany with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, stated that

Poland should know that their (Rome and Berlin's) relations with the USSR are, in reality, different than they seem.<sup>7</sup>

Insinuations about the possibility of an understanding between the Axis states and the Soviets are also being made by certain German circles. The possibility of a return to the Rapallo concept can be used as a threat even by the Soviets.

We see the allusions of both parties as blackmail manoeuvring. It seems that the main threat to the Soviets continues to be Germany and totalitarian ideology as an instrument of German imperialism in Central and Eastern Europe.!!!

In case of an armed European conflict, the Soviets would wish to avoid a situation in which they would immediately find themselves directly involved with all their forces and they wish to save a maximum of unused strength for the critical moment of the war. At the same time, however, they do not want to remain on the margin of the counteraction that is taking shape against the Axis states, offering assistance to the assailed, which is the subject of Moscow's negotiations with Paris and London.

Present Polish-Soviet relations are entirely correct, which does not imply an intention to desist from our present policy with regard to the Soviets.

With regard to the new Commissar for Foreign Affairs, we await information clarifying the significance of this change.<sup>8</sup>

Szembek

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 256*

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<sup>7</sup> Information on this pronouncement of Ciano came on 1 May from Roman Dębicki, the Polish envoy in Belgrade. PDD 1939/I, doc. 241.

<sup>8</sup> In connection with Maxim Litvinov's resignation, on 3 May his functions were assumed by the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars, Vyacheslav Molotov.

## 110

*6 May. Cable from the Under Secretary of State  
to the Embassy in Moscow about a German-Soviet understanding*

Polmission Moscow.

The English *Chargé d'affaires* has informed the Polish envoy in Kaunas that Lozoraitis told him confidentially of news from Berlin about a supposed proposal made by Weizsäcker to the Soviet Ambassador on the conclusion of a non-aggression pact.

*Szemбек*

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 259*

## 111

*6 May. Report of the Ambassador in Washington  
on his conversation with the Secretary of State*

6 May 1939

Secret

For the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

Re.: the conversation with the Secretary of State

During today's conversation, Secretary of State Hull congratulated me using very warm words for Minister Beck's speech at the Sejm on 5 May. He said that, as never before, Poland's historical role and its position in the world was stressed and endorsed by Minister Beck in a strong and dignified manner and that the door to a possible understanding was not shut.

In discussing Italy's attitude towards Poland, Hull then said that in case of an armed conflict, he thinks Italy would be a dangerous partner for Germany, as the Italian nation's affinity for Poland is far greater than for Germany. He thinks, therefore, that the possibility of negotiations that would cool Hitler's

fervour and his aggressiveness toward Poland will come from Mussolini as an important warning.

Hull thinks that a European war, should it come to it, would be a catastrophe for Europe and there would be no victors or vanquished. In his opinion, there still are possibilities of an understanding, supposing the climate of distrust and disbelief waned. In the event, the only means to restore stability and prosperity in individual countries would be to work for rapid disarmament and to curb excessive military spending. Otherwise, even without war, Hull predicts a great economic and financial catastrophe in Europe because, as he said, the nations can't *à la longue* live with a continuous sense of uncertainty and fear.

Hull thinks that the present position of the Soviet Union continues to be a riddle. He is inclined to presume, however, that the Soviets will not allow themselves to be dragged into any armed conflict in the first instance, but will await an opportunity that would present itself during the further course of a possible war.

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The conversation then shifted to the subject of the arrival of our delegation to New York and to the subject of trade talks, which Minister Antoni Roman is to begin on 9 May.

In conclusion, I can say that the atmosphere in our favour here has increased very strongly as of late and that the American government, as well as the entire public opinion, is reacting very strongly in Poland's favour. For this reason, it is my impression that the talks that Minister Roman will conduct here with President Roosevelt and the American government will be cordial and could lead to some concrete results.

*Jerzy Potocki*  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 260*



## 112

*8 May. Note by the Trade Counsellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on his conversation with the Counsellor of the Embassy of Great Britain about Danzig and financial issues*

SECRET.

Note from the conversation between Mr. J. Wszelaki, Trade Counsellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Norton, Counsellor of the British Embassy, on 7 May 1939.

Yesterday, on 7 May, I had a long conversation with the Counsellor of the British Embassy, Mr. Norton, shortly after his return from London.

Mr. Norton told me that the Foreign Office was interested, among other things, in what would happen if the Danzig Senate were to spontaneously proclaim the incorporation of the Free City into the Reich. I replied that any spontaneity on Danzig's part would be out of the question and that I thought an attempt to incorporate Danzig into the Reich in this fashion would be treated by Poland as a *fait accompli*. 'Yes, but in London they think Gdynia is militarily indefensible,' Norton said. 'Could you not, in fact, do without Danzig?' I replied using known arguments, adding that in this case the point was not even Danzig or the substance of the talks, but the methods of political behaviour.

From this part of the conversation I got the impression that officials at the Foreign Office whom Norton must have talked with continue to have the same familiar doubts about Danzig.

In the second part of the conversation, we talked about financial issues. Mr. Norton indicated to me that 'the Embassy did all that was possible' in this matter, that a positive opinion in this matter was also given by the 'political authorities', but the English Treasury and Board of Trade are so overworked that they could not answer the question asked by the Minister of Foreign Affairs two weeks ago, so as a result the Embassy has no instructions, although it is expecting them shortly.

I asked what the Board of Trade had to do with this matter, which was political and financial in nature but had nothing to do with trade. Mr. Norton clarified that this partly concerned a commodity loan that could be granted within the framework of the Export Credit Guarantee and the Board of Trade is an interested party. I added that, from the various alternatives we were

facing, the least desirable one was a prolonged wait for the British answer. I also added that should the British answer be negative, we had the option of reaching for certain funds that had not been taken into account until then and we could also count on the understanding of France, which, so far, had not disappointed us in important matters.

Mr. Norton was clearly embarrassed with this part of the conversation and repeated that, in his opinion, the near future would undoubtedly bring a positive resolution of the matter.

I learnt from Mrs. Norton that she was expecting the arrival of Director Strang in Warsaw shortly.

...8/5

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 265*

## 113

### *10 May. Note from the conversations of the Minister of Foreign Affairs with the Papal Nuncio and the Ambassador of Great Britain about Vatican's peace initiative*

SECRET.

Conversations of the Minister of Foreign Affairs with the Papal Nuncio and the English Ambassador on 8 and 9 May 1939 about the Holy See's peace negotiation.

On 8 May, the Papal Nuncio and the English Ambassador came to call on me. The object of their *démarche* was the initiative of the Holy Father aimed at calling a conference of five powers—England, France, Italy, Germany and Poland—for the purpose of bringing about an amicable resolution of outstanding contentious issues (a) between Italy and France, and (b) between Germany and Poland. The Nuncio asked me what would Poland's position be in connection with this initiative.

At the same time, the British Ambassador, informing me of the *démarche*—and in doing so confined Polish-German issues to Danzig—in keeping with information received from Lord Halifax and on behalf of his minister:

a) declared that the British government would wish to know the Polish government's view before formally announcing its position with regard to the papal proposal,

b) communicated that as to Lord Halifax, he would be inclined to answer that experiences from this type of conference are not encouraging and the role of HMG in matters which do not directly involve it would be delicate. Lord Halifax added that it would be his intention to propose that the Holy See offered its *bons offices* in each of the above mentioned issues.

With that, the English Ambassador stated that, in his view, the position of the French government would be identical to that of the British government.

With regard to the above, I obtained the approval of the highest state authorities for the position that I adopted on 9 May. I communicated to the English Ambassador that I considered Lord Halifax's position to be far-sighted and reasonable and that the Polish government would answer in the same spirit to the suggestions of the Holy See.

The British Ambassador greeted this declaration with great satisfaction. With that we exchanged a few observations of a private nature about the Holy Father seemingly, on this occasion, acting more as an Italian than as the Head of the Church.

To the Nuncio I said that the Polish government had very carefully examined the suggestion of the Holy Father, that it shared entirely his concern for a peaceful way out of the existing difficulties, and fully appreciated the intentions guiding yesterday's *démarche*. The Polish government, however, has to state that, as experience so far has shown, international conferences called without complete diplomatic preparation are a risky phenomenon, as their *échec*, instead of improving the situation, worsens it in a way that is dangerous for peace.

Moreover, the Polish government doesn't consider itself competent enough to assess the significance of French-Italian misunderstandings, having inadequate experience in African matters. On the other hand, the Polish government could not accept as authoritative the opinion of third states in matters existing or arising between Poland and the German Reich.

Under the circumstances, the Polish government would greet with satisfaction *les bons offices* of the Holy See aimed at removing the difficulties that it has with the German Reich, but has to state that it has serious concerns about the possibility of calling a conference of the Five.

Not wishing, however, for Poland to be the sole country making the realisation of the Holy Father's initiative impossible, the Polish government wishes to add that should the other four powers be of a different opinion and should they seek to call this conference, the Polish government is ready to *réexaminer la situation*.

During a conversation with the Nuncio on 9 May, under the pretext of personal confidences and with the reservation that all pronouncements were unofficial in nature, I added that the international situation is made considerably more difficult by Italy's incomprehensible, not to say faint-hearted, position. I added as an entirely private observation that Ciano's visit to Poland had come to me somewhat as a disappointment. I have always been gentle with Italian interests as far as our relations with Berlin were concerned, but Ciano's fear of his own shadow manifested upon the slightest mention of the German problem reduced the Warsaw talks to an exchange of sentiments and courtesies. I have never intended to question the Axis policy, but it seemed to me that Italy could have demonstrated more of its own political thought in Eastern European matters. I even admit that I expected certain—sharper perhaps—pronouncements from Ciano, and that on this account I have been totally disappointed. It might have been possible perhaps to avoid a division of Europe into competing blocs had Italy shown more resolve in Eastern European matters—something in which it would most certainly have found Warsaw to be a partner.

I then emphasised that the last bridges had not been brought down, thanks to the fact that on account of our position, England's involvement in Russia's affairs had been limited and Polish policy had not drawn Russia into the game. I asked the Nuncio to confidentially inform the Holy Father that I had presented matters during the London discussions as follows:

The Polish-English *rapprochement* is still a measure to avert war, while including Russia would mean pure war policy. I think that there is still time for such a policy.

The Nuncio, in a very animated reaction, declared that the proposal of the conference of the Five was no doubt designed to eliminate Russia from European politics.

Before leaving, the Nuncio repeated that he had well noted the three fundamental points of the Polish position, because the Holy Father will understand this conversation as a consequence of his *démarche*. He is, therefore, grateful for information about the future of this conference.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 269*

## 114

*10 May. Note from the conversation between the Minister  
of Foreign Affairs and the Deputy People's Commissar for  
Foreign Affairs about Polish-Soviet relations*

Provisional report.

Conversation between Minister Beck and the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Potyomkin on 10 May 1939.

Potyomkin had instructions from Moscow and spoke on the basis of those instructions. The tone of the discussion was cordial, almost casual. He spoke much about his mission to Ankara. He spoke with a tendency to convince Poland to an agreement with the Soviets, but also an understanding for our arguments.

1) During the discussion, Minister Beck voiced the following formula: 'Of course, Poland is not indifferent to what the attitude of the Soviet Union would be in case of aggression against Poland'.

Potyomkin replies that he is empowered to declare that the Soviet Union's attitude in such a case would be friendly (*attitude amicale*).

In response, Minister Beck declares that, as the Soviet Union could already note from the course of events, the Polish government has never entered into any conspiracies directed against the Soviet Union, nor does it intend to join agreements of such a nature. In the related argumentation and discussion Minister Beck pointed out that any *assistance mutuelle* between Poland and Russia was the more difficult as Poland did not have any real possibilities of assisting the Soviet Union. The only Polish assistance for Russia is the fact that it refrains from participating in collective armed actions against the Soviet Union and, as it turns out, any larger scale actions against Russia cannot be undertaken without Poland. This, however, cannot form the basis for an agreement. On the other hand, Poland cannot agree to unilateral guarantees. Of course, there are countries whose own means of action are so limited that they accept such guarantees. But for Poland this is impossible to accept and, for this reason, Poland in its relations with Great Britain has agreed to burden its own policy, solely in order to avoid any one-sidedness. Poland has survived 20 years on the basis of four political documents (two non-aggression pacts and two alliances). The introduction of the accord with Great Britain was in a way a serious and unique event. Poland has nothing against the Soviet government's talks with England and France, but Poland's situation is different and it has a certain

established tradition in its policy towards its neighbours. Minister Beck continued with the indication that one should not repeat the errors of last year's policy, when violent action was opposed by declarations that only led to further and even more violent actions.

Potyomkin agreed at this point that all types of demonstrative actions between Poland and the USSR were unnecessary.

2) The Baltic States: Both discussants stated that the aims of both countries' policies towards the Baltic States were convergent—only their tactical methods were different. The USSR takes the path of pressure, Poland that of persuasion. On the other hand, both countries are interested in the preservation of the independence of the Baltic States and in not allowing them to become objects in the hands of a third party.

3) Romania: Minister Beck again raised the Hungarian argument against widening the stipulation of the Polish-Romanian alliance to all Romania's boundaries. Here Minister Beck stressed that the present state of affairs—irrespective of belief or lack thereof in the importance of sentiments in the sphere of foreign policy—created a situation that would make it extremely difficult for the Hungarians to become militarily engaged against Poland.

Potyomkin seemed to show considerable understanding for this argument.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 270*

## 115

*10 May. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in London  
about the British loan for Poland*

Warsaw, 10 May 1939

Secret

To Mr. Edward Raczyński  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
i n L o n d o n .

In connection with the growing difficulties of the State Treasury, there is a need—without waiting for the fundamental response to the question in this

matter that I addressed to Ambassador Kennard during a conversation on 23 March—to ask the British government if it would be ready to grant the Polish government financial assistance of a greater magnitude to cover the needs connected with the state of heightened military alert and with bringing Poland in a short time to a full war readiness. It is preferable that this question be asked without any delay.

I leave it to you to decide with whom such a discussion should take place and whether on the occasion of the first such discussion it would be necessary to divulge the amount of the loan that is our *desideratum*, as well as the possible submission of a memorandum in this matter. The draft of such a memorandum will be brought by Economic Counsellor Wszelaki, who has received verbal instructions from me and who can additionally clarify the points of the memorandum.

Minister

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 271*

## 116

*10 May. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in Moscow  
about Polish intentions with regard to the USSR*

Polmission Moscow

On the occasion of your next meeting with Molotov, please declare that the Polish government stands on the firm position of the non-aggression pact of 1932 and presumes that recent events have demonstrated in a manner leaving no room for doubt the sincerity of the Polish government's intentions. The Polish government is counting on the reciprocity of the USSR's government. The reservations that we have raised about the extension of existing accords between us and the Soviet Union had to do primarily with the fact that the French government, without any empowerment on our part, engaged with the Soviet Union in discussions concerning relations between our countries that could not have been realised otherwise than through a direct understanding between Warsaw and Moscow. In addition, the Polish government is convinced that it is working most effectively for peace by pursuing a policy of non-aggression with regard to all its neighbours, on

a reciprocal basis, of course. The difficulty in concluding an agreement on mutual assistance between Poland and the Soviet Union has to do with a lack of practical reciprocity on Poland's part, and the Polish government, as a matter of principle, does not enter into obligations that are not reciprocal by nature. This does not in the least diminish the lasting commitment of the Polish government not to join any international agreements that would be aggressive in nature with respect to the Soviet Union. Under the circumstances, the Polish government assumes that there are grounds for lasting and friendly, neighbourly relations between our countries.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 272*

## 117

### *10 May. Unsigned note about the declaration of the Secretary of the Japanese Embassy*

Top Secret.

#### Note.

On 10 May, the secretary of the Embassy of Japan, Mr. Inoue, who enjoys the special confidence of the Ambassador, came to call on Director Kobyłański and made the following statement on behalf of the Ambassador:

For the past week, Ambassador Sakoh has been in possession of instructions from his government to offer its *bons offices* to the Polish government in order to resolve the conflict between Poland and the German Reich. In taking up this initiative, the Japanese government is guided by its interest, well known to the Polish government, in maintaining good relations between Poland and Germany and by its gratitude for the Polish government's services on the Manchukuo and China issue and its actions in Geneva.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> When, in 1932, Japan attempted to obtain the League of Nations' recognition for the puppet state of Manchukuo that it had created, Poland amicably adopted a neutral stance.



Ambassador Sakoh has been thinking about the manner in which to present the Japanese government's initiative to Minister Beck, wishing to do so in a form that would not be misunderstood and would reflect the Japanese government's proper intentions.

The Ambassador is leaving today for Berlin in order to obtain information from Ambassador Oshima. He emphasises that the above is a solely Japanese initiative which has not been suggested from any other quarters.

*The German press suggests some mediator*

Warsaw, 10 May 1939.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 274*

## 118

### *10 May. Personal letter of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in Rome*

Warsaw, 10 May 1939

Top secret.  
Personal.

Dear Bolek,

Instead of sending you detailed technical instructions, I think it more important at this point in time to introduce you to my thoughts on the subject of our policy as a whole.

Let me start from the beginning, i.e., from what took place after our discussions in Monte Carlo.<sup>10</sup> During my visit with Hitler at Berchtesgaden, I noticed a dangerous change in that man whom, on the basis of concrete evidence, I had grounds to consider in 1934 as one of the rare examples in Germany of reason in foreign policy. Too easy successes due to the indolence and the indecisiveness of his counter-partners, large and small alike, have brought this man, with whom it was possible to speak reasonably about

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<sup>10</sup> Minister Józef Beck spent a vacation in Monte Carlo in December–January.

European politics just a year ago, to a state that constitutes a direct threat to our interests.

In keeping with the principle voiced by our common friend, Reserve Corporal of the 1<sup>st</sup> Light Cavalry Regiment: 'Take a look at the trousers, Mister, then take a look at the world'—this man has lost all sense of measure which, after Bismarck, in my opinion he tried to represent in Germany for the first time.

This was decisive for me. After a heavy inner struggle, I took the decision to shift our policy from a path of reasonable understanding with this neighbour, to one of *réassurance*. Our public opinion has an exaggerated liking for this, though personally I am aware of the risk this decision entails.

During my visit to England, I became aware that the attitude of this, be it as it may, serious nation, had undergone a serious change. To British proposals of a guarantee I responded with the principle of reciprocity, considering that, despite our poverty and weakness, we have no half-way solutions. Either we pull up our country to the position of a power or, in one way or another, *nolens volens*, we will become some sort of Slovakia or something of that order. You will understand that, in keeping with the principles of the school from which we both originate, I tried the first solution.

As is shown by the cipher that you will receive prior to the present letter, I previously also considered taking out some form of insurance within the 'Axis'. Ciano failed miserably in Warsaw.<sup>11</sup> That man is afraid of his own shadow when there is talk of policy with regard to Germany in Eastern Europe. Besides sentiments and courtesies, in his discussions with me in Warsaw he simply failed to formulate any political thought.

In those conditions, and being fully aware of the risks of the decisions taken, I have decided to take a firm stand on German plans with regard to Poland. Piłsudski once predicted the problems that would arise from any 'unhealthy romancing with Germany'. He thought, however, that we wouldn't reach a reasonable arrangement with the countries of Western Europe if we didn't create our own Polish-German policy, if even for a time.

The Italians also have to know that—I leave it to your discretion to whom and when you choose to say it—I empower you to declare that in all our new accords (i.e., the alliance with England and the assurance of automatism in the

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<sup>11</sup> This is a reference to Ciano's visit to Warsaw on 25 February–1 March. See PPD 1939/I, doc. 68.

French alliance) we have not undertaken an obligation that would entail any direct or indirect action against Italy. We would like to know, however, how the Italians see their obligations with regard to Germany, as the further course of our negotiations will be regulated in keeping with their stance on this matter. This is both a question and a warning. I repeat once more that I leave it to your discretion—whether and when to say this, and to whom.

Should you notice a change of Ciano's tone in the direction either of disregarding our interests, as I defined them in my speech of 5 May, or a lack of desire to engage in discussions based on the confidence shown him in Poland, I think it would be appropriate for you to state in a calm manner that you are beginning to doubt if your mission in Italy still has a purpose, as the basis for it had been to make political use of the invaluable capital represented by the centuries-old friendship between our two countries.

*A titre d'avertissement, sans mettre les points sur les 'i'.*

And finally, one last matter. If a situation not allowing you to make adequate use of your work in Rome were to arise due to our partner's fearfulness, I would like to ask you, not officially but as a friend, if, under certain circumstances, you would see the possibility for yourself to assume the position of Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In connection with our international and internal situation, both of which could become more acute, I see two possibilities for myself: Either the necessity to assume the post of Prime Minister, in which case I assume that my internationally known name could be beneficial for the country, while formally keeping the portfolio of foreign affairs, or to assume one of the MOB commissions I have requested,<sup>12</sup> i.e., one of the cavalry brigades. In the second case, I fear that the Army would not let you go, considering you, with reason, one of the most outstanding cavalry high commanders.

I would be grateful nonetheless for an answer of principle, noncommittal for the time being, about the first eventuality, which could arise in case of what the Germans refer to as *Kriegsgefahrzustand*.

In any case, I would be grateful if you could give a frank answer to the theoretical question: Would you be willing, in the hour of trial, when it would not yet be necessary to fight, to assist me in my work for the State in the capacity of the man in charge of the Ministry, as in such a case I could sleep in peace, taking 10 minutes everyday to talk with you about foreign affairs and having my hands free for other matters?

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<sup>12</sup> A mobilisation commission.

I hope that such a situation will not take place and that Allah will spare me the 'bitter dregs' in our work for the State. But it would be very valuable for me to know if, in such a situation, I could count on your cooperation and in what way.

*These latter questions are, of course, strictly personal considerations, just in case. I am counting on your discretion.*

Cordial greetings. Yours

*J. Beck*

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 275*

## 119

### *12 May. Report of the Ambassador in London on his conversation with the British Foreign Secretary*

London, 12 May 1939

Secret.

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

During today's visit with Lord Halifax, about which I am sending a separate report,<sup>13</sup> I raised the subject of the present state of English-Soviet talks. Lord Halifax told me that the English government was encountering further difficulties in persuading the Soviets that the English offer was not characterised by lack of reciprocity. The Soviets continue to maintain this allegation, especially in connection with the hypothetical case of Russia's engagement in the defence of the Baltic States, in which case England would not be contractually bound to come to its assistance. Lord Halifax replied to them that neither would the Soviets be obliged to assist England in its possible intervention in the defence of, say, Switzerland. Given the continuing misunderstanding, the English government asked the Soviet government today (?) for more particulars on the allegation raised.

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<sup>13</sup> See doc. 120.

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Upon bidding me farewell, Lord Halifax asked me if we had established any contact with Germany about Danzig, or if we were hopeful about initiating such talks, be it through the assistance of the Holy See or by other means. I answered that I had no knowledge about this and, in any case, I didn't think that the present situation provided a good opportunity.

(Edward Raczyński)  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

PDD 1939/I, doc. 278

## 120

### *12 May. Report of the Ambassador in London on his conversation with the British Foreign Secretary*

London, 12 May 1939

Top Secret.

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

Following your instructions of 10 May,<sup>14</sup> brought to me by Economic Counsellor Wszelaki, I called on Lord Halifax this morning.

Having again and in depth thought the situation over, I have become thoroughly convinced that in order to incline the English government to fully appreciate the importance of our *démarche* it was necessary to carry it out in a ceremonial and formal manner and to deliver an *aide-mémoire*. Without a doubt, it was also necessary to disclose at once the very high amount of the loan for which we were asking. I saw the above steps as a means to secure our demands, as far as possible, from being whittled away by being handed over prematurely into the hands of expert circles and services which will, of course, aim towards a far-reaching reduction of our *desiderata*.

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<sup>14</sup> See doc. 115.

I prepared the *aide-mémoire* in French from the text in Polish brought by Economic Counsellor Wszelaki, taking into consideration the verbal instructions he had brought. I did not mention the amount of the loan in the text of the *aide-mémoire*, considering that it would be preferable if I were to mention it directly to Lord Halifax while invoking the powers received from you.

I began with verbal clarifications: I pointed to the serious character of my *démarche*, which I am addressing through Lord Halifax to the British Prime Minister and government. I recalled that on 23 April you had raised this question with Ambassador Kennard in a manner that gave you cause to expect an English answer. I added that, given its absence and the fact that the matter was pressing, I was instructed to return to the question in a more detailed manner and to submit a clarifying *aide-mémoire*. I then illustrated our needs in light of the arguments in the *aide-mémoire* and in that order. Lastly, I stated that the size of the considerable aid we were expecting should, in our view, amount to the sum you had instructed me to communicate.

In reply, Lord Halifax gave me the following clarifications: The English government has been informed by Ambassador Kennard about his conversation with you. If it has not yet pronounced itself, this does not mean it has not devoted close attention to the matter. Lord Halifax discussed the above matters in the last few days with the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer and was to return to the subject the coming Monday. My *démarche* today enhances his belief in the importance and pressing nature of the matter we have raised. Lord Halifax wishes for me to inform and assure you that the English government is determined, in keeping with its possibilities, to come to Poland's assistance in its present difficulties. At the same time, Lord Halifax feels forced to state openly that he was taken aback by the amount I had mentioned. Lord Halifax does not know if I am aware that the English government is also struggling with serious difficulties with financing a major rearmament program and a simultaneous preservation of its currency's exchange rate. This state of affairs makes the task of the Chancellor of the Exchequer all the more difficult and must also weigh on our matters.

Lord Halifax then asked a few questions concerning the procedure we have in mind, particularly if I have something to tell him about the conditions of the transaction we were requesting, interest rates, terms of repayment, etc. I replied that these questions would be discussed during the course of the negotiations we were suggesting. Lord Halifax then asked if we were also talking about loans with the French and, as I answered that we were, if the assistance we might possibly receive from the French would be, in our view, part of the sum that we

needed, or would the French assistance be needed in addition to the sum that we were asking from England. To those questions I answered in keeping with the information provided by Economic Counsellor Wszelaki, while emphasising that I was not speaking in accordance with instructions or on the basis of any official or precise information, which I did not have on this subject. I explained to him that, as far as I knew, we intended to satisfy our very substantial needs from three sources: our own continued efforts, English loans in the amount I had indicated and, in addition to them, further loans from France. Lord Halifax took note of these clarifications with what looked to me like gloom.

He promised that the English government would consider our *desiderata* without delay and give an answer to the Polish government as quickly as possible.

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I think that Lord Halifax's reaction to my *démarche* was rather positive, although I have no doubts that the British side will strive to reduce the figures we have mentioned considerably. According to the information communicated to me by the Embassy's Financial Counsellor, England's financial difficulties, which Lord Halifax has made reference to, are real indeed and tend to mount. I think that we should now expect an English answer very shortly. As far as the procedure is concerned, I have been considering very thoroughly whether to raise the matter, in addition to Lord Halifax, directly with the Prime Minister or with Minister Simon. It seems to me that at the present stage decency requires that I leave the matter in the hands of the Foreign Secretary and on his responsibility. Lord Halifax should and will have to, by force of events, assume the role of spokesman for our interests. I am convinced that he will perform this role with all his innate conscientiousness. An attempt on my part to circumvent him could be seen as an expression of distrust, if not an act of tactlessness. It is even possible that the Prime Minister and the Chancellor would presently refuse to hold any discussions with me. However, I have to reserve this *ultima ratio* in case of difficulties at further stages of the matter, as difficulties are sure to arise.

I am appending the *aide-mémoire* presented to Lord Halifax.<sup>15</sup>

Edward Raczyński  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

PDD 1939/I, doc. 279

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<sup>15</sup> Not included in this publication.

## 121

*13 May. Circular note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
on negotiations with the USSR*

Polmission Paris London Berlin Rome Quirinale Ankara Tokyo Bucharest  
Washington

*by letter:* Budapest Belgrade Sofia Kaunas Riga Tallinn Helsinki  
Stockholm Berne Brussels San Sebastian The Hague Copenhagen *Vatican*

Western states' ongoing demands for a Soviet declaration of assistance to Poland are voiced entirely without Polish participation. This has led on the part of the Soviets to a desire to gauge our opinion during the Molotov-Grzybowski and Potyomkin talks in Warsaw.

As a result of these talks, it was clarified that the Soviet government is showing understanding toward our arguments in the matter of Polish-Soviet relations, which are presently evolving in an entirely correct manner.

The Soviets are aware that the Polish government will not join any arrangement with either of its great neighbours directed against the other and understand the benefits that the Polish stance entails for them.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 282*

## 122

*13 May. Record of the conversation between the Chef de Cabinet  
of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Ambassador of Japan*

Secret

Conversation of the Minister's *Chef de Cabinet*  
with the Japanese Ambassador, Mr. Sakoh, on 13 May 1939

In connection with discussions that took place between Mr. Kobylański and the Japanese Ambassador,<sup>16</sup> I called upon the latter on the instructions of

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<sup>16</sup> See doc. 117.



Minister Beck, in order to inquire about the details of his trip to Berlin and the reasons why the carrying out of the instructions, which he mentioned to Mr. Kobyłański, had been suspended.

Ambassador Sakoh replied that he had received instructions from Tokyo to propose, along with his colleague in Berlin, to the Polish and German governments the mediation of the Japanese government in the settlement of the difficulties that had recently arisen.

As Ambassador Sakoh expected Minister Beck to respond to his *démarche* by asking about the approach of the German government to such a proposal, he decided first of all to travel to Berlin to discuss the matter with the Japanese Ambassador<sup>17</sup> there. In the latter's opinion, the present moment is *not* the appropriate one for the Japanese Ambassador to make such a proposal to the German government.

At this point, Ambassador Sakoh alluded to existing difficulties between Japan and the Rome-Berlin Axis, and also stated that, in the opinion of the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin, this kind of mediation could only be well received if it was undertaken by Italy.

Ambassador Sakoh further emphasised that the intention of the Japanese government was not in the least to affect Polish-German negotiations in a substantive way, and even less to suggest that the Polish government accept Hitler's proposal. Japan's mediation was to be limited to the re-establishment of the ruptured line between Berlin and Warsaw, 'to seating both partners at one table'.

The conversation then moved to Potyomkin's visit, English-Polish negotiations, etc. In this latter question, I stressed our satisfaction with the fact that, as we were being informed, Great Britain did not intend to engage itself on the side of the Soviets in Far Eastern affairs and showed a general tendency to treat Japan easily. At this point I added that our interest in those matters was due to the fact that, irrespective of fluctuations in European affairs, our attitude toward Japan remained unchanged.

Finally, Ambassador Sakoh asked, as if without conviction, if he understood well our position that we would never acquiesce to Danzig's full political independence or to a German protectorate.

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<sup>17</sup> Hiroshi Oshima.

I replied that we were concerned about maintaining our rights in Danzig, and that these rights could not be under the control of any third state. In this respect, there is a great difference between a protectorate and Danzig's emancipation. I think that a protectorate would, indeed, be unacceptable as a basis for discussion.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 283*

## 123

*13 May. Cable of the Ambassador in Paris  
about his conversation with the French Prime Minister*

Paris, 13 May 1939  
Received on 13 May 1939 at 8:00 P.M.

Mr. Łukasiewicz to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

No. 76

Secret

Received cipher cable No. 98

I have spoken with the Prime Minister, and informed him of our material and financial needs. I met with a favourable reception marked by understanding for our situation. The Prime Minister expects serious difficulties, however. He mentioned that, given the probability of the stretching of the present situation, it would be necessary to think of a common French-English-American effort. On Monday I would submit an *aide-mémoire* to the Prime Minister, and I will speak with the Minister of the Treasury. I will be hosting the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of the Treasury for breakfast on Wednesday.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 284*

## 124

*15 May. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in London  
on Poland's position towards negotiations with the USSR*

Polmission LONDON,  
c/c Moscow, Paris, Bucharest.

Our position on the Soviet-French-English negotiations can be neither negative nor positive, as we are not a party to those negotiations, and it is not up to us to hamper the policy of any of those three countries in this matter. We would only have reservations, in keeping with the principle 'nothing about us without us', about the settlement of Polish affairs during those negotiations (such as assistance for Poland).

As to our participation in any arrangement of this kind, we are upholding our reservation that a Polish-Soviet *mutual assistance* agreement could be seen as provocative by Germany and bring the conflict closer.

As for the enlargement of the Polish-Romanian *alliance*, we are also upholding our reservations that such a revision would determine the position of Hungary, thus immediately exposing Romania.

Also, we can see neither the need for nor the benefit of relinquishing the Eastern alliance with Romania, as this *de facto* purely defensive arrangement has no element of moral aggression. The Romanian government sees the matter in the same way.

*All our arguments are known to the Soviets, who are showing understanding for them, as has been confirmed in my discussions with Potyomkin.*

Sent to London. C/c to Moscow, Paris, Bucharest.

BECK

PDD 1939/I, doc. 288

## 125

*17 May. Western Section to the Embassy in Berlin  
on the flight of Germans from Poland*

Warsaw, 17 May 1939

C o n f i d e n t i a l .

To the Embassy of the Republic of Poland  
i n B e r l i n .

Pursuant to the letter P II N 49/121/39 of 27 April 1939 on the subject of the alleged flight of Germans from Poland to Danzig, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the basis of obtained information, wishes to inform you that a number of families with German citizenship and Polish citizens of German nationality, a total of 35 persons, have recently moved from the territory of the *poviat*<sup>18</sup> of Kartuzy to Danzig and to the Reich.

The information carried by the press in the Reich and in Danzig, to the effect that the Germans were forced to flee from Poland ‘in fear for their life and property’, is inconsistent with the facts.

All the persons who have left Poland—with their list in possession of the authorities—were never the object of persecution on the part of the Polish population or had any disputes with Poles.

The majority of those people left legally citing, upon being deregistered, departure for work, visiting relatives, or marriage as reasons. One of the persons is a fugitive from justice.

It seems that these departures have the traits of an operation organised to produce evidence showing that the German minority is forced by persecutions ‘to flee’ from Poland.

Deputy Director  
of the Political Department  
*p.p....*

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 294*

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<sup>18</sup> Intermediate level of local administration in Poland.

## 126

*19 May. Record of talks between Polish  
and French General Staff representatives*

## PROTOCOLE

Résumant les conversations tenues les 15, 16 et 17 Mai 1939 à Paris, entre:

Monsieur le Général KASPRZYCKI, Ministre des Affaires Militaires de Pologne, représentant Monsieur le Maréchal ŚMIGŁY-RYDZ, Inspecteur Général des Forces Armées de Pologne,

et Monsieur le Général GAMELIN, Chef d'Etat-Major Général de la Défense National Française

- ont fixé ce qui suit:

I. – En cas d'agression allemande contre la Pologne ou en cas de menace de ses intérêts vitaux à Dantzig qui provoquerait une action par les armes de la part de la Pologne, l'Armée Française déclenchera automatiquement une action de ses diverses forces armées de la façon suivante:

1. La France exécute immédiatement une action aérienne d'après un plan fixé d'avance.

2. Dès qu'une partie des forces françaises sera prête (vers le troisième jour)<sup>19</sup> la France déclenchera progressivement des actions offensives à objectifs limités.

3. Dès que l'effort principal allemand s'accentuerait sur la Pologne, la France déclencherait une action offensive contre l'Allemagne avec les gros de ses forces (à partir du quinzième jour).

II. – Dans la première phase de la Guerre la Pologne s'engagera avec toutes ses forces dans des actions défensives contre les Allemands en reprenant les actions offensives dès que les circonstances le permettront et dans les conditions générales envisagées entre les deux Commandements.

III. – A l'inverse, si le gros des forces allemandes attaque sur la France, en particulier par la Belgique ou la Suisse, ce qui provoquerait l'entrée en action des armées françaises, l'armée polonaise s'efforcera de maintenir devant elle

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<sup>19</sup> Après le jour initial de la mobilisation générale française.

le maximum possible de forces allemandes, dans les conditions générales envisagées entre les deux Commandements.

IV. – Pour renforcer le potentiel en matériel de l'Armées Polonaise les deux Hauts Commandements reconnaissent dans l'intérêt commun comme indispensable d'apporter de la part de la France immédiatement l'aide matérielle et financière au Gouvernement Polonais. Cette aide permettra d'augmenter positivement la force de l'Armée Polonaise et de développer l'Industrie de guerre en Pologne tant pour les besoins de l'Armée Polonaise que pour les besoins de ses Alliés sur le théâtre d'opérations oriental.

V. – Les deux Hautes Commandements considèrent comme indispensable de continuer les conversations plus détaillées ayant pour but le développement des principes contenus dans ce protocole.

Paris, 19 Mai 1939.

/-/ KASPRZYCKI, Gen.

/-/ GAMELIN

Attested by

Head of Inspection Bureau

/-/ STRZELECKI, Col.

*Bellona*, pp. 176–177

## 127

*21 May. Circular note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
about the incident in Kalthof*

Warsaw, 21 May 1939

Cipher cable No. 125. (Circular).

Yesterday in the evening, a crowd led by uniformed members of the Nazi party attacked and demolished the house inhabited by Polish customs inspectors in the locality of Kalthof, on the territory of the Free City of Danzig, on the border with East Prussia. In addition, the auto in which the Deputy General Commissioner of the Polish Republic, Mr. Perkowski, had arrived on the scene was attacked. The Polish chauffeur, who was assaulted by armed assailants, shot one of the attackers in self-defence.

The entire incident has all the traits of a blatant provocation. The Danzig and German information services are twisting the facts.

Please inform the German government and intervene with the press so that it prints information provided by PAT.<sup>20</sup>

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 299*

## 128

*22 May. Political report of the Ambassador in Paris  
on the interpretative protocol to the alliance with France  
(with an appendix)*

Paris, 22 May 1939

Strictly confidential.

For the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

### POLITICAL REPORT XVI/2

By sending, together with this document, the report from the negotiations on the signing of the interpretative protocol to our alliance with France, it is my privilege to communicate to you what follows:

It is extremely difficult to be certain what has influenced Minister Bonnet to withdraw from the already agreed signing of the protocol and acceptance of my declaration on the subject of Danzig. Putting all the facts together, I suppose that it is indeed a case of an understanding with London, the decision about which had to be made under the influence of Ambassador Léger after Minister Bonnet had committed himself to me and set the date for the signing for Friday, 19 May. Given that Minister Bonnet did not know the text of the London protocol, he could have hoped that the matter of Danzig

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<sup>20</sup> PAT—Polska Agencja Telegraficzna [Polish Telegraph Agency].

was treated in it in an analogous fashion to the draft of my declaration and that, therefore, he would not need to inform me of his consultations with London. Most probably it is for this reason that he did not inform me on Friday that he was making the acceptance of my declaration dependent on the results of this consultation.

On the other hand, from the conversation with General Gamelin, whom I saw on the occasion of the departure of General Kasprzycki,<sup>21</sup> it would follow that the Quai d'Orsay is interested in making use of a different definition with regard to the matter of Danzig than the one I have submitted.

I can thus presume that after his return from Geneva, i.e., on Wednesday or Thursday, Minister Bonnet will summon me and suggest that I make my declaration about Danzig in a different form than I have planned to do. In expectation of the above, I would be grateful if you could send me instructions on how I should behave in such a case, as well as how to react in case Minister Bonnet were to refuse to take cognisance of any declaration on Danzig on my part.

Personally, it seems to me that it would be advisable not to accept any formulations proposed by the French for our unilateral declaration and rather risk the suspension of the signing of the political protocol. Our situation seems to me quite strong, not only on account of the very clumsy and inappropriate tactics pursued by Mr. Bonnet, but also because we have at our disposal such reciprocity arguments as is, for the French, the question of Belgium.

I think that in any case it would be very desirable if I could have your instructions prior to my next discussion with Minister Bonnet, which could take place on Wednesday or Thursday.

In financial matters I empowered Director Domaniewski and Counsellor Mohl to conduct talks with the French Ministry of the Treasury that are necessary to speed up the payment of 135 million francs which, according to the Rambouillet agreement,<sup>22</sup> were to be paid out in 1940, but which can be paid out before the end of May 1939 in keeping with the resolution of the French Council of Ministers.

As to the matter of the 2 billion of the new material and financial loan, I would not wish to return to it prior to the clarification of the issue of the political protocol. It seems to me that, in any case, it would be desirable not to

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<sup>21</sup> The Polish military delegation, headed by General Tadeusz Kasprzycki, was in Paris on 14–19 May.

<sup>22</sup> A 1936 pact on a French loan for armaments in the Polish army.



allow for the material and financial loans to be treated separately. As for the latter, the tendency to make the French government's decision dependent on the evolution of our negotiations with the English government is not surprising. I do not think, however, that I have lost all means to speed up the decisions of the French government in relation to the time frame in which they will be made in London.

AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

[Appendix]

Strictly confidential.

R e p o r t

on negotiations about the interpretative protocol to our alliance with France.

On Friday, 12 May, I received your instructions to agree to the text of the protocol as proposed by Minister Bonnet on the condition that during the signing he makes a declaration concerning Danzig and that the French Minister of Foreign Affairs takes note of this declaration.

On that day at 8:30 P.M., I called on Minister Bonnet to carry out the above instruction and left him the text of the declaration about Danzig that I was to make during the signing of the protocol. Minister Bonnet did not raise any objections to taking note of the declaration about Danzig, merely pointing out that he would submit the text I had communicated to the departments and that he would give me his definite answer at the beginning of next week.

On Wednesday, 18 May,<sup>23</sup> I called on Minister Bonnet at 6:00 P.M. During the conversation, which took place in his office at the Ministry, Minister Bonnet told me that he agreed to my making the declaration on the subject of Danzig and would take note of it. He then asked me what form should be given to the so-called protocol—whether the protocol is to be signed by him and by myself, or in the form of an exchange of notes. I replied that I was leaving the choice up to him, but as to the declaration, I proposed that we draw it up in the form of an *aide-mémoire* initialled by Minister Bonnet and by myself. Having consulted over the phone with Ambassador Léger, Minister Bonnet declared that it would be better to adopt the form of the protocol signed by him and by myself. He also agreed to give my

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<sup>23</sup> This is an error—18 May 1939 was a Thursday.

declaration about Danzig the character of an *aide-mémoire*. Minister Bonnet then proposed that we sign the protocol on Thursday, 19 May, at 4:00 P.M. I accepted this proposal. The date for the signing of the protocol was thus officially set for Friday, 19 May.

In connection with my discussions conducted with Prime Minister Daladier and Minister of the Treasury Reynaud on the subject of our loan requests, I telephoned Minister Bonnet on Friday morning to point to the need for his intervention with both the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Treasury in order to speed up relevant decisions. Minister Bonnet replied that he would be glad to take appropriate steps, but was very busy and asked that under the circumstances we postpone the signing of the protocol till Saturday, 20 May. I agreed to this technical change so as to give Minister Bonnet more time to deal with the matter of our loan.

On Saturday, 20 May, I spoke again with Minister Bonnet, wishing to find out what the results of his discussions about our loans were. During this conversation, Minister Bonnet asked me again to postpone the signing of the protocol until his return from Geneva on 24 May, motivating this by lack of time, a meeting of the Council of Ministers and the arrival of Lord Halifax. I replied that I could not agree to a further postponements of the signing of the protocol, as the work of General Kasprzycki with the High Command of the French Army was based on the assumption that this protocol had already been signed, and General Kasprzycki had to leave for Warsaw. In the end it was decided that Minister Bonnet would telephone me in the afternoon, at about 1:00 P.M., following the Council of Ministers meeting.

In the meantime, Counsellor Frankowski called on the Director of Political Affairs at the Quai d'Orsay, Mr. Charveriat, in order to verify the text of the protocol and the *aide-mémoire* containing my declaration. This took place at about noon on Saturday. Mr. Charveriat didn't have the slightest doubt that the texts had been agreed on; he looked them over with Counsellor Frankowski, made no comments and agreed that should Minister Bonnet not be able to see me given lack of time, the documents would be submitted for his signature in his office and signed by myself at the Embassy. In this manner, until 1:15 P.M. there wasn't the slightest doubt that the issue of the protocol had been substantively arranged, and that it was only a matter of affixing the signatures.

At 1:15 P.M., Mr. Bonnet telephoned me and, having communicated to me the stance adopted by the Council of Ministers about our loans, repeated his plea to postpone the signing of the protocol until Wednesday. When I did

not agree to this and informed Mr. Bonnet of the procedure that had been agreed upon by Counsellor Frankowski and Director Charveriat, Minister Bonnet declared that he could not take a definitive stand on the subject of my declaration about Danzig, as he had to consult the matter with the English government. He added to this that, on 19 May, he sent a telegraph to Ambassador Corbin, asking him to find out whether the matter of Danzig could be found in the protocols written down in London and received a negative answer. Of course I told Minister Bonnet that it would have been easier to ask me about this and pointed out that in your discussions with the English government you hadn't left the slightest doubt as to our position about Danzig, and the position of the English government was formulated in Prime Minister Chamberlain's declaration to the House of Commons. I added that I found it difficult to understand why Minister Bonnet, while asking me to postpone the signing of the protocol from Friday to Saturday, motivated this only by a lack of time and concealed the real reason. Lastly, I stated that these incomprehensible doubts, which arose at the last moment, when my government had already been informed about the decision and the date for signing the protocol, could only make a most unfavourable impression in Warsaw. Not finding any answer to my arguments, Minister Bonnet ended the conversation by saying that he would telephone me again later in the day.

In this situation I thought it appropriate to inform Prime Minister Daladier personally about the course and the state of the matter. I was received by him on Saturday at 3:00 P.M. Having listened to my information, which was identical to this report, Prime Minister Daladier said that he was not familiar with the matter, that he found Minister Bonnet's behaviour incomprehensible and that, in any case, Minister Bonnet had behaved incorrectly toward me. Daladier then said, however, that had he been in charge of the matter, he would have told me from the outset that he would want to consult with the English government and would have made the definitive wording of the text dependent on that understanding. He cannot understand, however, how this could have been done in such a form and at such a time.

Drawing Prime Minister Daladier's attention to the seriousness of the situation, I told him that he should have no illusions that such vacillations could in any way influence our position on the Danzig question, while they could only, should they become known, incite Berlin to precipitate any possible conflict about Danzig. Lastly, I stated that both the manner in which the question of the protocol was handled and the position adopted by the

French government on the subject of the loans had led me to doubt if it was still possible at all for our countries to cooperate in a loyal and sincere manner, as is fitting between allies, because the French side continues to proceed in keeping with the old method, which can only give rise to our greatest distrust. Prime Minister Daladier declared that he would contact Minister Bonnet and would try to clarify the matter.

I waited until 9:00 P.M. for the telephone call that Minister Bonnet had told me I would receive, but which I didn't receive, and then I sent you the report about the state of the matter by telegraph.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 302*

## 129

*26 May. Cable of the Ambassador in Paris  
about his conversation with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Paris, 26 May 1939

Received on 26 May 1939 at 10:45 A.M.

Mr. Łukasiewicz to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

No. 82

### Secret

Minister Bonnet summoned me today and we had a long conversation, during which he tried to explain his behaviour with the fact that Foreign Office, having examined the draft of the Paris protocol, had declared that its wording was not consistent with the London protocol and that this was the sole reason for the postponement of the signing. At the same time, he stated that he didn't have the slightest doubt as to the Danzig question and was ready to accept our declaration in this matter. As Minister Bonnet's argumentation was not sufficiently clear and he was unable to refute my allegations, I ended the conversation sharply, stating that I considered our negotiation to be suspended and I was submitting a report to my government. Immediately after my return home, Minister Bonnet telephoned, proposing that he would come to see me to continue the conversation. I reacted very coolly and with

reluctance. Despite this, he called on me and we had another one-hour long discussion of a private nature. After lengthy hesitations, Minister Bonnet informed me that the English had given him the text of the London protocol and declared that he could sign immediately the text of the protocol previously agreed with me on the condition that the final words of the last sentence after '*contre toute*' be replaced with the penultimate sentence of chapter I paragraph 2 point B of the London protocol, without naming Germany with the addition of *menace directe et indirecte*. With this he categorically declared that he would accept our declaration in the matter of Danzig. I wish to point out that during the talks at the Quai d'Orsay he had mentioned his possible reservations about Belgium and Switzerland. I clarified the matter of Switzerland appropriately.<sup>24</sup>

I replied that the formula of the London protocol could not be taken as an authoritative indication of our definite arrangement with London and that the English could treat it at most as a draft to be submitted to us. Under the influence of my very categorical and firm arguments, Bonnet expressed an unbinding suggestion that it would be possible to sign the previously agreed text of the protocol along with the Danzig declaration with the reservation that it would later be adapted to the Polish-English agreement.

Today's discussions and information which I obtained from another credible source have reinforced my conviction that the whole matter only consisted in consultations with the English provoked by our adding of the Danzig declaration and resulting in a confrontation of the two texts. Bonnet's very firm declarations preclude his backing down in the matter of Danzig.

As I do not know your intentions as to the preservation of the formula of the London protocol in the future agreement with England, I see two possibilities: (I) For us to propose that we sign the already agreed text, with us submitting a note acknowledging the wishes of the French government to adapt it in the future to the Polish-English agreement—of course, along with the Danzig declaration, which would not be subject to any revision; or (II) To declare that we consider the negotiations to be suspended.

Bonnet and I parted on relatively friendly terms despite the uncompromising words which he had been forced to hear. Please send me further instructions.

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<sup>24</sup> This is a reference to the formula defining Poland's obligations in case of a German attack on France through Belgian or Swiss territory.

Following the word '*indirecte*', please add: 'He showed me, privately, the ready text of the agreement'.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 307*

## 130

### *26 May. Letter of the Ambassador in Berlin to the Minister of Foreign Affairs about his observations*

Berlin, 26 May 1939

Top Secret.

Most Respected Mr. Minister,

Upon my return to Berlin, I tried to get an idea of the Reich's genuine further intentions in the sphere of its foreign relations, with particular emphasis on its attitude toward Poland. I wish to point out that arriving at an appropriate view of the situation is extremely difficult as, in addition to the fact that decisions, as always, are the exclusive domain of the Chancellor, I also feel the lack of contact with authoritative local circles as a result of the tensions in Polish-German relations.

As to possibly approaching Göring and sounding out his views, I noted that he is presently rather removed from political decision-making and himself keeps a reserved position. I received confirmation of this from the Feldmarshall's own circles through a conversation between our Military Attaché and General Bodenschatz, from the Italian Ambassador and, lastly, from the newly-appointed Romanian envoy,<sup>25</sup> whom Göring, despite the fact that he is the initiator of the German-Romanian economic *rapprochement*, has been refusing to see for several weeks. The weakening of Göring's position is due to two factors. Firstly, his state of health, which makes his work difficult, undermining his nerves. Secondly, some differences—if not regarding his views, then his tactics. Göring, in his assessment of the situation, represents today the military and expert point of view. During the decisions-making last

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<sup>25</sup> Radu Crutzescu.

autumn he took a moderate stand, advising compromise with Chamberlain. It is said that, following his recent visit to Rome and his conversation with Mussolini, he reported to the Chancellor in a spirit of peace, which supposedly led to friction between them. I wouldn't in the least wish to state by this that Göring's role has been reduced in the long run as far as his influence on foreign policy is concerned. His voice may once again be heard in such matters, especially if his health improves. Nonetheless, it has to be recognised that in the present conditions, the person of Ribbentrop, though he may be strongly criticised in wider circles—especially those of various types of experts—is in the foreground due to the Chancellor's trust. For this reason, I also see no point today in approaching Göring, unless an opportune occasion for this were to present itself.

As an illustration, let me add that as far as the Embassy's contacts with the Germans are concerned, I personally keep a reserved stance in relation to official circles, while continuing to maintain casual relations. On the other hand, the Embassy personnel is in contact with the *Auswärtiges Amt* and other authorities in official matters. I would like to point out that formally these relations are entirely correct.

Moving on to the basic lines of German policy, the entire situation is dominated by the diplomatic game between the Reich and England. Local authoritative circles are giving vent to their critical stance with regard to England in contacts with foreign representatives. A conversation between the Yugoslav envoy<sup>26</sup> and Ribbentrop has recently been repeated to me. In it, the latter, recognising the fiasco of his many years of efforts toward a German-English *rapprochement*, indicated that today he was ready for a game between those two countries.

In the same vein, the Chancellor doesn't dissimulate his bad mood with regard to Great Britain, stating that Chamberlain has destroyed his work. German diplomacy is clearly counteracting the action conducted by England for the purpose of creating a front against aggression on the part of the totalitarian states. The English-Turkish agreement made a serious impression here and is seen as an able coup of English diplomacy. Von Papen's mission came too late,<sup>27</sup> something that he himself admits while blaming the Italians, because their occupation of Albania tilted the Turkish balance towards Great

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<sup>26</sup> Ivo Andrić.

<sup>27</sup> Franz von Papen was German envoy in Ankara from 18 April.

Britain. Berlin and Rome are striving today to strike at the English-Turkish agreement, alleging its inconsistency with the provisions of the Balkan Entente.<sup>28</sup>

As for our attitude towards England, German activeness is moving in the direction of propagating the idea in the West that the German-Polish understanding was foiled only because of England which, through its guarantee, made Poland's position all the stiffer. In addition, German propaganda is trying to portray us as dangerous partners who can light-headedly provoke a world war.

English and German influences continue to rub against one another in the Scandinavian and Baltic countries and in Spain. Nonetheless, the German side attributes the greatest importance to the talks between London and Moscow.

Two main concepts have coexisted in German policy with regard to the East: the old Prussian one of cooperation with Russia and Hitler's of conquering Russia as a ground for expansion for the Third Reich.

At moments of tension with Russia, as during the Great War, the issue of the countries lying between Germany and Russia, first and foremost Poland, was becoming topical. Hitler wanted to rest on Poland as an anti-Russian state. When today Poland has joined the English front, the issue of Russia naturally had to preoccupy German minds. I have found out that, especially in military circles, tendencies toward a *rapprochement* with Russia have strongly been revived. At the time of Litvinov's resignation, the German side unceremoniously disseminated rumours of talks between Berlin and Moscow for propaganda reasons. According to information obtained from the local Soviet Embassy, these are all groundless statements. The Soviet *Chargé d'affaires*<sup>29</sup> denies that Syrovoy has travelled to Moscow. He also claims that, from the German side, there have been no more concrete initiatives thus far.

The Germans, however, have indicated to the Soviets a certain moderation of tone in the German press about Soviet affairs, to the absence of anti-Soviet accents in the Chancellor's 28 April speech and to Germany's agreement to Hungary's occupation of Carpathian Ruthenia with a view to good relations with Russia.

The Soviet *Chargé d'affaires* has hinted that Moscow's understanding with Berlin was, if only for ideological reasons, impossible and that, at most,

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<sup>28</sup> This is a reference to the Anglo-Turkish Mutual Aid Agreement of 12 May 1939.

<sup>29</sup> Gieorgii Astakhov.



a certain normalisation of political relations could take place, as was the case with economic relations.

If the French-English-Soviet agreement were to be finalised today, Berlin would most assuredly greet this fact as the third (after Poland and Turkey), and perhaps the strongest, blow of English policy directed against Germany.

Without closing my eyes to the threat that such an alliance would represent for us in the future, I think that, at this moment, it should logically strengthen Poland's position *vis-à-vis* Berlin, especially if Poland were not to bind itself formally with Russia.

The strongest and, so far, the only realistic move for Germany given the English action was to sign a German-Italian alliance. Views as to the how to judge this act have differed until now. For example, the English Ambassador thinks an alliance, due to its obligatory consultations with Italy, could in the end contribute to restraining German policy.

I am rather of the opinion that provisions about compulsory consultations would more likely make it easier for the Italians at any given moment to shirk from participating in the war rather than constitute a real restraint on the Germans, especially given the disproportion in the strength of both countries. For the sake of accuracy, as far as our affairs are concerned, I have to add here that the Italian side presently has a mitigating influence on Berlin, the same way in which it is trying to incline us towards tractability.

My relations with Mr. Attolico continue to be friendly and he provides proof of his desire to work for a Polish-German *détente*.

On the front of direct Polish-German relations, I note the following:

First of all, one can feel a clear impasse, which—for the German side, which did not expect the reaction that had to arise as a result of Germany's actions in March, not only among Poland's public opinion but also among its governing circles—has come unexpectedly.

How far the Chancellor has thought out his plan of action towards us is impossible to say. The more reasonable circles that we meet here are wondering what the way out of this difficult situation is.

I have conducted a certain survey of the German mood through former envoy Gawroński, who had the opportunity to speak to von Papen, a close acquaintance of his from his Vienna days. Von Papen—having oriented himself in the local mood concerning Poland—expressed an opinion that clearly must have been suggested to him in official circles, namely that the

German side had no intention of exacerbating the situation on the Polish-German front. In this von Papen made a reference to restraints on the press. He steadfastly denied any German intention to wage war on Poland. He expressed fear that, if incidents were to multiply unduly, this could have a negative impact on the Chancellor, who, as he said, was a sentimentalist, and this would lead to a deterioration of the situation. He made it understood that, for the time being, the German side had no intention of talking with us, justifying this with today's tensions in Poland's internal situation. He did not hide that the German side expected that, in better conditions, it would be able to talk with us, to which he added that, not too long from now, the English would tire of their financial assistance for Poland.

Von Papen's opinion as above is corroborated by my own observations, insofar as it would also seem from other pronouncements made by officials here that the government of the Reich wishes to stall for the time being, expecting a weakening of our material resistance on the home front, and a certain weariness in the West. The stalling thesis is also supported by the announcement of fortification work on our Western frontier, work that is indeed being carried out, as I have been informed.

In parallel to this state of expectation, however, a state of artificial irritation is maintained in Danzig, taking the form of various incidents or, recently, of the Free City's denunciation of the convention with Poland. Thus far, German tactics in Danzig were conducted so that matters didn't go too far. One could also perceive a certain fear that Poland may create a situation in Danzig that would force the Reich to act at an inopportune moment. Of course, this action in Danzig is conducted in order to prepare Western public opinion for the necessity of incorporating Danzig into the Reich.

So far, a certain desire to talk with us has emerged only in the press, of which I wrote to you in report No. N/320/72 of 26 May.

Generally speaking, I have to say that in the past two weeks there has been no clear desire in Germany—with the exception of Danzig, which I cannot assess from here—to exacerbate the conflict with us. Although the press coverage and its tone are rather aggressive with regard to Poland, one can see that, so far, they are kept within certain bounds and do not take on an overly violent form.

The mood toward Poland within Germany, especially in its eastern territories, has deteriorated. Public opinion at large expects that Hitler should

either carry out his demands in relation to Poland without war or that the conflict should be limited to the Polish front.

In my conversations with diplomatic representatives, when the discussion moves to Polish-German issues, I stress the necessity to bring about a certain calming of minds, and when asked about specific possibilities for an understanding, I reply that it would be necessary to find out first what the real intentions of the German government are.

Respectfully,

*J. Lipski*

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 309*

## 131

*27 May. Declaration made by the Counsellor of the British Embassy  
to the Chef de Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
about a possible Polish action in Danzig*

Declaration made by Mr. Norton to Mr. Łubieński on 27 May 1939

Warsaw, 27 May 1939

In the event of a German *coup d'état* in Danzig, it may be carried out in such a way that Polish counter-measures could possibly be regarded as aggression. In such a case, too precipitate action on the part of Poland will inevitably lead to war. If, however, full military action can be postponed for a little time, Germany may be compelled to adopt a more reasonable attitude under the impression that Great Britain, France and the Soviets are supporting Poland.

For instance, the Danzig Senate may vote for union with the Reich and display force, without actually resorting to violence. In that case Poland could hold up her action in order to give Great Britain time to demonstrate clearly to Germany that in the event of a conflict she would support Poland, and so counteract any unilateral solutions based on force. Such an approach to the question could be accompanied on Great Britain's part by certain preparatory military measures.

Such abstention from direct reaction need not necessarily compromise the military situation, and on the other hand it would allow time to settle the matter in a more reasonable way, and, in the worst case, would strengthen our moral position.

It would be well if Poland could consult with her Allies before taking any irrevocable decisions in doubtful cases.

*PWB, doc. 79, p. 92; PDD 1939/I, doc. 311*

## 132

### *30 May. Declaration made by the Chef de Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Counsellor of the British Embassy*

*Declaration made by Mr. Michał Łubieński to Mr. Norton, Counsellor of the British Embassy, on 30 May 1939*

M. Beck exprime sa reconnaissance à Son Excellence le Vicomte Halifax pour la communication qu'il vient de lui faire par l'intermédiaire de l'Ambassade Britannique à Varsovie, le 27 mai courant.

M. Beck est entièrement de l'avis de Lord Halifax qu'en cas d'un coup de main à Dantzig tous les moyens devraient être employés pour empêcher le Gouvernement Allemand de prendre des décisions irrévocables qui pourraient amener un conflit armé.

Le Gouvernement Polonais, pour sa part, a fait toujours d'ailleurs preuve d'une extrême prudence et d'un grand calme, en évitant de se laisser entraîner à des décisions précipitées, sous l'impression des provocations réitérées des politiciens dantziçois.

L'attitude du Gouvernement Polonais au cours du dernier incident à Kalthof,<sup>30</sup> où le 20 mai courant une foule armée et commandée par des fonctionnaires uniformés du parti N-S, a attaqué des inspecteurs douaniers polonais, en est un nouveau témoignage manifeste.

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<sup>30</sup> See doc. 127.

M. Beck est d'avis que l'échange de vues entre le Gouvernement Polonais et le Gouvernement Britannique, au moment d'une tentative unilatérale de changement du statut international de Dantzig, est nécessaire, mais qu'il est impossible de prévoir, d'ores et déjà, toutes les éventualités, devant lesquelles se trouverait le Gouvernement Polonais au cours du développement de la situation à Dantzig.

Il est entièrement d'accord que dans le cas, où la violation du statut de la Ville Libre serait de nature à permettre un retard dans l'application des mesures militaires polonaises, sans compromettre la situation militaire générale de la Pologne, une pression commune devrait être essayée.

M. Beck serait cependant reconnaissant, si Lord Halifax pouvait lui préciser quelles « mesures préparatoires militaires » envisagerait le Gouvernement Britannique pour renforcer sa démarche à Berlin. De l'avis de M. Beck ces mesures devraient, d'un côté, ne pas laisser de doutes à l'Allemagne sur les intentions du Royaume Uni d'appuyer de toutes ses forces la Pologne dans la défense de ses intérêts vitaux, d'autre part elles devraient rassurer l'opinion publique polonaise et ôter tout soupçon que l'intervention diplomatique du Royaume Uni puisse aboutir à proposer aux partis un compromis inacceptable pour la Pologne.

En résumant ce qui précède, M. Beck considère qu'une action concertée avec le Gouvernement Britannique, et si possible Français, serait préférable, mais cependant il doit attirer l'attention du Lord Halifax sur la difficulté relevant du fait que Dantzig se trouve sur un secteur particulièrement exposé de la frontière polonaise, et que cette ville en étant un noeud ferroviaire de la plus grande importance, contrôle dans une grande mesure les voies de communication polonaises avec les deux ports: Gdynia et Dantzig.

M. Beck a l'honneur d'observer en outre qu'il doute que l'intervention du Gouvernement Soviétique puisse être favorablement acceptée par le Gouvernement Allemand. Par conséquent il est possible que cette intervention rendrait le règlement pacifique d'un incident éventuel plus difficile. M. Beck se réserve, en tout cas, la possibilité de formuler son opinion à ce propos.

## 133

*30 May. Guidelines from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Ambassador in Paris for further negotiations  
with the French government*

Warsaw, 30 May 1939

To be delivered personally  
Top secret.

To Mr. Juliusz Łukaszewicz  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
i n P a r i s .

Mr. Ambassador,

In reply to your letter of 27 May, I am sending you the following guidelines for further negotiations with the French government.

At this moment, we are interested in three groups of issues: (1) the substance of the political documents and declarations that we are striving to sign, (2) the tactic used by the French government toward us and our reactions to it, (3) the question of the defence of the State, expressed at present in our material and financial needs.

Ad (1) In substance, Bonnet's principled arguments about the necessity of making the French-Polish and English-Polish agreements identical are rather absurd, given that one type of situation will always exist in the case of two old continental allies, with both of them directly contiguous upon the object of their alliance, and a naturally different situation in the case of cooperation with a power that is more distant and whose interests on the continent are rather of a general nature.

Practically speaking, however, both the formula of our London protocol (I am appending the relevant passages) and the English government's interpretation of our agreement in our close, almost daily, contacts, are entirely satisfactory and, in my opinion, sufficient in relations with the French as well.

Given this, and *faute de mieux*, you can accept the final clause of our London protocol.

Ad (2) The tactic of the French government in the present period of negotiations with you I have described to Ambassador Noël here as entirely

incomprehensible for the Polish government and one giving rise to certain doubts as to the French intentions.

I used the expression, that 'with the English, in 48 hours I concluded an alliance that we are today updating in an easy and simple manner in the face of all arising new circumstances, and with the allied French government we can't manage to sign an interpretative formula based, after all, on the public declarations of the head of the French government and of his Minister of Foreign Affairs'. I would like to ask you to present the matter in the same way should the need arise—something I leave up to your judgment. Practically speaking, please inform Minister Bonnet formally that the changes and complications that are incessantly being raised by the French government in connection with this matter, a matter that seems unusually simple given the public declarations of our governments, are entirely incomprehensible for the Polish government and, given this, you find nothing else to do at present than to await a proposal which would, this time, be binding and whose absence or insufficient form will be seen by us as the French government's withdrawal from the principled position it has adopted. With that, please add that the position which you have defined in the matter of Danzig is a *conditio sine qua non* of any protocols or arrangements and has to be sufficiently clearly spelled out.

For your information, I would like to add that, in my frequent present conversations with the English on the subject of Danzig, I have noted the entire correctness of the English position. The English Ambassador, in asking questions about the situation, gives as his motive that 'this question could constitute a *casus belli* for us'.

Ad (3) All this French legal and political double Dutch presently has a clearly negative impact on financial and material issues. This is the only reason why it would be worth ending this matter quickly. You have to keep in mind that the efforts we are making presently in order to equip the army and make all equipment necessary for time of war effective is truly the greatest effort that we can demand of our country. The armaments industry is working in three shifts, all the organs of the state administration are participating in the preparation of mobilisation. The English negotiations are developing very seriously, but cannot proceed all that swiftly both on account of their scope, which is much wider than the French ones, and in view of the need to find forms and means for an issue that is entirely new for the English as well as for us. Despite this, as far as war *matériel* is concerned, we will probably arrive at the realisation stage much faster than we expected *and faster than in France*.

In those conditions, a difficult task falls upon you to reconcile a firm stance with a sufficient tempo for the realisation of our needs.

In addition to the above, I would like to stress once again that despite all the German or pacifist propaganda which is undoubtedly heard in the West of Europe, our talks with the English on Danzig are maintained on a very decent level, and lately we have also come to an agreement about the Lithuanian matter. *This is only for your personal and confidential information.* Attempts to defuse the Danzig situation, such as sending High Commissioner Burckhardt from Geneva to Warsaw, Danzig and Berlin, attempts to arrange some form of consultations with us on the matter of Danzig, are conducted by the English correctly and in absolute respect for our interests and the principles discussed in London. The main principle, of a European-wide scale, is: unacceptability of changing unilaterally the Free City's status or infringement on our rights there, then Poland's right to react to attempts of this kind and, finally, the obligation of friendly powers to assist us jointly in such a situation. At the same time, the English are also treating all indirect and hidden forms of German action as unacceptable.

Considering such an approach to the issue by England, given that—something I am communicating to you in strictest confidence—we have explained only verbally that we accept the principle that the United Kingdom defends itself not only directly on its very own territory, but also on the north-western shores of the continent, this clearly indicates that we have no reason to give the French any special *contrepartie* for respecting our position on Danzig.

MINISTER

*Added by the Minister:*

*All in all, should Bonnet officially propose his last formula, it can be accepted, on the condition that the declaration on Danzig is changed as you proposed. I understand that al. I of the draft basic protocol (of 3 May) remains unchanged.*

PDD 1939/I, doc. 315



## 134

*2 June. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the General Commissioner  
of the Republic of Poland in the Free City of Danzig in connection  
with tensions in Polish-Danzig relations*

Warsaw, 2 June 1939

Top secret.

To Mr. Marian CHODACKI  
General Commissioner of the Republic of Poland  
i n D a n z i g .

In connection with certain tensions that exist today between us and the Reich on the subject of the Danzig problem, I am seizing the opportunity of Counsellor Perkowski's trip to communicate to you the following information about general aspects of this matter.

As you know, in our negotiations with England and France we raised the matter of Danzig, i.e., we included it in the *casus foederis* as a necessary condition for our agreements. Our principal argument was that, irrespective of Poland's direct interests in the Free City, from the European point of view Danzig took on symbolic significance as the first 'no' spoken against the aggressive policy of the German Reich. In our basic negotiations with the two partners we obtained their recognition for our position. Experience has nonetheless taught us that we have to examine carefully if no opportunistic attempts to purchase peace at our cost in the sphere of Danzig are taking shape. For this reason, all attempts at the so-called 'mediation' should be observed with utmost care from this angle.

The direct object of my interest is the matter of Mr. Burckhardt's trip to Berlin. The cipher from our Embassy in Berlin will inform you *grosso modo* as to the course of this visit. I fear, however, that the information given by Mr. Burckhardt to Ambassador Lipski was not complete.

The British Ambassador in Warsaw has informed me that on his behalf he had suggested to London that Mr. Burckhardt try to arrange for a Polish-German declaration whose wording would be more or less as follows: 'In connection with the present atmosphere, the Danzig problem is not suited for a radical solution. Under the circumstances, the Polish and German governments declare that until general relations between them are not settled, they have no intention of influencing the present state of affairs by means of

*faits accomplis*'. There was also mention of conciliatory behaviour in case of incidents.

I responded to the British Ambassador that I would be very pleased if the declaration made to me by Chancellor Hitler at Berchtesgaden on 4 January,<sup>1</sup> stating that the German Reich had no intention of producing any *faits accomplis* in the matter of Danzig, was to find confirmation again in a bilateral declaration, no matter what the declarations of the Reich government might be worth these days. On the other hand, I would categorically have to oppose a declaration which, while having a calming effect today, could in the future be used as a *pactum de contrahendo*, that is, a recognition of the principle that the matter of Danzig calls for radical change. I took this opportunity to mention that our Baltic affairs, i.e., Danzig included, constitute a capital part of our cooperation with Great Britain.

I had informed Mr. Burckhardt earlier about state of affairs today by emphasising that:

1) the annexation of Memel has increased our interest in Danzig and the mouth of the Vistula;

2) the Reich Chancellor, by unilaterally breaking the agreement of 1934, has deprived himself of a conciliatory base to discuss these problems with us, given that he compromised what could have, at least theoretically, pass for a *contrepartie* ... for any concessions on our part.

In conclusion, I told Mr. Burckhardt that our room for negotiation was narrow and, given the lack of aggressive intentions on Poland's part, I found that what he would hear from Ribbentrop would be more interesting than what I could tell him.

I am informing you of the above discussions in order to make it easy for you to make the most precise use of the information that Mr. Burckhardt may share with you from his Berlin discussions. It is obvious that I am very interested in knowing as soon as possible all the details of Mr. Burckhardt account.

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<sup>1</sup> This should be 5 January.

As to the Polish officials attacked in the note of the Senate,<sup>2</sup> I thought it particularly necessary to reject the very principle of Senate demands related to the Polish personnel in the Free City. Had we surrendered on this matter, there would have been no end to Danzig's demands and we would have made our official personnel dependent on Danzig's whims. In practice, in defence of the above principle, I would like to ask you not to expose those officials in delicate situations. I reserve the future of this matter for a personal discussion. In any case, should you leave, please avoid leaving Counsellor Perkowski officially in charge of the Commissariat General so as not to expose him unnecessarily to some affront.

Please inform me of how you see the situation that will emerge during the meeting of the storm units between 9 and 11 of June in Danzig. News from Germany does not seem to indicate any special preparation being made from that side during that time.

Next week I will either personally come to Gdynia to talk to you, among other things, or please expect a summons to Warsaw.

*Beck*  
MINISTER

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 323*

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<sup>2</sup> In a note of 24 May, the Danzig Senate demanded the recall of three officials of the General Commissariat of the Republic of Poland, including the Deputy Commissioner General, Tadeusz Perkowski. These officials were in Kalthof on 20 May, where an incident took place during which Perkowski's chauffeur shot one of the German assailants.

## 135

*3 June. Political report of the Ambassador in Paris  
on negotiations with the French government*

Paris, 3 June 1939

Top secret.To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.POLITICAL REPORT XVII/2

Having received your instructions about the negotiations that I am conducting with the French government on the interpretative protocol to our alliance with France and in the matter of the material and financial loan,<sup>3</sup> it is my privilege to report what follows:

1) I carried out your instructions in the matter of the political protocol on 1 June. My statement, whose text in French I am appending, was accepted by Minister Bonnet without any comments or reservations. During the further course of the conversation, he read out to me the notes from his discussions in London with Lord Halifax, from which it was clear that Minister Bonnet argued very energetically for the necessity for the English government to conclude a definite political accord with us as soon as possible. Minister Bonnet did not go in particular into matters related to Danzig, so I found it advisable to send him the day after the discussion, along with my letter, the text of the declaration which I had made verbally. A couple of hours later, in a telephone conversation with me, Minister Bonnet thanked me for sending this note, saying that he would make use of it to speed up the answer that Lord Halifax owed him. Summing up, the matter of the political protocol between us and France is now entirely clear and there can be no doubt that the formula that will be proposed to us will be a French-English one, which the English government will most probably wish to include in the future accord with us. Given that Minister Bonnet could not yet make any binding proposal to me, I didn't find it advisable to come forward with a proposal for a new wording of our declaration on the subject of Danzig.

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<sup>3</sup> See doc. 133.

2) At this stage of the political negotiations and taking into account the need to push forward the negotiations on the material and financial loan, I declared during the conversation with Minister Bonnet that I thought it necessary for the matter of the loans to be conducted separately from political negotiations and to be settled quickly and positively. I pointed out that even in the most optimistic case scenario, one should expect that in three months at the latest we would be facing new and very serious tensions in the international situation, and that their primary element would most probably be the issue of Danzig, so under the circumstances it was of almost decisive importance for preserving peace that the strength of our resistance increase by that time in the greatest and most visible manner possible. I stated that although we were undertaking the greatest efforts within the bounds of what was feasible for us, this would not be sufficient if our allies, on their part, did not provide us with the necessary assistance. Of course, Minister Bonnet agreed with my opinion and immediately, in my presence, telephoned the Minister of the Treasury. He asked for the implementation of decisions adopted two weeks earlier by the Council of Ministers on the advance payment of 135 million francs on grounds of the Rambouillet agreement as well as concerning the material loan and about the initiation of negotiations on the subject of the financial loan.

On 2 June, as I had the privilege to inform you by telegraph, I had a lengthy conference with the Minister of the Treasury in the presence of the *Directeur du mouvement général des fonds*, Mr. Rueffe. I met with a clear desire to link the matter of the 135 million francs with the issue of new loans and to burden the French army with the material assistance issue without an immediate resolution of the material loan question. As to the financial loan, Minister Reynaud stubbornly stuck to the thesis that this matter should be settled together with London. In this he was under a very strong impression of the information—supposedly obtained from a very credible source—that London intended to reduce their financial assistance to us to the sum of £5 million as a material loan.

The discussion was difficult and, at moments, very unpleasant, as once again I found myself facing a rather impertinent attempt to shirk from decisions that had been communicated to me as definite two weeks ago by Prime Minister Daladier. As the entire matter is outstandingly political in nature and Minister Reynaud is clearly avoiding taking responsibility for any decision, I thought it advisable to put forward the project of a joint conference attended by myself, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in

order to come to some sort of an understanding. This project was accepted and Minister Reynaud promised me that he would ask Prime Minister Daladier to call such a conference for Monday, 5 June.

During the further course of the conversation I tried to separate the issue of the 135 million from the Rambouillet accord from that of the new loans. I succeeded in part, as Minister Reynaud declared that he considered the issue of the material loan to be settled in principle and he would only wish to come to an understanding about it with the Prime Minister.

As for the material loan, the details of the matter are as follows. The most optimistic prospects allow for the assumption that the French army and industry could supply us with war *matériel* worth 500 million francs in the next three months. I presume that obtaining the material loan in this amount will be possible irrespective of the fate of the London negotiations. The other 500 million that we have requested would cover the orders, whose realisation would require considerably more time. I can't rule out that, in connection with this, the Minister of the Treasury will strive to postpone the decision in this matter and make it dependent on the outcome of the London negotiations.

As for the financial loan, I have almost no hope any more of achieving positive results here before the London negotiations move significantly forward. Minister Reynaud has repeated several times and very firmly that in his opinion the only appropriate and logical method would be to conduct the discussions about the financial loan amongst the representatives of all three countries in question, i.e., France, England and Poland. Of course, I fought against at least an immediate realisation of this concept, pointing out that it could be taken into account in the future, but not now, when the issue is to secure immediate services and cooperation on the basis of allied relations that have existed between us and France for 18 years. I cannot harbour any illusions, however, that my arguments could have significantly altered Minister Reynaud's position and I am convinced that he will model his course of action in the matter of the financial loan for us on the position adopted by the English government.

After the conference with Minister Reynaud, I spoke on the telephone with Minister Bonnet, who informed me that he had received a dispatch from Ambassador Noël about the necessity to come to our financial and material assistance very quickly, which will help him in securing more immediate and positive decisions from the French government.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 325*

## 136

*6 June. Report of the Ambassador in London on his talks  
with the British Foreign Secretary (with an appendix)*

London, 6 June 1939

Top secretTo the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

It is my privilege to send you the reports from my conversations with Minister Halifax on 1 June and with Prime Minister Chamberlain today. I have tried to reconstruct these conversations as precisely as I could, so as to reflect the mood and to define the attitude of both authoritative members of the English government. Lord Halifax, who is in daily contact with services and is responsible for cementing England's new alliances, is undoubtedly a proponent of expanding cooperation with us and of giving us the means to make full use of our trained reserves. The Prime Minister, who is responsible for all ministries, showed restraint; I have to point out, however, that he admitted, at the very outset of his comments, that he was not questioning either the expediency of our postulates or their moral justification. The sense of his entire pronouncement could be summarised as follows: I am well aware that this is about our common interest and for this reason I am ready to contribute to strengthen you as far as this is possible. I am going through difficulties myself and, besides, I expect that I will have to finance a great number of my partners for a long time. Given this, I would like to limit myself in my cooperation at this time to the truly necessary minimum. Detailed discussions will reveal where this minimum lies.

There is a very big and important difference between a 'principled' position and practical realisation. In the latter, for the time being the English government continues to maintain the reservations that allow it to take up a more comfortable negotiating position. In particular, the English side will most certainly defend the 'small' program, above all in the sphere of cash, but also in that of resources (though as far as resources of British origin, not excluding the Dominions, are concerned, Britain's possibilities are certainly considerable).

As far as the 'principled' framework for the negotiations is concerned, the discussion until now has made it possible to reach a positive result. The

English government agreed, through the mouth of its Prime Minister, to include the entirety of the matter of interest to us in the negotiations, albeit in a prudent manner that leaves much room for a more or less flexible interpretation. At the same time, the Prime Minister firmly expressed the desire for our delegation to arrive. As it is difficult to expect the English government to reveal, without any formal negotiations, its limit set *pro foro interno*, I think the delegation for the negotiations should now be sent to London as quickly as possible. As soon as our government makes the necessary decision in this matter, it will be possible for me to discuss the form of the negotiations, their framework and personal matters with the English. There is no reason, however, why reaching an agreement on these points should take long.

As for the substance of the discussions, I take the liberty to point out that Prime Minister Chamberlain, in keeping with his realistic disposition, will most certainly be seeking answers to a wide range of questions about our financial policy and our possibilities in this area. This is the more probable as he has apparently been briefed about the relevant material from Poland and as this information has given rise to some doubts expressed in conversation with me.

(Edward Raczynski)  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

[Appendix]

London, 1 June 1939

Report on the conversation between Ambassador Raczynski  
and Lord Halifax on Thursday, 1 June 1939.

Lord Halifax received me only today, having returned late to London from Yorkshire, where he had been resting for several days. I declared to him, following your instructions of 25 May, that the Polish government considered the answer given to the Polish government's *démarche* about financial assistance for Poland as unsatisfactory. I then explained our position to Lord Halifax, justifying it in keeping with the above-mentioned instruction of 25 May. I also added (in my own name) that—as I was told—the discussions conducted alongside my own by Ambassador Łukasiewicz with the French government, which have started successfully from our point of view and



encompass the matter of French material loans for us as well as financial loans, have slowed down recently. It is difficult to resist the impression that this slowdown has occurred through consultations with London or, at least, with due account taken of London's position with respect to us. If this indeed is the case, I see in this yet another reason why the London discussions should proceed further without delay and should be all-inclusive.

I sought to give a serious tone to my intervention. I mentioned that, during my stay in Warsaw, I had also been received by the Marshal<sup>4</sup> and the Deputy Prime Minister.<sup>5</sup> I indicated that, treating the instruction entrusted to me with all the zeal its serious nature called for, I intended to appeal to the Prime Minister, and perhaps even to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, upon which I turned to Lord Halifax to ask that he facilitate my intervention with the persons mentioned, unless he had some reservations.

Lord Halifax told me that he expected us to be dissatisfied with the British response of 20 May. He made reference, as he had done before, to considerations that made it difficult for England to finance us in the extent we had requested and stated that maintaining the British financial structures in a condition as efficient as possible was also in the interest of England's allies. He immediately added, however, that he fully appreciated the value of our arguments and that he was ready to raise the issue once again with the Prime Minister and the government without delay. He expressed the opinion that it would perhaps be advisable if I could personally present the Polish position to the Prime Minister and to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, possibly together with and in the presence of Halifax. As I agreed to this thought, he pledged to clarify the matter with the other interested parties. Lord Halifax's reaction to my intervention strengthened my conviction that he appreciated the need to accommodate us. His proposal for a joint conference with the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer is, for me, another indirect indication that opposition primarily originates with Sir John Simon. It would seem that Halifax would be personally pleased if my dynamism were to be unloaded directly upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

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In keeping with the final passage of your instructions, I then raised with Lord Halifax, in an informative manner and referring to my personal interest

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<sup>4</sup> Edward Rydz-Śmigły.

<sup>5</sup> Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski.

in the matter, the issue of the final settlement of the Polish-English treaty of mutual assistance. To my question Halifax responded readily that he greeted it with satisfaction, as he had intended to raise the issue himself. He admitted that he had not been in a hurry until now, as, he stated, 'he wished at first to duly clarify English-Russian relations'. He would now wish to embark on the finalisation of our mutual understanding., Minister Bonnet has also recently insisted on this very strongly in Geneva. Mr. Malkin (legal counsellor at the Foreign Office) has already worked out certain guidelines and Lord Halifax intends in the near future to submit the English draft in Warsaw, while acquainting me here with this proposal. In response, I explained to Lord Halifax that I had not received any specific instructions as of late in this matter but, as far as I knew, the text of the treaty had been debated in Warsaw as well and a relevant draft had probably been prepared.

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Towards the end of the discussion, Lord Halifax asked me with a serious expression on his face what my information regarding the situation in Danzig was. For some time, this question has been recurring in a telling fashion in the conversations that I have been holding at the Foreign Office. I replied, providing a general clarification on the basis of the material that I had received in the last courier post from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and, via the Ministry, from our General Commissioner in Danzig. Lord Halifax also mentioned Burckhardt in a few words, partly in the form of a question as to whether we considered him an able person and at the right place. He did so, however, without any insistence, something that allowed me to treat this part of the discussion rather casually. In any case, we were both already on our feet and, ending the conversation, we headed for the door.

Report from the discussion between Ambassador Raczyński  
and Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in the presence of Lord Halifax  
on Thursday, 6 June 1939

The Prime Minister received me this morning at his Downing Street residence, in the Cabinet's conference room, in the presence of Lord Halifax. Despite Lord Halifax' promise given me on 1 June that he would try to get the Chancellor of the Exchequer to participate in this conference, the latter was not present. It is probable that Sir John Simon himself preferred to avoid a discussion with me.

Having conveyed my condolences to the Prime Minister on the occasion of the *Thetis* submarine catastrophe, I immediately moved to the matter of our loan postulates and I illustrated our position by means of the same arguments that I had raised in relation to Lord Halifax.

The Prime Minister replied that he appreciated the importance and the urgency of our postulates and didn't question their moral justification; at the same time, he had to state that England's difficulties were quite considerable and that its situation was worse, financially speaking, than in 1934. It doesn't presently have as many foreign debtors or any ease in obtaining the foreign loans needed, but is overwhelmed by demands from various directions, including the considerable and urgent needs of the Dominions. This situation makes it difficult for England to provide assistance of the size we request. It is possible that, as I told the Prime Minister, in case of an outbreak of war, Poland would be exposed in the first instance to the main attack from Germany. However, the war would probably last a long time and its final outcome would be dependent on an able management of reserves. For this reason, Great Britain must at all times keep their thrifty use in mind.

The Prime Minister denied with all his energy that the British government could in any way be to blame for the delays in the simultaneous Polish-French discussions. On the other hand, despite its best intentions, the English government in its obligations could not go beyond what the English financial and foreign exchange situation allows, regardless of any possible example given by France.

The Prime Minister emphasised that the very restrictive English reply of 20 May was in large measure dictated by the fears of his government given the amount of the loan we had mentioned. Of the three categories of loans, namely the loan for materials; the loan for financing the import of resources; and the cash loan, the British government agreed to discuss the first category. The second category presents greater difficulties, but the English would like to know the resources in question, their quantity and, possibly, if they originate in the British Empire. The greatest difficulty is with the third category, that of cash loans. The Prime Minister at this point went somewhat deeper into the substance of our needs and expressed his presumption that should it turn out to be impossible to finance in the full measure the import of resources needed for our war industry, or even domestic production, Poland might be able to fill the ensuing gap by widening the purchase of ready equipment. As I drew his attention to the entirely obvious drawbacks of such a concept, the Prime Minister did not insist, but indicated that these points,

being somewhat complicated and in need of a closer examination, could be beneficially discussed if the Polish government were to agree to send a delegation for negotiations with the English side.

The Prime Minister referred to information which seemed to call into question Poland's sacrifice, in favour of defence needs, of other 'civilian' needs in the greatest degree possible. The Prime Minister has heard that our government continues to allocate considerable funds for public works, etc. The Prime Minister is also asking himself if the maintenance of our currency's high exchange rate, in excess of its purchasing power, has not contributed to exacerbating the situation of the State Treasury.<sup>x</sup>

Finally, moving on to military requirements which, for some time now, the Prime Minister has had to attend to in some detail in England and with which he has thus become better acquainted, he is wondering if our armament effort should be directed at multiplying the present strength of the army or its cadres through the creation of new great units, or if it should rather be concentrated on the preparation of sufficient reserves in the materials and ammunition sphere.

A lively debate ensued between us about the conditions that would have to be met for the Polish government to send a delegation to London, as Prime Minister Chamberlain wished. Lord Halifax took part in this discussion and tried to direct it in a more positive direction, from our viewpoint. I read out to the Prime Minister the text (which I had brought with me) of the English *aide-mémoire* of 20 May, in order to show him that it had amounted to a refusal to consider postulates so important for us and that it had foretold a negative outcome of the delegation's efforts. I further said that we were not unjustified in our fear of a tendency on the English side to divert the talks onto a narrow path of technical discussions between experts, as provided for under the English memorandum. The situation, however, requires far-reaching and swift decisions, which the government can seek only through its decision-making circles.

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<sup>x</sup> In the present report, I am not mentioning the counterarguments I raised, as my aim is not to convey this or that answer I gave in a given case, but to characterise the attitude of the Prime Minister and to indicate what information about our economy and our needs he was given. This information, perhaps not entirely precise, can form a resume of the discussions on economic matters that are being held here. I fear that they might be interpreted to the detriment of our interests.

From the discussion summarised above a final concept has emerged: that of a meeting between allied countries for the purpose of a joint assessment of the needs and options. The above concept doesn't rule out any discussion of material, resources or purely financial needs.

On the other hand, the Prime Minister voiced a reservation about an interpretation holding that the English government would in any measure be bound to take our postulates into account in the above-mentioned areas.

He asked if I considered such a framework acceptable. I replied that I would inform the Polish government about it and would not fail to inform the English government of our answer shortly.

London, 6 June 1939

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 330*

## 137

*6 June. Letter from the Ambassador in Paris  
to the Ambassador in London about his discussion  
with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Paris, 6 June 1939

S e c r e t

Dear Edward,

Acting on instructions from Minister Beck, I am eager to communicate to you the following:

On Saturday, 3 June, Minister Bonnet informed me of the substance of the Soviet answer to the latest English-French proposal. It contains three points:

1) The total removal of any reference to the Covenant of the League of Nations.

2) The replacement of the first article of the English-French draft which, using vague formulas, described three categories of situations in which mutual English-French-Soviet assistance was to operate, by a considerably more

precise article, more or less of this kind: England, France and Soviet Russia undertake to mutually provide one another with military aid if:

a) one of the three countries were to be directly attacked by any third state;

b) Belgium, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Turkey or Greece were to be attacked;

c) a neutral country wishing to defend its neutrality alone were to be attacked.

3) The replacement of articles three and four of the English-French draft, which contained the obligation to conduct consultations, by an article calling for military aid to be provided automatically.

4) The removal of the article that stated that the English-French agreement did not impose any obligations on a third country.

5) The insertion of a new article containing an obligation not to conclude a separate peace.

6) The insertion of an article about the obligation to conclude a military agreement.

7) Making the entry into force of the political agreement conditional on the conclusion of the military agreement. This was confirmed to me by Prime Minister Chamberlain and Strang.

In the opinion of Minister Bonnet, the Soviet answer is a counter-proposal marked by double blackmail. Even supposing that an understanding would be possible about the formula of a political agreement, it is entirely unclear what the Soviet demands would be for the conclusion of a military agreement, on which they make dependent the entry into force of the political agreement. The first article in the Soviet version contains, according to Minister Bonnet, the demand for French and English agreement to a direct Soviet military intervention on the territory of all Eastern European countries, including Poland, and is obviously unacceptable. And lastly, it is striking that the Soviet response goes further than the proposals made by Litvinov on 19 April did. These proposals contained the draft of a political and military agreement, yet the entry into force of the political agreement was not made dependent on the conclusion of a military one and, moreover, the states of Eastern Europe were not so precisely enumerated, but covered by the general term 'all countries of Eastern Europe'.

To Minister Bonnet's question about my opinion on the Soviet answer, I replied more or less as follows.

1) It is clear that the Soviet government specifically aims to secure French and English agreement to intervene on the territory of the Baltic States, even against their wishes. This is indicated not only by the substance of the pronouncement made by the Soviet government to France and England, but also by Moscow's recent exchange of notes with Tallinn and Riga, which caused Estonia to adopt a very categorical stance, reserving for the government of that country the exclusive right to judge if and to what degree it was threatened.

2) By stating such far-reaching conditions as the ones contained in Moscow's last reply, the Soviet government either wishes to complicate negotiations and remain in reserve for as long as possible, or is hoping that France and England, giving in to pressure from within, will accept a compromise consistent with the wishes of Soviet policy and will, in turn, compromise their credibility with a number of states with which they cooperate.

3) It is clear that if France and England were to acquiesce to the Soviet counter-proposals, this would call into question the policy of almost all Eastern European countries, which would find themselves facing the issue of what threat is greater—the German or the Soviet one. We should not forget that the Romanians stated categorically only a few weeks ago that if they had to choose between an active Soviet intervention on their territory and even a heavy compromise with Germany, they would choose the latter. The same can no doubt be said of the Baltic states, which cannot be under any direct the threat from Germany, whereas with Soviet Russia they share open borders.

4) One should consider why the Soviet government takes the liberty, after a few weeks of negotiations and having in hand the English-French draft that entirely satisfies its interests, to come forward with proposals whose character is almost that of a provocation. An interesting light is shed on this issue by the fact that practically on the very day the Soviet answer is handed to representatives of England and France, the Soviet Ambassador in Warsaw gives a sensational and friendly speech with respect to Poland. It seems clear that the behaviour of the Soviet government in relation to England and France is motivated, on the one hand, by the fact that neither of the Western European powers has the slightest means—financial, economic, political, or military—of pressuring Soviet Russia, and, on the other, Paris and London have done everything to convince Moscow that the constitution of a front of

peaceful powers without its participation is absolutely impossible. As a result, as the negotiations proceed, Soviet demands are becoming increasingly impertinent and instead of following a line consistent with compromise take the path of satisfying the egotistic aims of Moscow's *raison d'état*. If, on the other hand, Polish-Soviet relations are good, this is undoubtedly because we have several thousand kilometres of frontiers with Soviet Russia and a strong army, which, according to the known *idée fixe* of the Soviet government, could at any time collaborate with Germany against Russia. This inspires respect and encourages the Soviet government to avoid misunderstandings with Warsaw.

Under the circumstances, English-French policy should strive to extricate itself from the extremely uncomfortable situation in which it has found itself, and it can do so only through actions that would convince the Soviet government that it is not treated as a primary partner and that it would have to settle for a compromise consistent with Russia's secondary role, which follows from both its geopolitical situation and from its practical means of action. This aim can be reached only through action and not by means of continued exchanges of notes unsupported by deeds. The action of England and France would have to take the form of an immediate, very effective, and even a demonstrative pushing forward of cooperation with Poland, Romania and Turkey, so as to convince Moscow that the defence front is being organised independently of the negotiations conducted with the Soviet government and that Poland, Romania and Turkey are treated as the West's chief partners. One can be certain that following appropriate steps taken in this direction, the tactic of the Soviet government would change fast, as it would seriously have to expect the reinforcement of its three most important neighbours irrespective of its wishes. Knowing the methods of Soviet policy, I am convinced that the approach I am proposing would make it possible to persuade the Soviets to accept the English-French draft, with no need to modify it in any significant way.

As I explained the above reflections to Minister Bonnet, I made the reservation that I was not in the least speaking in the interest of the country I represented, but only on a general plane, on a matter of mutual interest. Concluding, I added that, knowing the weakness of London and Paris in their dealings with Soviet Russia, I could not delude myself that they could apply the methods I had proposed and which we had used to positive effect in our own relations with Moscow. Minister Bonnet shared my opinion entirely,



probably including my reservations about the possibility of adopting these methods of action by England and France.

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I communicated all of the above by letter to our Boss, who empowered me to repeat, in his name, all these reflections to Minister Bonnet, and asked that you yourself treat this as instructions for discussions with your partners.

*With warm greetings J. Łukasiewicz*

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 331*

## 138

*9 June. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Ambassador in London about Soviet assistance*

Warsaw, 9 June 1939

Cipher cable No. 143.

In connection with Strang's departure for Moscow,<sup>6</sup> please declare at the Foreign Office that we have learned through Paris the substance of the Soviet answer to the last proposal and that our position remains unchanged, namely:

I. We cannot agree that Poland be mentioned in the agreement concluded between the Western Powers and the USSR.

II. The principle of Soviet assistance being granted to an attacked state even without the latter's agreement we find unacceptable in relation to Poland and, in relation to other states, as a dangerous breach of the stability and security of Eastern Europe.

The definition of the scope of Soviet assistance is, in our opinion, only possible by means of negotiations between the attacked state and the USSR. As a comment, please add that in our assessment the USSR is determined to avoid any concrete involvement at this stage and hence giving too

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<sup>6</sup> William Strang, a high official at the Foreign Office, arrived in Moscow on 9 June with a mission to clarify contentious issues in the ongoing British-Soviet negotiations.

much publicity to the negotiations will always put Russia's partners in an uncomfortable position.

Sent to London, c/c to Paris and Moscow.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 336*

## 139

### *9 June. Ambassador in London on the pronouncements of British politicians*

Cipher letter of 9 June 1939

No. 19

S e c r e t. For the Minister.

According to credible information, the aim of yesterday's speech by Halifax, conciliatory with regard to Germany, and the Prime Minister's answers in Parliament, was primarily to counteract in Germany itself the theory of encirclement, which Hitler is using to rally the support of non-Nazi elements as well. I also can't rule out the intention of making an impression on the Soviets for the purpose of inclining them toward greater tractability.

I had a lengthy discussion with the Prime Minister yesterday during a banquet at the Foreign Office. He expressed sadness and scepticism over the possibility of coming to an understanding with Hitler but, at the same time, also the intent not to burn bridges 'given that the present balance of power policy cannot produce truly positive results in the long term'. The Prime Minister has told me that indirect suggestions of an understanding keep reaching him from Germany, but that they are 'as plain as a pikestaff'—in exchange for a free hand for Germany in the East.

The Prime Minister asked, without hiding a certain concern, about the situation in Danzig.

As for the Soviets, he expressed impatience with protracted negotiations and suspicions as to their true intentions. The Prime Minister ascribes part of the blame for the Soviet blackmail to British opposition. Speaking of the

Soviet position with regard to the Baltic States, he said that there were limits to concessions, which England could not cross. At the same time, he stated that he didn't have a very high opinion of either the Soviet ability to provide effective assistance or their intentions in this respect. He has heard a similar opinion from General Gamelin.

I spoke with Cadogan, who also mentioned that one had to keep in mind the possibility of attempting, once again at the appropriate moment, to talk with Germany. He spoke unfavourably of the Papal initiative, seeing in it Mussolini's indirect hand. He noted that for the time being we were dealing only with Italian trial balloons, but at any time we might expect from those quarters a more energetic initiative for talks, brought about by Italy's difficult situation.

Sent to: Warsaw, Paris (by cipher letter).

RACZYŃSKI

Cipher letter received on 10 June 1939

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 337*

## 140

### *12 June. Report of the Ambassador in Moscow on the state of Polish-Soviet relations*

S e c r e t

Moscow, 12 June 1939

To Minister Józef Beck  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

Soviet-Polish relations.

The Soviets' present attitude toward Poland seems to stem from the following:

1) Our attitude of active resistance in relation to Germany, meeting the important interests of the USSR, is noted here with appreciation.

2) Our political stance, which is making it difficult for the Soviets to derive the greatest possible prestige, and even imperialist benefits, from the international situation are, of course, seen in a negative and critical light.

3) The course of the negotiations with England and France is also not without its indirect influence. From the sole point of view of our attitude toward Russia, their successful outcome is not a positive factor.

An illustration of this state of affairs is provided by the following observations which I have been able to make recently:

I. In the propaganda concerning international affairs and addressed abroad, our anti-German position is valued highly and even viewed with a certain pride in the aspect of our 'Slavic nature'. Much is being said about the strength and valour of our army. Potyomkin clearly (Mikoyan and Molotov more discreetly) have emphasised to me that in case of a conflict 'we can count on them'.

A practical stance is affected, however, by the fact that the Soviets' present belief in the inevitability of the conflict is weaker and that they do not see their own advances as an important factor in its acceleration. For example, I noted that Mikoyan, in rejecting our proposals for transit, tried at the same time to emphasise all his good will in the efforts aimed at bringing about the trade agreement. Potyomkin has offered, in a rather ceremonious manner, Father Woyno as the Polish parish priest in Moscow.

II. The fact that 'Poland is turning neither eastward nor westward' continues to worry Russian political circles. From this point of view, one can say that the period of our 'idyllic' relations of April-May has come to an end. Attacks on Poland's being 'bourgeois' and on the leadership of our foreign policy have been noted. The resistant stance of the Baltic States is considered here to be 'our school'. The incident with Ambassador Potocki is an illustration of the atmosphere of suspicion.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In a cipher cable of 10 June, Ambassador Grzybowski informed the Ministry that he had been summoned by the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vladimir Potyomkin, who expressed the displeasure of the Soviet government in connection with the alleged pronouncement of the Polish Ambassador in Washington, Jerzy Potocki. The latter was to have said in New York that 'for Poland, the choice between the German Reich and the Soviets is a choice between two diseases. Not having any certainty if the troops coming to our aid will leave Poland, Poland does not have friendly relations with either of those states'. Ambassador Grzybowski questioned the accuracy of this information. See PDD 1939/I, doc. 343.

III. The mentality of Soviet foreign policy leaders, permanently under the contradictory influence of megalomania and an inferiority complex, is thrown out of balance by the fluctuations of English-Soviet negotiations. As their positive prospects increase, our stock in Moscow falls. Presently, however, I observe with my interlocutors a certain irritation and discouragement. They complain about the Baltic States. The so-called reasonable relations with Germany and Italy seem modest. We have noted a few courteous gestures toward the German Embassy. In relation to Italy, quite the contrary—on the occasion of the repatriation of Soviet sailors from Spain, Russia played an unpleasant trick on Italy by not keeping its promise to free Italian technicians held in Russian prisons.

All in all, however, the negotiations with England and France have spoiled the situation for us for the time being. It is difficult to predict today at what level of its relations with us Soviet policy will recover its balance. It seems, however, that a disturbance of this balance is a significant fact at the moment.

AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND  
(Wacław Grzybowski, Ph.D.)

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 344*

## 141

*21 June. Note by the Under Secretary of State on his discussion  
with the Ambassador of Germany*

Secret

Conversation between Minister Arciszewski and German Ambassador  
von Moltke during a private breakfast at the latter's  
on 21 June

Ambassador Moltke began the discussion by referring to our last meeting 10 days ago at the Italian Embassy and stating that the inflamed state of Polish-German relation continued and that on the Polish side no *détente* could be seen.

I replied that we had just heard Goebbels' speech in Danzig and that we probably couldn't call it a *détente* speech, to which Mr. Moltke declared that this speech should not be viewed as a new German offensive step toward us, as it limited itself to confirming Germany's known position on the Danzig question. On the German side, however, they must note that our undertakings in Danzig, particularly in customs matters, where 100 new customs inspectors have recently been appointed, constitute as if a deliberate desire to aggravate the atmosphere.

I answered that he had indeed touched upon the most irritable subject. German enunciations and speeches, such as the latest by Goebbels, no longer move much either the Polish public opinion or the Polish government. This could be seen in the almost absolute lack of any reaction on the part of public opinion to Goebbels' speech, which unfortunately makes it plain that the German point of view has not changed in the least. This speech and ten more like it do not alone constitute a danger and do not threaten to spark a conflict between Poland and Germany. But even the slightest incident in Danzig could become far more dangerous than the greatest speech. It is not Poland that is on the offensive in Danzig, but the German side, through its harassment of our rights there. Our directives are merely energetic defensive measures.

Harassments in Danzig are so dangerous because they are aimed at altering the material state of affairs, something we could never agree to and, secondly, because they can at any moment create *une situation irréparable*, after which talks between Poland and Germany could become pointless. Berlin has to understand that there can be no talk of any clearer horizons between Poland and Germany as long as we live in an atmosphere of continuous German pressure on our rights in Danzig. So far, we don't yet understand what exactly the Germans want. It is difficult for us to believe that the Reich, forsaking the results of several years of mutual policy, would be aiming for a most severe conflict with Poland over Danzig. We note that this is the current state of affairs, at least in appearance. Should this indeed be the case, an alternative presents itself: either Germany maintains the state of harassment, to which we will respond with all our energy (I stress that although this is very burdensome, we can live in this situation for 100 years, but we doubt if this state of affairs would be beneficial for either side), or one should expect that Germany will sooner or later have recourse to the *ultima ratio*, for which, as he is well aware, both the Polish public opinion and the government are prepared.

Despite everything, as I have indicated above, we have doubts as to whether the issue of Danzig is the crux of the matter. Perhaps Germany is concerned with its prestige, embroiled through unfortunate circumstances in a dispute with us. If this were to be the case, I can guarantee that a way out of this situation could be found, although games of prestige are always highly delicate, and that Poland has not the slightest intention to contribute to the drop of Germany's prestige in Europe. Our entire tactic since 21 March has confirmed that.

Ambassador Moltke replied that, in his opinion, we could avoid more drastic steps in Danzig, bearing in mind that in Berlin our anti-German offensive on the minority and press fronts is felt very acutely. It would be necessary to state objectively that in those two areas the level of tension arising on the Polish side is incomparably greater than on the German side. The press in Germany is held in check, however, and the few repressive German directives against the Polish minority are only a delicate reply to the Polish measures. One can't deny that *Voivod* Grażyński has become, as of late, a veritable *Totengräber* of all prospects for Polish-German cooperation. The news about the pronouncements of our press and about torts to the German minority affect the mood of the Führer very painfully. They do not wish to apply the Talion principle to us thus far, but the real state of affairs is beginning to look worse and worse.

I replied that the latest steps against certain German organisations have been taken on a perfectly legal basis for violations of the statute. Perhaps six months ago our administration would have turned a blind eye to such facts, but what motives could it have for doing so today? It is important to realise that the entire German action against Poland during the past few months is seen here as preparations for war. This opinion is not only that of the Polish public, but also of the government. Perhaps our Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its actions is not guided by this certainty, but this is precisely the role of this Ministry, and of all other similar ministries in the world. Our Ministry, however, has absolutely no arguments in hand to convince the government of Germany's peaceful intentions with regard to Poland. I am asking Ambassador Moltke what motives should incline the Polish Ministry of the Interior, given this state of affairs, to take a special go-easy approach towards the German minority. It is getting ready to repulse a possible attack in all sectors of the country. Everything that is disloyal in the life of the German minority in Poland absolutely has to be eliminated. And so it will be, until the horizon begins to clear up. I keep returning to the matter of Danzig, because therein

lies the crux of the problem and, I repeat, for as long as the German pressure on Danzig continues there can be no talk of any real *détente*.

The Ambassador asked rhetorically if our ties with the anti-German system, and in particular with Russia, are really so great. I replied that as far as the guarantees are concerned, our choice has doubtlessly been made, but the Ambassador, who knows us, should himself know best that we never compromise the freedom of our policy and, for this reason, we are striving to maintain the present line between Berlin and Moscow. In relation to the Soviets, we have not undertaken any obligations so far and we state clearly that we are entirely on the margin of the trilateral negotiations conducted in Moscow. The course of events depends not on us, but on Berlin.

Ambassador Moltke replied that he truly believed that we didn't have any direct ties with the Soviets, but it was undeniable that a direct tie via England and France was bound to arise. I replied that this was undoubtedly the case, but that this was a situation that was emerging despite our will and which, thus far, had not in any way represented an active element of our political calculations.

Summing up, I must note that although I have observed that Ambassador Moltke was during the present discussion less optimistic than he was during the previous one and lacked any conciliatory tones, he did not, on the other hand, this time stress the unyielding German position in the matter of Danzig and did not attack our accord with England, limiting himself on several occasions to the insinuation that a terrible fact that had arisen was that Poland and the Soviets should find themselves in the same offensive camp against Germany.

In the evening that day, the Romanian Ambassador had a lengthy conversation with Mr. Moltke, during which the German Ambassador expressed his pessimism about the further course of Polish-German relations, while pointing out that he could see no signs of *détente* on the Polish side and that the accords concluded by Poland with the West had led to a significant stiffening of our position.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 354*



## 142

*27 June. Report of the Ambassador in Paris on the interpretative  
protocol to the alliance with France*

Paris, 27 June 1939

Top secret.For the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

On 24 June, I received from Minister Bonnet the draft interpretative protocol to our alliance with France along with a letter stating that this draft had been agreed with the English government and that its aim was to coordinate the mutual obligations between Poland, England and France. It is my privilege to send you copies of both documents for your information.

The above dispatch was preceded by a conversation that I had with Minister Bonnet on 22 June. He communicated to me then that the French government had given its approval to the draft of the Polish-French accord sent to him for his opinion by the English government and that, on the other hand, the French draft of the interpretative protocol to the alliance with us will be communicated to me on 23 or 24 June. I should point out that Minister Bonnet didn't as much as hint that the draft would depart from the text communicated to me semi-officially a month ago. This is the usual method of Minister Bonnet, who is always lacking in courage to communicate any unexpected changes to a previously agreed position directly to me.

According to my information, confirmed by Ambassador Raczyński, Minister Bonnet initially came forward in London with the draft of the protocol that had been communicated to me semi-officially a month ago, complementing it later with a draft declaration on Switzerland and probably Belgium. The Foreign Office was against naming any third countries and suggested a wording taken from the London draft of the Polish-English accord, which Minister Bonnet obviously accepted. All this only confirms the fact that France's policy and its diplomatic service are presently and probably for a long time entirely subordinated to the idea of doing nothing without London's approval, especially in matters pertaining to Central and Eastern Europe. Quite clearly, London is the decision-making centre of the common English-French policy, both in terms of decisions of principle and of the texts of agreements signed by England and France. Presumably, this state of affairs

will last, as it is considered in authoritative French circles to be the most convenient, because it creates a situation in which France doesn't incur any individual risk and is certain that England will always cover it in matters of the European continent. Such a policy is extremely popular in the wider and decision-making circles of the French *bourgeoisie*, which has apparently given up all ambitions for an independent French role in Europe and is seeking the most comfortable policy, one least subject to moments of individual risk.

Moving on to the analysis of Minister Bonnet's letter and the interpretative protocol to our alliance with France, I should point out the following:

1) Undoubtedly, the most important sentence in the letter is the one about the necessity to stress the strict solidarity that should unite Poland, England and France, and to safeguard full concordance of the obligations undertaken by these countries.

Minister Bonnet expressed here the same tendency that is absolutely dominant in the English-French-Soviet negotiations and which is no doubt very strong. The fact that the English government, on its part, consults with its French ally about the wording of the accords it proposes to conclude best confirms the fact that we are dealing with a French-English bloc that is very strongly consolidated, at least for the time being.

2) As far as I can tell, knowing the London draft of the Polish-English accord only cursorily, the basic difference between it and the French draft has to do with the fact that the draft of the English-Polish accord provides for a term of expiry and a renunciation procedure, whereas the text of the Polish-French draft does not contain those elements.

This is a difference that we could make use of during further negotiations, as it could be claimed that the formulas of an accord that is, in principle, perpetual have to be more general and flexible than the formulas of an accord whose duration is specifically defined in advance. I would not dare to suggest that you make excessive use of this argument, however, because in the present situation this could produce more difficulties than benefits. Namely, it could bring to the order of the day the question of providing the Polish-French protocol with specific terms of expiry.

3) The introduction to the protocol seems not to give rise to any reservations—it is taken almost unchanged from our draft.

4) Point 1 is consistent with the draft which was communicated to me semi-officially a month ago by Minister Bonnet and which you have in principle accepted.

5) Point 2 constitutes a *novum* in relation to Minister Bonnet's previous draft and can, in its first passage, apply to Romania, which has both our and French guarantees. It seems clear that the French editors could only have had Romania in mind and indirectly obtaining for it guarantees from us in case of a threat from Germany. In any case, the relevant formula can be interpreted in this manner.

The second paragraph of Point 2 is characterised by an absolute lack of reciprocity. It seems to me that if it were to be complemented in a sense desirable for us, this would be all the more convenient as it could include the issue of Lithuania.

Presumably, perhaps even certainly, both the English and the French will strive to sign the accords with us simultaneously and hence it will be difficult to introduce any significant changes to the negotiated texts.

Of course, all this together has an impact on the issue of our declaration about Danzig. Minister Bonnet asked me a couple of times why we were not coming forward with this draft declaration with respect to the English government. I always answered that in London the situation was different from the one in Paris, because there we had been asked to wait for the English government to draw up the draft of the accord with us. It was clear that Minister Bonnet was striving to act *pari passu* with London also in the matter of the Danzig declaration.

The delay in the Foreign Office's pronouncement on the subject of our second (more precise) draft declaration about Danzig has occurred because the Quai d'Orsay had not sent it at all to its Ambassador in London. This was confirmed by Ambassador Raczyński on Friday, 23 June. Minister Bonnet, interpellated by me about this matter, showed great surprise and confusion and telephoned in my presence to the Director of Political Affairs, asking him if this was indeed the case. Given Minister Bonnet's extremely easy and almost constant deviation from the truth, I could not tell if this was truly only negligence or something more. It seems to me that Minister Bonnet acted in good faith, as he showed me the dispatches of Ambassador Corbin and talked with him on the telephone in my presence, but I can't rule out that this may not have been the case.

I think that, in any case, we could declare to Minister Bonnet that we will not be able to consider his draft of the protocol until he takes an official stand in the matter of our draft Danzig declaration.

It is my privilege, in sending you all of the above, to ask for your instructions.

AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 364*

## 143

*29 June. Cable from the Ambassador in London  
on his conversation with the British Foreign Secretary*

London, 29 June 1939

Warsaw cable No. 116

Secret.

I called upon Lord Halifax, to whom: (1) I stressed the postulate of a rapid finalisation of the loan negotiations that had been at a standstill for many days, (2) I expressed the hope that the delay did not arise with a view to the English-Soviet negotiations.

Halifax greeted my intervention with evident satisfaction (as one reinforcing, with regard to the English government, his position favouring the quickest decision). He assured me that the delay, whose protractiveness he regrets, is caused by economic and technical considerations, worsened by the existence of a greater number of needs requiring satisfaction. Despite this, in the next few days the English government will submit its answer to us. Ad (2) Halifax assured me with the greatest possible insistence that the negotiations with Moscow were without any influence on the course of the negotiations with us. England bound itself to Poland with a mutual obligation to provide assistance and will meet its obligation completely with all loyalty, irrespective of the state of its relations with the Soviets. Halifax asked me to repeat the

above declaration to Colonel Koc,<sup>8</sup> and authorised me to use it in discussions should it be necessary to eliminate misunderstandings.

Halifax informed me that the German Embassy had submitted a memorandum to the Foreign Office enumerating all the supposed cases of torts to the German minority caused by us. Action of this kind is, according to Halifax, tactically harmful for us, and also undesirable for British diplomacy. There is no doubt that we could present a longer list of grievances, but Halifax hopes that we will, as far as possible, deprive the German side of all pretexts to make pronouncements against us. Halifax reiterated several times that he did not wish to meddle in our internal affairs and made his comments in the friendliest possible way, stressing the tactical aspect of the issue. I think it would be advisable to provide the Foreign Office with a memorandum, *pro informatione*, on the situation of the Polish minority in Germany. Should the need arise, I am certain that the Foreign Office would also know how to make use of this text with regard to public opinion.

Raczyński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 370*

## 144

*[June]. Unsigned note on the subject of communications  
through Polish Pomerania*

### COMMUNICATIONS FROM GERMANY TO EAST PRUSSIA THROUGH POLAND

Transit between East Prussia and the rest of Germany is taking place on the basis of the Paris Convention of 21 April 1921, which provides for communications by rail, road, water, post, telegraph and telephone.

In railway transport, Germany can make use of ordinary transit on general conditions, using all Polish railway lines, or of privileged transit, for which five transit lines, of a length of 110 to 400 km, have been provided. The German

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<sup>8</sup> Colonel Adam Koc conducted the summer negotiations in London about an armament loan for Poland.

railways voluntarily gave up using three of these lines for currency-related reasons and presently privileged transit takes place only on the Strzebielino-Gdynia-Tczew-Marienburg and on the Chojnice-Tczew-Marienburg lines. In transit, travellers are carried, as is merchandise, using separate trains with German transport lists without any further formalities. Travellers are not subjected to any passport or customs control. In these conditions, travellers may not even notice that they have travelled through Polish territory. When the transit trains stop at the station, travellers can purchase fruit, meals and refreshments. It is, of course, permitted to open windows in the cars of the train in transit.

All these facilitations have also been made available to travellers from Germany to other countries and also from Germany to Danzig, given that on the Danzig-Tczew-Marienburg line Poland has introduced special trains for travellers who don't have a Polish passport visa, making it possible for Danzig inhabitants to travel without a Polish visa to Marienburg and from there to Berlin.

It should be pointed out that those trains travel faster than the fast trains running on the Berlin-Zbąszyń line. The stops of the trains at the stations are kept to only a few minutes. Also the safety of this transit is very high, as is demonstrated by the fact that in 18 years there has only been one catastrophe on the transit lines, near Starogard, caused not by the fault of the railways, but as a result of a criminal act.

Payment for the transport of travellers and merchandise from Germany to East Prussia is charged only in Germany in German Marks in strict accordance with the German domestic tariff and respecting all German discounts. Therefore, there is not even the slightest discrimination of travellers or shippers from Germany to East Prussia in comparison with transport taking place within Germany; on the contrary, travellers can take advantage here of special far-reaching reductions for transit on East Prussian return tickets. Whereas in Germany each kilometre travelled costs the same, i.e., costs increase proportionately to the distance travelled, the tariff of the East Prussian return ticket is a degressive one (i.e., as most tickets in Poland).

The German railways reimburses the Polish railways for the latter's share in the transport fees for the transit lines in keeping with the Polish tariff, with all Polish tariff discounts. In some cases, the German railways are even granted rebates that do not exist in the Polish tariff (such as discounts for families with a large number of children, discounts for return tickets, etc.), and also rebates for German popular trains from Germany to East Prussia.

Given the unusually cheap fares in the Polish tariff, the management of the German railways, in charging fees according to the German tariff, derives

benefits from the difference between the amount charged and the one reimbursed for transit through Polish Pomerania.

In recent years, Poland has made many facilitations in transit traffic, a very valuable one being the concession concerning settlement for transport. Thus, when the German railways ceased to pay for transit, Poland did not suspend the transit and agreed to accept compensation for several years of arrears (about 100 million zloty) in the form of merchandise. Through subsequent agreements, payments in hard currency were further reduced to a dozen million zloty annually, and payment in merchandise was expected. In addition, the German railways were granted an extra discount which additionally increased the German partner's benefits from the transit.

For auto transit through Polish Pomerania, Germans can use excellently maintained asphalted roads. Thus especially on the Starogard-Chojnice section, several hundred cars and motorcycles, and even huge cargo train autos, can be seen daily moving freely between Germany and East Prussia. This traffic takes place without passports, and drivers only pay a very low fee for the wear of the asphalted surface.

If one were to add to the above the unfettered freedom of navigation for German ships on inland routes and Poland's agreement for German aircraft to fly over the Polish *voivodship* of Pomerania, one can see that such transit facilitations as observed in communications with East Prussia would be difficult to find elsewhere and any objective observer would have to state unconditionally that Poland truly gave Germany the freest possible communication with East Prussia. It should be pointed out here that Poland's merchandise export traffic in the direction of the ports alone is more than four times the volume of the Germany-East Prussia traffic, not to mention the internal Polish traffic in Pomerania and Danzig. Taken together, this makes the entire so strongly promoted German transit through Pomerania a mere fraction of huge Polish shipments towards the sea.

Germans, among them outstanding and leading personalities, have for years been pointing with satisfaction to the beneficial arrangement in the regulation of transit. The present campaign about East Prussian transit, in which in over 18 years as many as three disputes arose and were settled through arbitration, has all the makings of an artificial campaign. Several weeks of propaganda will not succeed in wiping out evidence of the truth known for over 18 years.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 373*

## 145

*1 July. Cable from the Chef de Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in London about Minister Beck's discussion with the British Chargé d'affaires*

Warsaw, 1 July 1939

Cipher cable No. 161

The British *Chargé d'affaires* called upon Minister Beck today with a personal message from Lord Halifax:

The English government has observed on the German side a systematic attempt to overturn Polish rights in Danzig, so as to present the eventual Polish reaction as an aggression. The British government and the French government are ready to consider possible preventive measures with the Polish government.

Minister Beck replied to this that Poland's reaction will always be proportionate to the German action. A common *démarche* in Berlin could, in his opinion, lead to two dangerous consequences: (a) it will be a clear recognition of the German Reich's right to interfere in Danzig affairs, (b) in case of the German Reich's refusal to abide with this *démarche*, it will require immediate action and precipitate the conflict.

On the other hand, a common *démarche* of the General Commissioner and the consuls of Great Britain and France with the Danzig Senate would be possible. Minister Beck would be willing to discuss such a move.

Sent to London, c/c to Paris.

Łubieński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 374*



## 146

*1 July. Note by the First Secretary of the Legation in Riga  
on his conversation with the Head of the Baltic Section  
of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Note.

On 1 July, taking advantage of the fact that several current issues needed to be settled, I called upon the Head of the Baltic Section at the Political Department of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Masens, who has recently returned from a lengthy trip to England and the Scandinavian countries. Mr. Masens was the first to bring the conversation to political subjects, primarily showing an interest in the supposed mediation action of the Vatican. I replied that, as far as I knew, thus far the matter hadn't gone beyond press rumours—contradictory at times—and, as far as we were concerned, it didn't in any case take on any real shape. Masens showed understanding for the fact that Poland could not today see any reason why the present situation between Germany and Poland should become the subject of negotiations, when Poland's position has been so clearly and decidedly defined and the road to direct talks has been opened. Moving then to the issue of the Moscow talks, particularly Zhdanov's article,<sup>1</sup> Masens expressed the opinion that Soviet tactic clearly consisted of a deliberate search for difficulties (this also concerns, in his opinion, the matter of extending guarantees to the Baltic States) and that, given this, it would be proper to conclude that the Soviets saw no benefit in concluding a pact with the West and would prefer to keep a free hand. I replied that, not long ago, I had also defended a similar thesis in a long discussion with the newly appointed Latvian military attaché in Warsaw and former head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section of the General Staff, Colonel Kikkuls, whose position was decidedly different from that of Masens, namely he argued that the Soviets had to conclude and absolutely would conclude an alliance with the 'democracies', as they couldn't allow for the Axis powers to emerge victorious from a possible conflict due to the absence of the Soviets. To Masens' question about our position on the concepts put forward by the Soviets with regard to the Baltic States, I answered that it was entirely consistent with the position of those

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<sup>1</sup> In an article published on 29 June by Moscow's *Pravda*, one of Stalin's closest collaborators sharply criticised the style in which Great Britain and France conducted the negotiations with the Soviet Union on an anti-German alliance.

states, as we believed that the international arrangement in the Baltic must fully respect—from the formal point of view—the independence of the Baltic States, and their neutrality from the substantive point of view. Later in the conversation, Masens reiterated that thus far France or England had not taken any steps that would make one suppose that they would depart from those principles. The Soviets exhibit a complete lack of understanding for the psychology of the Baltic States if they think it possible to come forward with such ideas.

Lastly, Masens asked me about my impressions from my last several-day long stay in Warsaw, about the mood in Poland, and then shared his observations that a similar self-control and calm as can be seen in Poland can also be observed in the Scandinavian countries. This is in glaring contrast to the nervousness that he has witnessed all over the West (here he listed Germany, England and France).

1 July 1939

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 375*

## 147

### *1 July. Report of the Ambassador in Berlin on his conversation with the Ambassador of Great Britain*

1 July 1939

Top secret

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
i n W a r s a w

The British Ambassador to Germany, who is leaving next Tuesday on a private trip to England for a few days, has shared with me his observations following recent discussions with several German personalities.

During the visit of Prince Paul of Serbia, he was invited by Göring, with whom he had the opportunity to exchange views. Additionally, he has talked at length with SA leader Lutze, with high-ranking military officers and, recently, with Weizsäcker on several occasions.

Sir Nevile Henderson thinks that neither Göring nor the Chancellor are seeking war. Of course, they take the general political situation into account; for example, the conflict in the Far East could rather incline them toward war. In higher spheres, Henderson has not met with doubt anywhere that England would fulfil its obligations as an ally with regard to Poland. The opposite version is spread at lower levels for propaganda purposes.

Henderson thinks that Hitler still has not decided on a line of action with regard to Poland. If the German press is attacking Poland relatively mildly in comparison with how it is writing about England, the British Ambassador thinks this is on instructions from the Chancellor.

Göring has told Henderson that the question of Danzig is not pressing. Weizsäcker assured him just two days ago that the German side would not cause any coup in Danzig. According to Weizsäcker, there is rather a danger of incidents on the Polish side that could lead to German measures. Göring was supposed to have indicated to the Ambassador that in case of a Polish attack on Danzig, the German government would immediately intervene militarily.

Of course, I indicated in connection with this that all suppositions that Poland would take aggressive steps toward Danzig were perfectly groundless. I added that on the territory of the Free City, we note a continual violation of our rights or steps that give the impression that some form of action is being prepared by the German side. I mentioned the construction of barracks, the arrival in Danzig of members of the SA, and the smuggling of war *matériel*. Sir Nevile made it clear that he had been informed of this. Nonetheless, he doesn't think that there is a decision on the German side to carry out a *coup de force* in Danzig.

Henderson further drew my attention to the fact that even from quarters that are neutral or even ill-disposed toward Germany he is getting information about the excessively chauvinistic attitude of our local authorities with regard to the Germans. The British Ambassador in Warsaw reports that he does not feel this attitude in the government, but that the *voivods* are going too far in their steps. In the same manner, many imprudent things are being said and then seep into Germany. Henderson pointed out in a rather friendly manner that he was mentioning this out of fear of a possible Polish-German conflict.

Lutze, a rather moderate person, has told the Ambassador that he fears that the ongoing anti-German pronouncements on the Polish side might break the camel's back with the Chancellor.

Weizsäcker, who, according to the Ambassador, is making diligent efforts to avoid war and who fears incidents, continually stresses the need to calm the

spirits in Polish-German relations. Weizsäcker supposedly told Henderson that it would be best to draw the curtain, as he said, over the Danzig matter for some time.

In connection with this pronouncement of the Secretary of State, Henderson thinks that only Hitler, and no one around him, least of all Ribbentrop, would be able to produce a certain *détente* in Polish-German relations. The Ambassador would see such a *détente* in the deferral of discussions on Danzig matters to some time in the future, after the atmosphere has calmed down. Only our direct contact with Hitler would have some chance of success. I pointed out that I was not acquainted with the Chancellor's views or his postulates of, say, a general nature. Henderson replied that, of course, he was also unaware of this. I wish to point out that the above considerations of the Ambassador were delivered in the form of an entirely loose and friendly exchange of views.

I would also wish to add that when the Ambassador mentioned the treatment of the German minority in Poland, I didn't fail to draw his attention to the fate of our population in Germany.

Henderson also showed me a telegram he had received from London, which included an account from the French Ambassador in Berlin on rumours making the rounds in Danzig. The telegram mentions the Chancellor's visit to Danzig supposedly planned for 20 July, the arrival of German navy units and the simultaneous declaration by the Senate of the incorporation of the Free City into the Reich. Henderson doesn't really believe these rumours and will consult his French colleague on this matter.

Henderson's remarks about the past contained a few interesting details. He claims that following Munich, when the Oderberg affair was discussed,<sup>2</sup> Hitler rejected the demand, put forward by certain German personalities, to incorporate this city with an overwhelmingly German population into the Reich, explaining that he needed to hand over Bohumin to Poland in connection with the future settlement of the matters of Danzig and the Corridor. Henderson claims that many Germans greeted Poland's rejection of Hitler's offer with relief, as their appetite, especially that of military elements, go considerably further as far as Polish Pomerania is concerned.

In summary of the above conversation with Henderson, I would like to point out that it clearly indicated that as an exponent of Chamberlain's views,

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<sup>2</sup> Bohumin – see footnote 2 p. 113.

he is making all efforts here to find a peaceful way out of the situation of tension. In connection with this, he is chiefly worried about irritants in Polish-German relations, something that the German side is taking advantage of in order to point out to possible incidents on the Polish side. The aim of his conversation with me, one that he had asked for, was to influence us in the direction of mitigating our behaviour with regard to the German minority and to reign in our press. The suggestion of possibly deferring the matter of Danzig is also worthy of consideration, provided it would actually be possible to pursue such a solution under the circumstances.

Irrespective of the above considerations of Mr. Henderson, I wish to draw your attention to the fact that both the German and international press is almost daily bringing news of the directives of our local authorities against the German minority. I think that limiting the actions of *voivods* in this respect to a certain framework set by the central authorities would be very advisable, the more so as, looking at it from afar, the directives not only concern the German minority's activities that can be qualified as anti-State, but also, for example, the dismissal of workers or the closing of gymnasiums and schools.

AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

JÓZEF LIPSKI

PDD 1939/I, doc. 377

## 148

### *3 July. Report of the Consul General in Berlin on rumours of a German-Soviet understanding*

Berlin, 3 July 1939

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw  
Minister's Office

#### Alleged Russian-German negotiations

According to unverified information, during the next two weeks Russia and Germany are supposedly to conclude an accord of not only an economic nature, but also a political one.

The main proponents of the accord are allegedly the *Gauleiter* of Bavaria von Epp and the Minister of the Economy Funk.

Source: Indirectly from a high court official from Leipzig. This official is a silent opponent of the regime and supposedly informed my informer of the occupation of Prague three days before the fact.<sup>3</sup>

Consul General

...  
(Stanisław Kara)

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 380*

## 149

*6 July. Letter from the Counsellor of the Embassy in London  
about a discussion at the Foreign Office*

Cipher letter of 6 July 1939

No. 19

Deputy Director of the Central Department Kirkpatrick asked me to come to the Foreign Office today to inform me, on Halifax's instructions, about the present state of negotiations with the Soviets, with their conditions now beginning to 'crystallise'.

The principal difficulty continues to be the question of the Baltic States, to which the Soviets attach great importance. The English government, fully appreciating the danger of Soviet interference in those countries should they be subject to a mutual guarantee, and not wishing to force the latter on them against their wishes and our reservations, is in the last resort inclined to propose an intermediate formula that 'the British government undertakes to come to the Soviets' assistance, insofar as they would become involved in military operations as a result of direct or indirect aggression on one of the three Baltic States'. Such a clause would be appended to the accord in the form of a secret protocol or note.

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<sup>3</sup> A copy of this report was sent to the Ambassador in Berlin and to the 2nd Department of the General Staff.

The English government would not demand, contrary to its initial position, any reciprocity from the Soviets as far as the Netherlands and Switzerland are concerned. The words 'indirect aggression' would receive, according to the formula adopted at today's Council of Ministers, the following interpretation: 'The expression indirect aggression should be understood as an action taken by a given state under threat of force on the part of another state, an action that would lead that state to abandon its independence or neutrality'. The English government attaches special importance to the interpretation of this expression given the danger of Soviet interference in the Baltic States under some other pretext.

Should this ultimate formula also be rejected by the Soviets, the English government would propose, as a second option, a trilateral English-French-Soviet accord with a mutual guarantee in case of direct aggression, with the proviso, however, that negotiations for a wider accord would continue and should Germany attack one of the states covered by the accord in the meantime, immediate consultations would follow.

As a third option, in case an understanding is not reached about this formula, the English government would propose only the conclusion of a trilateral accord on mutual assistance in case of direct aggression.

I indicated that I am taking the above information *ad referendum*, repeating our reservations, however, about extending any Soviet guarantee to the Baltic States, as per cipher cable No. 143.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to technical difficulties, Kirkpatrick attributed the delay in the negotiations primarily to Molotov's mentality and the use by the Soviets of their better negotiating position. Kirkpatrick thinks, however, that the Soviets basically want to conclude the accord and he has no fear that delaying the negotiations had as its only purpose their understanding, in any form, with Germany.

Representatives of the Baltic States in London are, according to Kirkpatrick, duly informed about the course of the negotiations. So far the details have been communicated only to the French government.

Sent to: Warsaw, by cipher letter to Paris.

JAŻDŻEWSKI

Cipher letter received on 8 July 1939

PDD 1939/I, doc. 385

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<sup>4</sup> See doc. 138.

## 150

*6 July. Information from the Eastern Section about the position of Japan on rumours of a German-Soviet rapprochement*

Warsaw, 6 July 1939

S e c r e t

To the question of the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Tokyo about the position of the Japanese government with regard to the rumours of an intended German-Soviet understanding, Minister of Foreign Affairs Arita replied that the Japanese government had also received such information, but it didn't believe it and did not wish to verify its authenticity. Minister Arita added that any German *rapprochement* with the USSR contrary to the Anti-Comintern Pact would force Japan to draw the appropriate conclusions.<sup>5</sup>

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

*p.p. ...*

*PDD 1939/I, doc 386*

## 151

*8 July. Note by the Under Secretary of State on his conversation with the Ambassador of the USSR*

Secret

Note on the conversation between Minister Szembek and the Soviet Ambassador, Mr. Sharonov, on 8 July 1939

He presented to me Counsellor Nikitin, director of the *Torgpredstvo*.<sup>6</sup> A general conversation ensued about the need to enliven mutual trade relations. We spoke in more detail about cotton. The Ambassador emphasised

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<sup>5</sup> This information was sent to the embassies in Berlin, Moscow, London, Paris and Rome.

<sup>6</sup> *Torgovoe Predstavitelstvo*, the Soviet Trade Representation.



that the Soviet side would wish to deal not with one purchasing organisation, but with individual importers.

Further in the discussion I asked the Ambassador about the English-French-Soviet negotiations in Moscow. The Ambassador stated that the Soviet side wanted above all to be assured of reciprocity in the accord. In Moscow, negotiations give rise to very little interest, with the exception of the *Narkomindel*,<sup>7</sup> of course. There is talk of everything, this year's harvest, summer excursions, but no one busies himself with the matter of the negotiations.

To my question about the course of Soviet-German trade negotiations, which have been mentioned in rumours circulated in the press, the Ambassador replied that no such talks were taking place. The press exaggerates. It also reported that during his stay in Moscow he had been received by Stalin, which was not true, as he only visited Molotov. He had been in Moscow for a short time, having stayed mostly in Tbilisi, where he went in order to bring his children to Warsaw.

He rented a villa in the vicinity of Warsaw for the summer.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 387*

## 152

### *11 July. The Consul General in Berlin about reports of a German-Soviet rapprochement*

Berlin, 11 July 1939

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw  
Minister's Office

Alleged Russian-German negotiations.

Following report No. T.50/N/1.6 of 3 July 1939,<sup>8</sup> I wish to communicate that the news of a German-Russian *rapprochement* has been repeated in a decisive form by the same source. The informer stated that 'within two

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<sup>7</sup> The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID).

<sup>8</sup> See doc. 148.

weeks the world will be astounded by the Russian-German accord'. This accord is apparently to be concluded at Poland's expense.

I am not giving the name of this informer, given the need for discretion. I will provide this name verbally when the occasion presents itself.

I was promised the names of the delegates sent for this purpose to Moscow by 12–13 July.<sup>9</sup>

Consul General

...  
(Stanisław Kara)

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 391*

## 153

### *16 July. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador in London about the loan for Poland*

Warsaw, 16 July 1939 at midnight

Telephone cable No. 177

Secret

On the order of the government, please ask without delay to be seen by Halifax and submit the following declaration to him in the form of a note:

On the basis of their political cooperation, an exchange of views took place between the Polish government and HMG on the subject of financial and material loans that the English government could grant for the purpose of effectively increasing Poland's military potential.

The matter of the financial loan has been raised by the Polish side because this would be a means allowing for a wider use of the potential of the Polish military industry through increased production and purchase of certain indispensable raw materials. This is the fastest way leading to the intended

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<sup>9</sup> Copies of this document were sent to the Ambassador in Berlin and to the 2nd Department of the General Staff.

end given that, as it has turned out, the English and French possibilities of ceding war *matériel* are limited.

In agreement with the English government, Minister Koc was delegated to London as the Government Delegate to conduct the appropriate negotiations.

The Polish government is forced to state that during the course of the negotiations, the English plenipotentiary not only didn't find any practical proposals based on the above-mentioned premises, but raised a number of demands arduous for Polish interests and having nothing in common with the intended aim.

As an example one can mention that the limitations on coal exports imposed by the British side would entail for Poland a foreign exchange loss amounting to a significant portion of the planned British financial loan.

The proposed reform of the Polish currency system raised during the discussions is a matter of great significance which is out of all proportion to the significance of the sum mentioned by the English-French side during the negotiations.

In reality, the sums under discussion, whose conditions for use proposed by the English side are unacceptable for us, are merely equal to the sum expended in a single month by the Polish government for state defence out of its own funds.

Under the circumstances, the Polish government has to view the position communicated to Minister Koc as equivalent to a denial of the request for the financial loan. The last proposal communicated to us is not only unacceptable, but can't even constitute a basis for discussion. If the above mentioned position were to be considered the final answer of the English government, further negotiations over the financial loan are pointless. Should, however, the English government be able and wish to revise the position taken by its plenipotentiary during the negotiations, it would only be warranted to examine such a loan as would provide for the transfer of appropriate sums to make use of the potential of Polish industry and to purchase resources and war *matériel* (in addition to that provided by the material loans) where it is possible to obtain them in due time. The matter of coal could be negotiated separately and the currency problem could be the subject of a future friendly exchange of views when the situation permits.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Poland would be grateful for a fundamental answer and takes the liberty to draw attention to the necessity of clarifying the situation as soon as possible.

Awaiting a response in the matter of the financial loan, the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland would consider it desirable for the negotiations about the material loan to be speeded up and completed swiftly. The above declaration is confidential in nature.

For the information of the Ambassador and Minister Koc: should the English answer be negative, evasive or not provided by Tuesday night, Minister Koc should leave London at once without engaging in any further discussions. Neither is it desirable to conduct even unofficial discussions other than the ones concerning the material loan until an answer is obtained. Domaniewski shall remain for discussions about the material loans.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 394*

## 154

*17 July. Cable from the Ambassador in London  
about his conversation with the British Foreign Secretary*

London, 17 July 1939

Warsaw cipher cable No. 133

Received cipher cable No. 177

I carried out your instructions with regard to Halifax this evening, submitting a *pro memoria* and adding verbal clarifications.

Halifax argued on a friendly tone with the interpretation that the British side was striving in the negotiations to exploit the situation in a brutal and egoistic manner. He explained that the English position is dictated by substantive difficulties, and especially by the fear of creating an inauspicious precedent in relation to a number of other countries seeking loans here.

He promised to discuss the matter with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and, if possible, to give me an answer tomorrow.

Raczyński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 396*

## 155

*24 July. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in London  
about the loan for Poland*

Polmission London

c/c to Paris

Please communicate to the government to which you are accredited that from the last declarations made to you it ensues that the most significant issue for which the negotiations have been initiated, i.e., the swift strengthening of the armament of the Polish army, has no chance of being settled positively. In those conditions, further negotiations on a financial loan do not seem warranted. The Polish government expresses hope that the negotiations on the material loan will not pose such difficulties and can be completed shortly.

Please add the usual courtesy formulations to the above substantive text.

B E C K  
Warsaw, ... July 1939

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 402*

## 156

*28 July. Cable from the Chef de Cabinet  
of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassy in London about the conversation  
with the British Chargé d'affaires*

Warsaw, 28 July 1939

Cipher cable No. 194

Norton communicated to me Lord Halifax's message for the Minister:

'Halifax regrets that the negotiations have not succeeded. In his view the last proposals of the British government contained many far-reaching concessions from the British side and would have enabled the Polish government to widen its armaments through purchases in other countries. This state of affairs,

however, in no way alters the desire of the British government to cooperate in all areas with the Polish government in the pursuit of their common aims’.

On the Minister’s instructions, I communicated to Mr. Norton the Minister’s reply to Lord Halifax:

‘In reply to Lord Halifax’s message, Minister Beck also regrets that the financial negotiations have not resulted in an agreement. He regrets it above all because the argumentation of the English negotiators is incomprehensible to the Polish political and military circles in light of the present European situation. Minister Beck states, however, that even though Poland is not a country of abundant financial means, the sum of the negotiated loan could not have had any decisive influence on our country’s financial situation. The decision to work with the United Kingdom for the preservation of peace, and also in case of a conflict, is in any case a fact of incomparably greater significance than the above-mentioned financial negotiations. Thanking Lord Halifax for his message, Minister Beck states on his part that the Polish government also expects closer cooperation with the United Kingdom in all areas, irrespective of the specific problem of the loan’.

Sent to London, c/c to Paris, Berlin.

Łubieński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 408*

## 157

*2 August. Report of the Ambassador to the Holy See  
about his audience with the Pope*

Rome, 2 August 1939

Secret

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

About the audience with the Holy Father on 24 July:

On the day of my arrival in Rome, i.e., on 19 July, I was received for a short audience by Cardinal Secretary Maglione, to whom I presented a copy of my credentials and a draft of my speech for the occasion of the presentation of my credentials. The visit was a pure courtesy call. I got the impression that it was the Vatican's wish that the presentation of credentials take place within the next few days.

It took place on 24 July, in accordance with Vatican ceremony. I am sending you the text of my speech (unchanged in relation to the text drawn up in Warsaw) as well as the text of the Pope's reply. I am also appending the description of the audience by the *Osservatore Romano*.<sup>1</sup>

After the audience, the Pope held me back for a discussion lasting over half an hour. He asked me first of all about the health of the President of the Republic of Poland, if he was presently in Warsaw, if and how he intended to rest during this summer. Moving on to the political situation, the Pope referred to his peace mediation by saying that he did everything he could for peace, but 'it is very difficult to do anything in Berlin'. He remembers how last year, at the end of September, he listened to Chancellor Hitler's speech in which it was clearly stated that Germany, after the annexation of the Sudetenland, would not have any more territorial claims in Europe. What remained of this today? This moment it is Danzig, but tomorrow other, further-reaching demands could be raised, and their direction remains unknown. The principles on which the Chancellor had based his policy were broken twice: firstly, the Reich occupied Bohemia and Moravia, incorporating into the German State a Slavic population of many millions, and, secondly, as

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<sup>1</sup> The appendices are not included in this publication.

far as South Tyrol is concerned, the Chancellor is ready to make use of its purely German population as a bargaining chip.

The Holy Father then complained bitterly about the hampering of all Church work in Germany, for making the Catholic Action impossible—‘one can barely, only just work in the Church, and even that not really much’.

The Pope then asked about the situation in Danzig, while looking into the *Annuario Pontificio* to check what the correct Latin term for Danzig was and how it sounded in Polish. On the basis of my powers, I presented the Danzig problem, beginning with the Polish-German agreement of January 1934, at the basis of which was an understanding about Danzig. Danzig is not in the least a Versailles matter. If Poland agreed to a compromise such as the solution of the Versailles Treaty, this was due to its understanding of the necessity to make certain sacrifices on behalf of the spirit of the times and the nationality principle. Already in the early spring of 1933, Polish-German relations found themselves at a crossroads on account of Danzig. This was a great historical *aut-aut* between Poland and Germany, precisely on account of Polish interests at the mouth of the Vistula. At the time, Germany understood this and it was possible to come to an understanding that gave both countries and Europe a measure of peace for many years. If the Chancellor, forgetting about all his declarations, such as, for example, the oft-repeated one that Danzig is for Germany nothing but *eine Provinzstadt* and that there can be no conflict between Poland and Germany on account of Danzig, is now declaring that Danzig is indispensable for the Reich, this certainly indicates a far-reaching change of the principles guiding German policy, but it cannot in any measure affect a change in the principal and long-term foundations of Polish *raison d'état*. Minister Beck did everything he could at the time not to close off the Chancellor's paths of retreat. To the speech of 28 April, the response could only have been Minister Beck's speech of 5 May.

Today the situation is rigid, and the Reich does not have any compensation in Danzig. Of course, there is a certain domain of rights that are presently almost unexercised in practise, and which are nominally represented by the Commissioner of the League of Nations. Poland is ready to discuss these rights with the Reich, but this has been insufficient for the latter thus far. In contrast, the Reich is not in a position to offer us any compensation for Danzig: we have no desire to seek such in Slovakia, and there can also be no question for the Polish government and nation to consider as a *contre-partie* some vague German guarantees for Poland. The German word has lost its value in Poland for years to come. Through its firm and unyielding attitude,



Poland also, in my view, serves well the cause of peace (at this point the Pope nodded vividly). There can be no question of resolving the matter of Danzig through its incorporation into the Reich and Poland does not and will not engage in any discussions on the matter. Far from wishing to provoke a war, Poland is nevertheless determined to respond with *une réaction proportionnée* to all attempts to create *faits accomplis* in Danzig. As the term 'negotiation' came up during the discussion, I added that any negotiation or international conference could only be valuable if there were chances for its success; otherwise it could only contribute to the worsening of the situation.

I tried to present my reasoning here as precisely as possible, as I did during subsequent discussions with members of the College of Cardinals, when I made use of the same or similar arguments drawn from your verbal instructions.

The Pope listened to these arguments with attention, nodding and asking a question from time to time. At a certain moment, he said that Poland's role was presently the more important as from the East and West Poland was surrounded by blocs that were anti-Christian, or in any case, a-Christian. This led the Holy Father to move to the subject of the Western powers' current discussions with the Soviets. Also on this issue I was able to present our position in keeping with your instructions. It was clear from this part of the conversation that the Pope was vividly interested in whether a *rapprochement* between the Third Reich and the Soviets was possible and to what extent. His words betrayed his fear that this kind of *rapprochement* could not be ruled out and that in certain conditions it was even probable. On my part, I voiced the conviction that Hitler's revolution could not compete with the Bolshevik revolution's 'friendly' social slogans and that Hitler probably understood this. He may also understand something else, namely that should he spark off a European or world war, the *tertius gaudens* and ultimate victor would most probably be Bolshevism. The Pope nodded vividly, adding that 'one should be hopeful that he understands this and one should be hopeful that there won't be a war'. Despite the Holy Father's greatest interest in the subject of peace, nothing in the conversation seemed to indicate that he intended to undertake a new initiative in the present situation.

To my observation that we, in Warsaw, don't understand how the Italian system of government could have lost its freedom of movement in relation to the Third Reich to such an extent, the Pope replied: '*ils sont très liés*'.

The Pope then spoke with great affinity and warmth about the stance of the Polish nation, about its internal unity and its fantastic form at this time of

danger. The Holy Father ended with personal phrases and once again gave me his blessing as we parted.

The Pope's reply to my speech contained eminently political moments and gave the impression that the Pope had taken the opportunity offered by the presentation of the letter of credence by the new Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in order to make a fundamental statement against the background of the present political situation.<sup>2</sup> I was confirmed in this impression during my subsequent talks at the College of Cardinals, by observations originating from the editors of the *Osservatore Romano* and, last but not least, in my conversation with the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignore Cortesi. The latter told me outright that it had been very convenient for the Pope to be able to take up and reiterate in his reply certain elements included in my speech.

In the afternoon of the day he had received me to present my credentials, the Holy Father departed for his summer stay at Castel Gandolfo.

The Pope's speech appeared on the front page of the *Osservatore Romano* the following day. The French and English press devoted special attention to its content, as is shown by the appended clippings from *Le Temps* and the *Times*. It is symptomatic that the Italian press has ignored the Pope's speech entirely.

/-/ K. Papée  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland  
to the Holy See

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 410*

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<sup>2</sup> Following the death of the previous ambassador, Władysław Skrzyński, the post of Polish Ambassador to the Holy See remained vacant for a year and a half.

## 158

*5 August. Cable from the Chef de Cabinet  
of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in London  
about the submitted declaration*

Warsaw, 5 August 1939

Cipher cable No. 203

On the evening of 4 August, acting on the instructions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I invited the Counsellor to the British Embassy and the French *Chargé d'affaires* in turn to call on me, and made the following statement to them:

‘Acting on instructions from the Danzig Senate, on 4 August, the Danzig Customs Officials on the East Prussian frontier informed the Polish Customs Inspectors that, as from 6 August, they would not be allowed to exercise their control functions.

‘In answer to this we are addressing without delay a note to the Danzig Senate, demanding a withdrawal of this order by the evening of 5 August. We shall regard any attempt to prevent the Customs Inspectors lawfully performing their duties from carrying out their functions as an act violating our interests in Danzig, and severe retaliatory measures will be undertaken.’

Łubieński

*PWB, doc. 81; PDD 1939/I, doc. 414*

## 159

*5 August. Cable of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassy in London about the assurances of the President  
of the Danzig Senate*

Warsaw, 5 August 1939

Cipher cable No. 204

The President of the Danzig Senate replied verbally today that, for the time being, no regulations blocking the work of our Customs Inspectors will be enforced. A written answer has been promised after 6 August.

We have provisionally taken cognizance of this statement, pointing out that in the event of any attacks on our Inspectors, or hindrance to their work, the announcement that we shall react remains in force.

Beck

*PWB, doc. 83; PDD 1939/I, doc. 415*

## 160

*9 August. Cable of the Chargé d'affaires in Berlin  
about his conversation with the Secretary of State  
at the German Foreign Ministry*

Berlin, 9 August 1939  
Received on 9 August at 8:30 P.M.

Mr. Lubomirski, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw

No. 185

The Secretary of State Weizsäcker invited me today and made the following verbal declaration on behalf of the German government:

The Reich Government has learnt, with great surprise, of the tenor of the Polish Government's Note to the Senate of the Free City of Danzig, in which Note, in the form of an ultimatum, the Polish Government demanded the cancellation of an alleged measure which existed only in the form of unverified rumours. This measure has not in reality been taken by the Danzig Senate.

The Government of the Reich feels obliged to draw attention to the fact that a repetition of such demands, in ultimatum form, addressed to the Free City of Danzig, and also threats of reprisals, could only lead to an aggravation of Polish-German relations. The responsibility for the consequences of this must fall entirely on the Polish Government, and the Reich Government is compelled from now on to renounce all responsibility in this matter.

Moreover, the German Government draws the attention of the Polish Government to the fact that the measures taken by that Government in order to prevent the export of certain commodities from Danzig to Poland are liable to cause serious economic losses to the Danzig population.

If the Polish Government persevere in maintaining such measures, the Reich Government is of the opinion that in this state of affairs the Free City of Danzig could not but seek other possibilities of export and, therefore, also of import.

I am sending the exact text noted by me by today's courier.

PWB, *doc. 85*; PDD 1939/I, *doc. 417*

## 161

*10 August. Cable of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassies in London and Paris on the Polish-German exchange  
of declarations about Danzig*

Warsaw, 10 August 1939 at midnight

Cipher cable No. 209

On 9 August, the German Secretary of State summoned the *Chargé d'affaires ad interim* of the Republic of Poland in Berlin and submitted a protest against Poland's demand concerning customs matters in Danzig in the form of an ultimatum and declared that certain Polish directives of an economic nature, arising from the Danzig economy's efforts to avoid Polish customs clearance, would justify, in the view of the German government, the seeking by Danzig of alternate routes of import and export—something that should be understood as a threat to the customs union.<sup>3</sup>

Today, Arciszewski summoned the German *Chargé d'affaires ad interim* and declared that Poland did not see any legal basis that would justify the Reich's intervention in Danzig's affairs. He further declared that all attempts by Danzig to violate Polish rights and interests would be met with an appropriate response by the Polish government, and that possible interventions of the German government to the detriment of Polish contractual rights and interests would be seen by Poland as an act of aggression.

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<sup>3</sup> See docs. 158–160.

The ambassadors of France and England received the full texts of both declarations today.

Please expect further information.

Sent to London and Paris, c/c to Danzig.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 418*

## 162

### *10 August. Cable of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in London about Danzig*

Warsaw, 10 August at midnight

Cipher cable No. 210

Re: Cipher cable No. 209 <sup>4</sup>

In my conversations today with the Ambassadors of England and France, in connection to both governments' proposition for a *démarche préventive*, I asked if the French and English governments did not think it advisable to bring it to the attention of the German Reich that this type of intervention in Danzig matters was threatening to peace and the English and French governments would not be able to remain indifferent. I asked for a swift reply.

I added to this that, as the German government had yet to publish its declaration made to the Polish *Chargé d'affaires* in Berlin, I was treating the matter as confidential and would not announce it to the press until I received news of its disclosure by Germany.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 419*

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<sup>4</sup> See doc. 161.

## 163

*10 August. Note by the Counsellor of the Embassy in Berlin  
on his conversation with the Ambassador of Great Britain*

SECRET

Note

On 8 August, the British ambassador,  
Henderson, invited me for a talk.

He opened the conversation by expressing his concern over the development of the situation in Danzig. From his approach to this question I got the impression that conversations he had had of late with Secretary of State Weizsäcker, as well as with other Germans, were not without an impact on his judgment. It seemed to me that he accepted German information with a certain dose of faith; I was confirmed in this impression by a certain detail: namely, when I communicated to him a detailed genesis of our last note addressed to the Danzig Senate,<sup>5</sup> Henderson took from his desk the manuscript of a report he had apparently prepared according to these conversations, and made some alterations in it.

Henderson next developed his point of view as follows:

From information in his possession, he knows that Chancellor Hitler has not yet taken any decision on how to settle the problem of Danzig. He might use force to achieve a solution, or proceed by peaceful means. Radical German elements, among whom Forster and Zarske should be numbered, who right now are in Berchtesgaden for consultation with the Chancellor, are pushing the Chancellor to act on impulse. They present the matter in such a way as to make it appear that Poland has aggressive intentions toward Danzig. Under such circumstances, it would be wise to abstain from any action which would provide grist for the radicals' mill, and possibly accelerate Hitler's decision. Henderson thinks that everything possible should be done to make the crisis last until late into the autumn, or even until spring, when the situation will be quite different. In following this idea, Henderson reached the conclusion that it might be desirable to establish a certain diplomatic contact, purely informative, between the Polish Ambassador in Berlin and Secretary of State von Weizsäcker. At present Weizsäcker is substituting for Ribbentrop.

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<sup>5</sup> See doc. 158.

Experience shows that contact with Ribbentrop is not very essential, for Ribbentrop relates to the Chancellor his conversations with diplomatic representatives from memory only, and not too precisely. On the other hand, Weizsäcker is an experienced official, and each conversation with him, in the form of an exact note, is being forwarded to the Chancellor. Here Henderson made the reservation that it is not his intention to advise concrete talks with Weizsäcker about Danzig. He only thinks that through normal diplomatic contact the question could be clarified and thus the tendentious versions presented to Hitler by his entourage could be counteracted. As an example of tendentious informing of the Chancellor by his collaborators, Henderson cited an incident which took place after the occupation of Prague. Upon his arrival in Prague, the Chancellor expressed his wish to pay a hospital visit to injured members of the German minority about whom the German press had reported at length. The Chancellor's entourage faced quite a problem, since such victims did not exist at all. Finally, Hitler received a delegation of 'wounded Germans' whose heads were bandaged *ad hoc*.

To my remark that the German side shows evident ill-will by provoking difficulties in Danzig, obviously striving to increase tension by creating incidents and by conducting a falsification campaign in the press, which accuses the Polish side of aggressive intentions while it strives for conquests, Henderson remarked that German behaviour toward England is far from correct also, but in his opinion the duty of a diplomatic representative is to maintain contact with official factors of the government of the state to which he is accredited. That is why, if the situation does not deteriorate basically, he intends to accept, even this year, an invitation to take part in the Congress of the Party at Nuremberg. He explained the German activity which strives to intensify tension by saying that the Chancellor possibly figures that with strong tension it will be easier for him to settle problems.

St. Lubomirski.  
Counsellor of the Embassy

Berlin, 10 August 1939

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 554–556, PDD 1939/I, doc. 423*



## 164

*14 August. Cable of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
about the declaration in connection with Burckhardt's trip to Germany*

Secret

Berlin Paris London Stockholm Danzig

In connection with Burckhardt's trip to Germany,<sup>6</sup> which has all the traits of a negotiation, I declared today to the English and French ambassadors that the Polish government considered the High Commissioner's behaviour improper, as Mr. Burckhardt is conducting some form of negotiations with the government of the Reich, which does not belong to the League, and with other Powers, undoubtedly about Danzig, behind the back of the Polish government which, given the statute of the Free City and as a member of the League, should be informed of everything first.

I am warning that in the event of any attempt to bargain with our interests, I will take a decisive stand against both Germany and the League and, lastly, against each allied Power that would have put its hand to it.

I am communicating the above as a guideline for your discussions.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 428*

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<sup>6</sup> The High Commissioner of the League of Nations was received by Hitler at Berchtesgaden on 11 August.

## 165

*15 August. Letter of the Ambassador in Berlin  
to the Minister of Foreign Affairs about his conversation  
with the Ambassador of Great Britain*

Berlin, 15 August 1939

Top Secret

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Dear Mr. Minister,

Yesterday afternoon I had a visit from the British Ambassador, who came to share with me his opinions on the political situation.

He remarked first of all that the declaration of the German government of 9 August with regard to Danzig and the reply of the Polish government dated 10 August had resulted in a considerable deterioration in the situation. The Chancellor felt particularly hurt by the last paragraph of the Polish declaration. When Ciano raised the Danzig problem in Salzburg,<sup>7</sup> the German side presented to him the exchange of the declarations in question, stressing that the honor of Germany, as well as that of the Axis, was at stake. Thus the Italian side had been prevented from playing a restraining role in the case of Danzig.

Besides, the argument of Germany's honor made its appearance in the columns of the German press after the conference of Salzburg.

Repeating this version—probably heard from the German side—Ambassador Henderson told me that he is awaiting further explanations on the results of Italian-German conversations from his colleague in Rome.

I may add that I did not fail to clarify to Henderson the very essence of the German declaration and to explain more precisely our reply.

In his further deliberations the British Ambassador gave way to his concern that, if the hitherto absolutely negative line of policy toward Germany is maintained, we will be entangled in a war in a short time. In his opinion, Hitler would not knuckle down even if faced by a coalition reinforced

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<sup>7</sup> Ciano talked with Ribbentrop in Salzburg on 11 August.

by Russia. Since March the parties have not been on speaking terms, while the situation is becoming ever more complicated and the conflict is deepening.

London, the Ambassador told me, took the stand that we should abstain from any conversations with the Reich. Besides, the internal situation in England is such that Chamberlain could do nothing for peace this time, and neither could Mussolini. The Ambassador thinks that, as matters stand now, only France or Poland could take a step toward Germany to save peace.

Sir Nevile thinks that there is just time until the Congress in Nuremberg; then, if Hitler takes a position in his speech, it will be too late.

To quote a characteristic feature of Henderson's deliberations, here is what he said: if after seven months of war it will be necessary to strive for peace, it is better to find a peaceful solution now.

Henderson has the idea, for example, that Poland should declare to the German side that it considers it essential to calm the minds on the German and Polish side first, which would make it possible to demobilize troops in Poland and Germany, and only afterward (without spelling out the time limits) to open conversations to find a solution for Danzig.

In Henderson's opinion, such a declaration would strengthen considerably Poland's position. In accordance with his words, German government circles reduce the Polish-German strife to Danzig only, stressing that Hitler has already given up the Corridor question. Besides, the French Ambassador confirmed to me that Welczek recently made a similar statement to Bonnet.

I cited to both ambassadors totally contradictory reports from the German press, with recently voiced aspirations even mentioning Silesia. Finally Henderson repeated what he previously said to Counsellor Lubomirski: that Secretary of State Weizsäcker told him that he has no contact whatsoever with me.

I replied to the Ambassador that in this case it is the German side that is making demands. I am always at the disposal of the German government if it has anything to communicate to me, while on my part the line of the Polish government is strictly defined.

Recapitulating, I may observe that I noticed that the British Ambassador was visibly upset by the prospect of an armed conflict. I am sure that he will act in London to find some solution to the situation.

For my part I told him that what is causing most concern in international relations is the complete lack of confidence in Hitler's government, as a result

of the bitter experiences of the past. I added that, in my opinion, persuasion is hardly a weapon to be used with Germany.

Besides, of course, I expressed my best intentions to do everything possible to avoid the catastrophe of war.

Although Henderson did not say so, from what he said to Lubomirski it was clear that he is anxious first of all to secure more time.

Coulondre, who was quite calm and composed, told me yesterday more or less the same things.

Respectfully,

Józef Lipski

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 557–559, PDD 1939/I, doc. 432*

## 166

### *16 August. Record of the conversation between the Under Secretary of State and the Ambassador of Great Britain*

*secret.*

Record of the conversation between Minister Arciszewski  
and the English Ambassador on 16 August 1939

The English Ambassador talked with me today about the events of recent days, pointing out that although he had seen Minister Beck almost every day during the past week, he would nevertheless wish to make some of his thoughts more explicit.

In the Ambassador's opinion, the reports that he has received from the Hitler-Burckhardt discussions at Berchtesgaden show that Hitler is showing clear signs of mental imbalance. Hitler's instability indicates that he has fears about the future course of the situation—he is perhaps primarily concerned with his personal prestige in Germany. A man in such a situation is most dangerous, as various *imponderabilia* can affect his decisions in one direction or another. The Ambassador thinks that it is precisely at this critical moment that Poland should be particularly vigilant in order to avoid any incidents, both

in Danzig and in the sphere of minority and press affairs, to which Hitler is pathologically sensitive. In practical terms, the Ambassador thinks that:

1. Poland should strive to come to an understanding during the discussions that are beginning in Danzig, because they could turn out to be a stepping stone to further *détente*.<sup>8</sup>

2. Poland could at this point make full use of Burckhardt's *bons services*. It should be borne in mind that Poland itself had demanded of the Committee in January that Burckhardt not be withdrawn from Danzig and counted on his active role there. If any *détente* is to emerge in Danzig, it is clear that it would be easier for the Senate to make concessions to Burckhardt than directly to the Polish government.

3. All touchy matters should be avoided in the press and in minority issues. The Ambassador agrees entirely that the German press is presently incomparably more violent in its tone than the Polish press, but it should be remembered that as one is dealing with lunatics, the only guarantee of success and victory is balanced cool-headedness. In the area of minority affairs, the Ambassador notes daily repressive measures, such as the liquidation of German dairies and of other German economic organizations.<sup>9</sup> One should not ignore the fact that, one day, Hitler could present a long list of such repressions to English and American public opinion—something that will not fail to make an impression.

4. Finally, the Ambassador turned my attention to the fact that Minister Beck, during a discussion with him, stated in a categorical manner that there could be no question of any settlement of minority affairs between Warsaw and Berlin.

I replied that:

ad 1. Discussions between Mr. Chodacki and Mr. Greiser are to begin in Danzig today. Their course depends entirely on the good intentions of the

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<sup>8</sup> In connection with the dispute about the prerogatives of the Polish customs inspectors, discussions took place in Danzig on 16 and 18 August between the Commissioner General of the Republic of Poland and the President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig. A round of negotiations at a lower level also began, but Danzig representatives were not interested in the success of the negotiations.

<sup>9</sup> This is a reference to German dairy cooperatives. In 1938 their share in Polish exports of butter amounted to 44%.

Senate. Our demands are limited to the maintenance of the full competence of our customs service in Danzig and, on this basis, an understanding would be easy to attain. As I have already pointed out to the Ambassador on many occasions, there are certain limits to our tolerance for Danzig, but we have no intention to approach the issue of the discussions in terms of prestige or in a sharp manner on that account; we are only concerned about protecting our rights.

ad 2. As to Mr. Burckhardt, I declared that it must surely not come as a surprise to the Ambassador that we didn't greet Mr. Burckhardt's escapade with enthusiasm.

Minister Beck certainly must have presented our opinion to the Ambassador about the need to keep in mind the appropriate competences of Mr. Burckhardt. If, in January, we insisted on preserving the High Commissioner's mandate in Danzig, this was only on account of the role he could play in relations between Poland and Danzig, and did not imply that we were thinking about his mediation between Berlin and Warsaw. In any case, we do not wish to attach too much importance to certain of Mr. Burckhardt's inappropriate initiatives during his trip to Berchtesgaden and we expect that he could play a more prominent role than in the last couple of months, one that follows directly from his functions. At this moment, for example, a new and dangerous sensitive issue has emerged in connection with the arrest of our customs inspectors in Danzig and we think that Mr. Burckhardt could take a closer interest in this matter.

ad 3. It is difficult to expect a calmer reaction to events from the Polish press at the moment.

As to the sharper pronouncements that occur from time to time, they do not have the approval of the government, which reacts to them energetically, as is borne out by the quite frequent confiscations of issues. It is difficult to do more in the present situation.

As far as the anti-minority directives are concerned, they arise first of all from concern for state security. The administration has been forced to liquidate a number of purely German economic organisations that were organs of anti-state activity run from Berlin. The administration did not violate the material interests of the German minority and a number of economic organisations, including the dairies, were reopened following their transformation into mixed Polish-German organisations, thus enabling close

monitoring of their activities. Our administration's positive interest in these directives is certainly more important than the fear of ill-disposing a segment of Western public opinion toward us—a possibility mentioned by the English Ambassador.

In conclusion, I declared that we were always concerned not to irritate unnecessarily Hitler's sensibilities and that Poland would certainly take no deliberate steps aimed at provoking Germany.

Upon leaving, the Ambassador said that he shared our views entirely and that we shouldn't, even for a moment, doubt England's absolute solidarity with Poland and that he only felt obliged to share from time to time his opinions and concerns.

Warsaw, 16 August 1939

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 433*

## 167

### *16 August. Letter from the Ambassador in Paris about his conversation with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Paris, 16 August 1939

Coded letter No. 6

Minister Bonnet asked me to come to see him so that he could inform me of the *démarche* which Ambassador Noël, together with General Musse, was to make to you today.

It concerns the demand made by the Soviet government in the military negotiations with France and England that in case of war Soviet troops should be allowed to march through Polish territory and the territory of Romania. With regard to Poland, the Soviet Union would like to secure our assent to the entry of its troops into Eastern Galicia and the Vilnius 'corridor'.

Stressing the strictly secret character of this communiqué, Bonnet asked me to inform you that both he and the Premier are most anxious to reach an agreement with Moscow, and that they are both of the opinion that, taking

into account the strictly secret character of the potential military agreements, we should consider the Soviet proposal favourably.

Since Bonnet only spoke with me informatively, I declared that I would report the above to you and declined to discuss the details, which Bonnet seemed anxious to do. It is hard for me to believe that Bonnet has any doubts about our answer; I rather suspect that he only wants to lay the blame on Poland for the breaking off of the Moscow negotiations. Or perhaps the French and English hope that the Soviet government will not insist on matters concerning Poland and Romania, and that agreement with the Soviet Union will be possible at the expense of the Baltic States.

Sent to: Warsaw, London

Łukasiewicz

*Diplomat in Paris, pp. 309–310; PDD 1939/I, doc. 434*

## 168

*16 August. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassies in London  
and Paris on Minister Ciano's observations*

Warsaw, 16 August 1939

Cipher cable No. 218

Following his return from Salzburg, Ciano was telling members of the diplomatic corps that Italy did not have to fear war, as a potential Polish-German conflict would remain an isolated one and Poland would not receive assistance from France or England.

Please draw the attention of the government to which you are accredited to the harmful nature of the climate thus created and ask if that government, through its representatives in Rome, could take appropriate steps in order to correct such opinions of the Italian government. I do not have in mind a particularly ceremonious form of such a declaration, but merely that the Italians be given a precise explanation of the situation.



Please provide information about the position of the government to which you are accredited with respect to this suggestion.<sup>10</sup>

Sent to Paris, London, c/c Rome Berlin.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 436*

## 169

*17 August. Report of the Ambassador in Berlin  
on his conversations with the Ambassadors of Great Britain  
and France*

Berlin, 17 August 1939

Top secret.

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in *Warsaw*

Today in the afternoon, I had the visit first of the British Ambassador and then of the French Ambassador.

The two ambassadors informed me about conversations they had on 15 August with Secretary of State von Weizsäcker.

Sir Nevile Henderson read to me a long report on his conversation forwarded to Lord Halifax, of which I shall try to give a general outline.

Herr von Weizsäcker, who, as the Ambassador thinks, is working to prevent war, stated that while in his last conversation with the British Ambassador on 4 August he evaluated the situation rather calmly, considering it to be better than it had been at the same time last year as far as peace was

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<sup>10</sup> Ambassador Raczyński wrote on 17 August: 'I carried out the instructions with regard to Cadogan, who stated that the Italians had no grounds for their interpretation. Nonetheless, Cadogan will send instructions to the Ambassador in Rome to dissipate all of Ciano's possible illusions and also for this position to become known among the diplomatic corps'.

concerned, it has since become very serious. According to Weizsäcker, this is due to:

- 1) the Polish ultimatum to Danzig regarding customs inspectors;
- 2) the declaration of the Polish government dated 10 August in reply to the German declaration of 9 August (allegedly, especially the last passage of our reply caused a sharp reaction from the Chancellor); and, finally,
- 3) the alleged mounting coercions perpetrated against the German population in Poland which, according to the Secretary of State, go beyond any measure, reaching crisis proportions.

The British Ambassador replied to these statements by: (1) pointing to the illegal militarization of Danzig, (2) stressing that the Polish government, in the last passage of its declaration of 10 August, only stated that it would consider as an act of aggression any possible intervention of the German government to the detriment of *rights and interests of Poland under the treaty*, and (3) stating that the Polish Ambassador, for his part, had informed him of persecutions of Polish minorities in Germany.

Herr von Weizsäcker further stated that Poland is conducting a suicidal policy, that Russian assistance for Poland in case of war would be of minor value, and that in case of a conflict Germany would enter into an agreement with Russia to the detriment of Poland. Von Weizsäcker observed that he cannot conceive how England can guarantee the irresponsible action of Poland, and expressed the opinion that such a guarantee would not be valid in case Poland caused the conflict.

Sir Nevile observed that Poland is conducting a prudent policy and that each of its steps of a basic character is agreed upon with the British government.

Weizsäcker interrupted, saying that the ultimatum for the Free City of Danzig regarding customs inspectors, as well as the reply to the German declaration of 9 August, had not been agreed upon with the British side.

Sir Nevile firmly stated that England would come to Poland's assistance in case of German aggression. With regard to the British guarantee for Poland on the matter of Danzig, he referred to Lord Halifax's declaration.

Further statements of the Ambassador on the British guarantee for Poland, repeated in the course of this long conversation, were quite explicit and followed the line of our policy.

At a certain point of the report the Ambassador mentioned that he felt that Weizsäcker was making very light of the specific gravity of British military action.

Talking about the prevailing impasse, Weizsäcker remarked that under the present circumstances any step by the German side in order to reduce tension with Poland has become impossible. The Secretary of State also stated that Minister Beck's speech of May rendered difficult the resumption of conversations. Namely, it stated that such conversations could only proceed upon the principles defined in this speech, thus creating a prestige obstacle for Germany.

In conclusion I note that von Weizsäcker was trying to present us as an irresponsible partner; he added that there are only a few men in Poland who have a reasonable concept of the situation, but their position is of no importance.

Henderson got the impression from this conversation that a total impasse now prevails in Polish-German relations, and if the situation continues it will threaten to end in an armed conflict. He fears that, if events are allowed to take their course, then either at Tannenberg<sup>11</sup> or at Nuremberg the Chancellor might go so far that conflict will be inevitable. Henderson's thesis is that the Chancellor is misinformed by his entourage; they do not inform him about Polish arguments, but rather stir him up. That is why Henderson returned to his previous idea of my meeting with Göring and telling him things he might bring to the knowledge of the Chancellor. I recall that in his previous conversation with me (report No. N/52/440/39 dated 15 August) Henderson proposed a formula in which the two partners should return to the *status quo* on Danzig of March, and do their best to appease public opinion in both countries. Only then could conversations be started. I did not conceal from Henderson that with the present German approach such propositions could hardly achieve a positive result. I cited news from the German press, which for the past two days has categorically urged the reunion of Danzig and even of the Corridor with the Reich. Henderson thinks that this is rather an answer to our media hype over East Prussia. Looking for a way to avoid war, he thinks that the invitation to the stag hunt in the autumn sent to him by Göring

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<sup>11</sup> This is a reference to a statue for the commemoration of the German victory over Russian forces in 1914. Hitler was to make a speech during the ceremonies (subsequently cancelled) at Tannenberg on 29 August.

through Scherping, as well as to me, could serve as an occasion to meet the General Field Marshal.

Next I had a visit from French Ambassador Coulondre. Referring to his conversation with Weizsäcker, he called special attention to the fact that the Secretary of State posed the same question to Henderson and to him: namely, would France come to the assistance of Poland in case Poland provoked military action by Germany?

M. Coulondre told me that, reading Weizsäcker's camouflaged thoughts, he declared in an absolutely emphatic way, leaving no room for the slightest doubt, that France would always stand at Poland's side. He stressed that in March French public opinion felt threatened at the very heart of freedom. As a result, the alliance with Poland had been reinforced. M. Coulondre placed this alliance on the level of the 'indissoluble common security of France and Poland'.

M. Coulondre was under the impression that this categorical declaration of his had not only been understood by Weizsäcker but—since the Secretary of State was striving to hamper whatever unpredictable step might be contemplated by the top German factors—he accepted the declaration rather as an argument to be presented to those authorities. Today M. Coulondre already had certain confirmation that his declaration had been circulated further. M. Coulondre is of the opinion, which I share wholeheartedly, that only a determined stand taken by England, France, and Poland can save the peace. Only this can stop Hitler's risky policy. He fears just such reticence as in 1914 paved the way for the outbreak of the war. Even today, in certain German circles the supposition prevails that England would soften in the last moment. The French Ambassador does not believe this; nevertheless, he thinks that such rumors should be denied by the British side.

In connection with this, I remark that I told Henderson that such opinions were repeated to me. They resulted from misinterpretation of certain British probing of the German position. I was referring here to news supplied by an informant of Consul General Chiczewski with regard to this subject (Chiczewski's report No. 3/N/a/62/39 of 12 August 1939).

Henderson was positive here, stating that he never met with a shadow of a doubt on the part of competent German factors as to England's determination to fulfill its obligations toward its allies.

Returning to Coulondre's conversation with the Secretary of State, I stress that Weizsäcker shared the Ambassador's opinion that the war would only turn to the advantage of 'Trotsky', as Coulondre put it.

I am taking the liberty of recalling to you that last year during the Czech crisis Weizsäcker was one of the German diplomats who did everything possible to avoid war. I therefore do not doubt that he is now following the same line. According to Coulondre's information, Ambassador Welczek in Paris and Count Schulenburg in Moscow also strongly recommend prudence to the German government.

Finally, Coulondre evaluates the result of the conference at Salzburg thus: that Ciano did not yet take on any obligation, leaving the final word to Mussolini and a possibility to act further for peace. Ambassador Attolico left Salzburg for Rome and has not yet returned to Berlin.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

Józef Lipski

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 559–562; PDD 1939/I, doc. 440*

## 170

*18 August. Letter of the Ambassador in Berlin  
to the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
about a possible meeting with Göring and minority problems*

Berlin, 18 August 1939

Top secret.

Dear Mr. Minister,

I would like to take up in a more concrete way a number of problems in connection with my last reports:

1) I would like to know whether you consider it desirable in principle that I should try to meet Göring.

I am enclosing a copy of an invitation I received for stag hunting in the autumn,<sup>12</sup> which might make it easier for me to renew, even at present, my contact with Göring. In case you consider such a conversation to be desirable, I would like to have, under the present circumstances, appropriate instructions as to the subjects I should take up.

For my part, I think that reference could be made in a general way to intentions wrongly attributed to Poland and to mendacious propaganda. Poland's consistent policy should be underlined, with a slight hint to Russia, stressing that we are going to fight if aggression takes place. And inquire in whose interest this European war would be waged.

Such a conversation with Göring, if it could take place at all, would rather be aimed at presenting to Hitler, through Göring, our determined, but not aggressive, standpoint.<sup>13</sup>

2) At present, the worst tension in Polish-German relations appears on the sector of minorities. This tide is clearly reaching a crescendo. Bearing in mind that this sector, from the international angle, is particularly inconvenient for us, in addition because of other minority problems in Poland besides the German, I am trying to do my best to supply documentary proof about the persecutions of our minorities in Germany. Special files, containing more than 600 incidents, were recently handed to the British and French embassies. Nevertheless, even in a man so devoted to us as Coulondre, I can detect anxiety. He fears that our minorities measures may cause a Polish-German conflict, judging that sector to be particularly exposed.

Observing these matters from Berlin, as well as from the Polish territory, I came to the conclusion that coordination is indispensable between our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the activities of our local administration.

3) I am taking the liberty of suggesting that it might be desirable, even prior to Tannenberg and Nuremberg,<sup>14</sup> to issue some official declaration explaining that the loyal German minority has nothing to fear and can live peacefully in Poland, developing its own culture, while anti-Polish incidents and organizations created for diversion will be persecuted with absolute

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<sup>12</sup> Not included in this publication.

<sup>13</sup> On 19 August, Józef Beck sent to the Embassy in Berlin the cipher: 'I consider it advisable to accept Göring's invitation. Please send the exact date of the hunt by telegraph—or possibly come to Warsaw to discuss instructions for the talks'.

<sup>14</sup> This is a reference to the planned NSDAP party meeting. See footnote 11 p. 355.

determination. I think that such a declaration could be issued by the Prime Minister or the Minister of the Interior to a representative of the German minorities in Poland—one most digestible for us.

4) Yesterday invitations for Nuremberg arrived. The deadline for reply is fixed at 26 August.

You would therefore oblige me by sending me a decision in connection with my reports No. N/52/442/39 of 15 August and No. N/52/443/39 of 16 August.

Respectfully,

Józef Lipski

*Diplomat in Berlin, pp. 563–564; PDD 1939/I, doc. 442*

## 171

*20 August. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassies in London, Paris and Moscow  
on the possibility of the Red Army's entry into Polish territory*

Warsaw, 20 August at 5:00 A.M.

Cipher cable No. 224

Secret.

The Ambassadors of France and England turned to me as a result of the French-English-Soviet staff negotiations, during which the Soviets demanded the possibility of coming into contact with the German army in Pomerania, the Suwałki area and in the Eastern Galicia region. The English and French *démarche* supported this position.

I replied that it was unacceptable that these states should be debating about the military use of the territory of another sovereign state. Poland is not tied to the Soviets by any military accords and the Polish government has no intention of concluding such an accord.

The French Ambassador proposed that they would tell the Soviets that the Polish government refused to discuss the matter or that the French

government did not take up a formal *démarche*, being certain of a negative response.

I leave the matter of answering the Soviets to the discretion of France and England, with the reservation that their response must not provide any ground for misunderstandings.

Sent to London Paris Moscow

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 447*

## 172

*22 August. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassies in London and Paris in connection  
with the German-Soviet Pact*

Warsaw, 22 August 1939 at 4:00 A.M.

Cipher cable No. 227

In connection with the announcement of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact, I took the following position with respect to the Ambassadors of France and England: The Polish government has never believed in the Soviets' sincere intention to become fully involved in the currently emerging conflict with Germany. Therefore, the Polish government does not consider that the material situation has changed significantly.

Today's *communiqués* about the intended non-aggression pact show irrefutably that the Soviet government has for a long time been playing a double game, consciously striving to scuttle the negotiations with Paris and England; therefore our negative stance about the Soviet troops' marching through Poland cannot result in burdening us with responsibility for the situation that has emerged. Given the psychological significance of today's events, I believe that the only response is to reiterate the firm position of England, France and Poland. The Germans will no doubt meet with the same difficulties in their negotiations with the Soviets, and the German-Soviet pact will most certainly lead to the further breakdown of Hitler's ideology, the



Anti-Comintern Pact, and the mood in the Soviet Union. In addition, it creates a new situation in the Far East.

Under the circumstances, a lot depends on the decisive attitude of the governments and the press of our three countries. Should the need arise, I agree to the publication of the last phase of the Moscow negotiations, taking full responsibility for the approach of our press and public opinion.

I consider immediate consultations by Tuesday night with England and France to be indispensable to safeguard a solidary disposition of the press.

Sent to London Paris, c/c to Bucharest Rome

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 451*

## 173

*22 August. Cable from the Ambassador in London in connection  
with the German-Soviet pact*

London, 22 August 1939

Received on 23 August 1939 at 12:45 A.M.

Mr. Raczyński to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw

No. 169

I received the following clarifications about the German-Soviet non-aggression pact from an unofficial, but fairly serious, source:

I. The understanding was achieved with the active participation of Italian diplomacy;

II. At its basis lies a mutual obligation not to interfere in the internal affairs of the other party; in particular, the Germans won't interfere in the Ukrainian question;

III. Latvia, Estonia and Finland become a part of the Soviet sphere of interests;

IV. The Germans leave Bulgaria to Turkish influence (they won't encourage its revisionist tendencies?);

V. The old Anti-Comintern Pact loses its anti-Soviet edge from now on.

Sent to Warsaw, Berlin, Paris, Rome.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 454*

## 174

*23 August. Circular note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in connection with the German-Soviet pact*

Warsaw, 23 August 1939

Cipher cable No. 229 (circular)

While commenting on the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, please say that:

I. It does not alter Poland's actual situation in the least, as Poland has never expected any assistance from the Soviets.

II. It does not change Poland's policy in the slightest and does not affect its relations with its allies.

III. It constitutes evidence of the double game of the Soviets, who are most certainly avoiding full involvement on the side of any group of bourgeois states, while readily awaiting the possibility of a European war.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 457*

## 175

*23 August. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassy in London on possible Polish-Soviet  
military cooperation*

Warsaw, 23 August 1939

Cipher cable No. 230

Secret

Given the new situation created by Ribbentrop's departure for Moscow, the French and English ambassadors, in a repeated *démarche* aimed at achieving a tactical reversal of the situation, expressed the desire of their governments to reopen military discussions so as to limit the possibility and the scope of a German-Soviet accord. Hence we were asked again for our silent acceptance for the military negotiators in Moscow to express the conviction that in the event of a war, Polish-Soviet military cooperation is not out of the question.

I declared that the Polish government did not believe in the effectiveness of these tactical interventions, but we worked out a formula to make the situation of the French-English delegation easier. With this I repeated, for internal use, our reservations about Soviet troops marching through Poland.

The formula would be that 'the French and English staffs are certain that, in the event of common action against aggressors, cooperation between the USSR and Poland, on conditions that remain to be defined, cannot be ruled out. Given this, the staffs consider it necessary to conduct an analysis of all hypotheses with the Soviet staff.'

I took the opportunity to declare forcefully once again that I was not against this formula solely to facilitate the tactic, whereas our fundamental position with regard to the USSR is final and unchanged.<sup>15</sup> I reiterated once

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<sup>15</sup> In a cipher cable of 24 August, Beck instructed Polish ambassadors in London and Paris to 'submit a declaration to the government to which you are accredited that I agreed to the use by the English-French negotiators of the known formula only in order to give an indication of good will and to tactically facilitate the situation of the delegation. My agreement does not change in the least our fundamental position in this matter'.

again the indecency of the Soviets' discussing our affairs with France and England without turning to us.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 458*

## 176

*23 August. Cable from the Ambassador in London  
on his conversation with Great Britain's Foreign Secretary*

London, 23 August 1939

Received on 23 August at 11:55 P.M.

Mr. Raczynski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
i n W a r s a w .

No. 170

Secret

I had a conversation with Halifax, who gave me the impression that the London government had decided, without going back on its obligations, to seek a compromise once again. This mood seems to be rooted first of all in a pessimistic assessment of the Soviets' true intentions based on information obtained from various sources. This assessment is the reason why Halifax, without much conviction, as he told me, agreed to support the French *démarche* with regard to us about changing our position concerning Soviet demands.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, Halifax has some hope that we will renew our direct contacts with Berlin through the *bons offices* of the Italians, and fears war in the coming days should the above diplomatic steps not be taken.

As for the political treaty with us, he showed an inclination to delay matters, emphasising that some political points still remained to be agreed on. At the same time, he made references to yesterday's energetic *communiqué* for the press.

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<sup>16</sup> See doc. 175.

In my response, which I gave 'in my own name', I stated that I also had no illusions about the Soviets' ethics and plans. I am convinced, however, that the Soviet accord with the Germans cannot form a basis for sincere friendship, and even less so for a lasting one. It is a result, on the Soviet side, of fear combined with a desire for gains. If the Western powers take a courageous stand and go to war side by side with us should the need arise, the Soviets (who would still make political gains) will not 'compromise themselves together with the Germans'. A game will be lost, but not the rubber, and the situation will be saved. But if Poland had to defend itself alone, and if a 'diplomatic surrender' were to take place, the German-Soviet collusion will be played out in full to the great detriment of France and England, which will then be directly threatened. In the present situation, yesterday's declaration of the London government for the press is not sufficient to create a 'platform of strength' that even the British government considers indispensable for either war or any kind of negotiations.

It is, therefore, all the more necessary to finalise our mutual assistance agreement as the clearest and most emphatic response to the war-of-nerves method.

Halifax listened to the above reasoning as if approvingly and promised to attend to the treaty and to give me an answer as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, in order to save time and also on account of Kulski,<sup>17</sup> who has to return to Warsaw soon, I proposed that legal experts move the matter of the treaty's final wording forward.

Sent to: Warsaw, Paris

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 459*

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<sup>17</sup> The Legal Counsellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Polish negotiator and author of the Polish-British agreement of 25 August 1939.

## 177

*24 August. Report of the Ambassador in London  
on his conversation with Great Britain's Foreign Secretary*

London, 24 August 1939

TOP SECRET

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
i n W a r s a w .

Discussion with Lord Halifax on 23 August

In a cable of 23 August,<sup>18</sup> I gave the most important passages from Lord Halifax' statements during our discussion on that day and even summarised the arguments that I had used in order to reinforce his conviction on the need for redoubled firmness in today's dangerous situation and for a swift signing of the definite agreement on mutual assistance. Below, I take the liberty to provide more details reflecting the mood of our discussion:

Lord Halifax struck me with a certain desperation, or at least internal doubt. He told me that information from 'various sources' pointed to worrisome Soviet intentions and that in this state of affairs it had to be recognised that the situation had seriously changed for the worse. Prime Minister Daladier has convinced Lord Halifax to support yet another French *démarche* calling on us to change our stance in the matter of the march of Russian troops through our territory. Lord Halifax admits, however, that he has agreed to support this intervention only half-heartedly. At this point I said that Lord Halifax' doubts were most certainly and fully justified, and that we chasing illusions could only lead to bitter disillusionment. It seems obvious that the Soviets, by demanding the right for their troops to march through certain specific regions, which they had probably also discussed with Germany, were only seeking a way to gain the agreement of both sides and also, through the Western powers, of the owner itself, for Russia's interference in Poland's affairs.

Then, as I summarised it in the cipher cable of 23 August, I expressed the conviction that whatever could be said about the undisclosed clauses of the Soviet-German accord, it seemed obvious that fear of the Third Reich's dynamism played a vital role on the part of the Soviets alongside their desire

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<sup>18</sup> See doc. 176.

for gains. The accord safeguards the Soviets' security and unquestionable 'gains', both in the event of some international conference and in the case of a localised war. In case of a generalised war, however, in which Poland would be joined by its Western allies, the Soviets' sole interest would be to maintain their neutrality and it is unthinkable that they would be eager to assist Germany.

I then said that although Poland's situation was not good and did not leave us freedom to choose a course of action, the situation of France and England—contrary to appearances—was not much better. The safest course for these countries is firmness. If they do not follow it, they are running the risk that Soviet-German cooperation could become truly close, thus giving Germany the freedom at the appropriate moment (and soon at that) to settle accounts with France.

Lord Halifax listened very attentively to my reasoning—here and there he voiced his observations, but generally he seemed to share my view. This did not prevent him, in a different part of the discussion (which I am summarising hastily and rather chaotically), from placing great emphasis on various aspects of coming to an understanding with Germany. As Lord Halifax told me he had communicated all these points to you through Ambassador Kennard, I only mentioned them in one sentence in my cable.

For the record, I will repeat them here in some detail: Lord Halifax is of the opinion that the consideration that exacerbates relations more than anything else is the claim that one nation's compatriots are discriminated against in the other country. This is the case here too, despite the fact that clearly the German side is deliberately pursuing an anti-Polish campaign, magnifying every incident described, if not outright making it up. For this reason, Lord Halifax—wishing the Polish government to re-establish, insofar as this is possible, direct contacts with the German government—thinks that the subject of the talks could be, first of all, *détente* on the above-mentioned minority front.

As to political matters, Lord Halifax received indications from Berlin only last Monday that—even now—Chancellor Hitler would not rule out discussions on the basis of his March proposals.<sup>x</sup>

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<sup>x</sup> In his speech to the House of Commons today, Prime Minister Chamberlain also carefully touched upon this point...

On the other hand, Mussolini—in response to the warning sent to him by the English government (last Saturday) to the effect that, should the need arise, England and France, despite all their friendly sentiments for Italy, would stand by Poland without delay—communicated on Tuesday night that he was aware of this, but, at the same time, he also knew that it was still possible to avert war. This, however, would require that Poland establish direct contact with Germany, and in the next few days, at that...

I didn't initiate any discussions on this subject. I only mentioned that England must appreciate the element of power in Poland's position and in its decision to defend its legitimate rights.

At the end of the discussion, I once more and very firmly returned to the matter of our political accord as a symbol of Polish-English cooperation, military if need be, a symbol equally understandable for our countries, our opponents and third countries. Whereas, during the first part of the discussion, Lord Halifax pointed to procedural difficulties, the need to agree on a few more points, and then to the need to obtain the approval of the so-called 'inner Cabinet' and gave me to understand that the entire procedure could be protracted, toward the end of the discussion he showed a more animated desire to push the matter forward.<sup>xx</sup>

Today's debate in the House of Commons.

I described this debate in today's cable to you.<sup>19</sup> I said that the Prime Minister's speech was firm, although it contained conciliatory elements. I meant the recurring allusions in the speech—fully understandable only to insiders—to Lord Halifax' statements made at his meeting with me yesterday. It is clear that the Prime Minister spares no effort in order to avert war at the last minute, while not showing weakness. I am inclined to ascribe to his

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<sup>19</sup> See doc. 178.

<sup>xx</sup> Lord Halifax's good intentions on this point were manifested during this afternoon's talk between Director Kulski and his counterpart Mr. Fitzmaurice that contributed to the spelling out of both side's positions. Besides this, I found an echo of my conversation with Lord Halifax in today's speech by the Prime Minister, in which Mr. Chamberlain mentioned the treaties of 'mutual assistance being in the finishing stages' (with us and probably with Turkey) and emphasised once again that irrespective of this, the mutual obligations of England and its friends are already today fully binding.



initiative today's appeal from President Roosevelt to the King of Italy.<sup>20</sup> The speeches of representatives of the opposition were rather poor, which struck me the more as, until now, on similar occasions they were rather more belligerent than Mr. Chamberlain. The speeches of other deputies, with the exception of Eden, were downright poor. Despite this, the portrayal of the parliamentary debate in today's evening press and on the radio was good and gave the impression that the society was ready for any eventuality.

(Edward Raczyński)  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 460*

## 178

*24 August. Cable from the Ambassador in London  
about the speech of the Prime Minister of Great Britain*

London, 24 August 1939

Warsaw cipher cable No. 174

Today's speech of the Prime Minister in Parliament was judged as resolute in tone, although it contained conciliatory accents with regard to Germany. The pronouncements of the opposition leaders were striking for their solidarity with the government at a time of danger and, at the same time, betrayed a certain disorientation caused by the Soviet-German accord. The mood in the House of Commons is generally good, although not characterised by total energy and decisiveness. The tone of the press is firm.

Raczyński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 461*

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<sup>20</sup> This is a reference to the appeal of President Roosevelt directed to King Vittorio Emanuele III for Mussolini to mediate in the Polish-German dispute.

## 179

*25 August. Circular note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
in connection with the resolution of the Danzig Senate*

Warsaw, 25 August at 5:00 A.M.

Cipher cable No. 236. (circular)

On 24 August, the Danzig Senate informed our Commissariat General verbally that it had resolved to name Forster 'Head of State'. In response, the Commissariat declared that the Polish government saw no legal basis for such a function in the Free City of Danzig and reserves its position. In addition, the Polish government warns the authorities of the Free City of Danzig that a policy of *faits accomplis* could have dangerous consequences, for which Danzig will be responsible.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 469*

## 180

*25 August. Agreement on Mutual Assistance signed between  
the Governments of the United Kingdom and Poland*

Anglo-Polish Agreement of Mutual Assistance

London, 25 August 1939

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Polish Government,

Desiring to place on a permanent basis the collaboration between their respective countries resulting from the assurances of mutual assistance of a defensive character which they have already exchanged;

Have resolved to conclude an Agreement for that purpose and have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

The Rt. Hon. Viscount Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs;

The Polish Government:

His Excellency Count Edward Raczynski, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Polish Republic in London;

Who, having exchanged their Full Powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions:

#### ARTICLE 1

Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of aggression by the latter against that Contracting Party, the other Contracting Party will at once give the Contracting Party engaged in hostilities all the support and assistance in its power.

#### ARTICLE 2

1) The provisions of Article 1 will also apply in the event of any action by a European Power which clearly threatened, directly or indirectly, the independence of one of the Contracting Parties, and was of such a nature that the Party in question considered it vital to resist it with its armed forces.

2) Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of action by that Power which threatened the independence or neutrality of another European State in such a way as to constitute a clear menace to the security of that Contracting Party, the provisions of Article 1 will apply, without prejudice, however, to the rights of the other European State concerned.

#### ARTICLE 3

Should a European power attempt to undermine the independence of one of the Contracting Parties by process of economic penetration or in any other way, the Contracting Parties will support each other in resistance to such attempts. Should the European Power concerned thereupon embark on hostilities against one of the Contracting Parties the provisions of Article 1 will apply.

## ARTICLE 4

The methods of applying the undertakings of mutual assistance provided for by the present Agreement are established between the competent naval, military and air authorities of the Contracting Parties.

## ARTICLE 5

Without prejudice to the foregoing undertakings of the Contracting Parties to give each other mutual support and assistance immediately on the outbreak of hostilities, they will exchange complete and speedy information concerning any development which might threaten their independence and, in particular, concerning any development which threatened to call the said undertakings into operation.

## ARTICLE 6

1) The Contracting Parties will communicate to each other the terms of any undertakings of assistance against aggression which they have already given or may in future give to other States.

2) Should either of the Contracting Parties intend to give such an undertaking after the coming into force of the present Agreement, the other Contracting Party shall, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the Agreement, be informed thereof.

3) Any new undertaking which the Contracting Parties may enter into in future shall neither limit their obligations under the present Agreement nor indirectly create new obligations between the Contracting Party not participating in these undertakings and the third State concerned.

## ARTICLE 7

Should the Contracting Parties be engaged in hostilities in consequence of the application of the present Agreement, they will not conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.

## ARTICLE 8

1) The present Agreement shall remain in force for a period of five years.

2) Unless denounced six months before the expiry of this period it shall continue in force, each Contracting Party having thereafter the right to denounce it at any time by giving six months' notice to that effect.

3) The present Agreement shall come into force on signature.

In faith whereof the above-named Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Agreement and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done in English in duplicate, at London, 25 August 1939. A Polish text shall subsequently be agreed upon between the Contracting Parties and both texts will then be authentic.

(L.S.) HALIFAX  
(L.S.) EDWARD RACZYNSKI

*PBP, pp. 188–190*

## 181

### *25 August. Secret Protocol<sup>21</sup> to the Agreement on Mutual Assistance signed between the Governments of the United Kingdom and Poland*

The Polish Government and Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are agreed upon the following interpretation of the Agreement of Mutual Assistance signed this day as alone authentic and binding:

1. (A) By the expression 'European Power' employed in the Agreement is to be understood Germany.

(B) In the event to action within the meaning of Articles 1 or 2 of the Agreement by a European power other than Germany, the contracting parties will consult together on the measures to be taken in common.

2. (A) The two Governments will from time to time determine by mutual agreement hypothetical cases of action by Germany, coming within the ambit of Article 2 of the Agreement.

(B) Until such time as the two Governments have agreed to modify the following provisions of this paragraph they will consider: that the case

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<sup>21</sup> Not published until April 1945.

contemplated by Paragraph 1 of Article 2 of the Agreement is that of the Free City of Danzig; and that the cases contemplated by Paragraph 2 of Article 2 are Belgium, Holland and Lithuania.

(C) Latvia and Estonia shall be regarded by the two Governments as included in the list of countries contemplated by paragraph 2 of Article 2 from the moment that an undertaking of mutual assistance between the United Kingdom and a third State, covering these two countries enters into force.

(D) As regards Romania, the Government of the United Kingdom refers to the guarantee which it has given to that country; and the Polish Government refers to the reciprocal undertakings of the Romano-Polish Alliance, which Poland has never regarded as incompatible with its traditional friendship for Hungary.

3. The undertakings mentioned in Article 6 of the Agreement, should they be entered into by one of the contracting parties with a third state, would of necessity be so framed that their execution should at no time prejudice either the sovereignty or territorial inviolability of the other contracting party.

4. The present protocol constitutes an integral part of the Agreement signed today, scope of which does not exceed it.

In faith whereof the undersigned, being duly authorised, have signed the present protocol.

Done in English in duplicate at London, 25 August 1939. The Polish text will subsequently be agreed upon between the contracting parties, and both will then be authentic.

Signed: Halifax.  
Signed: Edward Raczyński.

*PBP, pp. 188–192*

## 182

*26 August. Circular note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
about his conversation with the Ambassador of the USSR*

Warsaw, 26 August 1939

Cipher cable No. 240 (circular)

Sharonov's call on me yesterday, under the guise of resolving a border incident of secondary importance, was presumably aimed at showing that, despite the Soviet-German pact, relations between Moscow and Warsaw remained unchanged.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 477*

## 183

*27 August. Cable of the Under Secretary of State  
to the Embassy in Berlin on his conversation  
with the Ambassador of France*

Warsaw, 27 August 1939

Cipher cable No. 248

Secret

The Ambassador of France, following the Chancellor's talk with Henderson, has—acting on instructions from the Quai d'Orsay—submitted to me a proposal of an exchange of populations between Poland and Germany.

Minister Beck is of the opinion that this thought deserves to be considered and should not be rejected outright.

I answered Noël in this vein, adding that we would not make a similar official *démarche* with regard to Germany ourselves, but I did not discourage

any sounding attempts by third parties. In case of questions, please adopt the same position, and you can propagate this thought should you have a chance to do so by discreet and appropriate measures.

Sent to Berlin, c/c Paris London.

Szembek

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 482*

## 184

*28 August. Cable from the Ambassador in London  
on his conversation with the British Foreign Secretary*

London, 28 August 1939

Warsaw cipher cable No. 182

Paris       "       "       "

Re: Personal cipher cable No. 3

Lord Halifax summoned me today at 2:30 P.M. to inform me of the substance of the English answer to Hitler. He asked that I refrain from telegraphing it, as he was communicating it to you through Kennard along with a special message (which he also read to me). As I have feared, the answer shows the hand of the 'appeasers', whose influence has been maintained. Halifax asked about my impression.

I avoided answering and pointed out that the answer would be given in Warsaw. I limited myself to pointing out that the term 'fundamental interests' seems flexible.

Halifax stressed the necessity not to slam the door on direct negotiations, in keeping with the answer to President Roosevelt. The responsibility is all the greater in view of—as information coming from Berlin suggest—certain hesitations. The point is to maintain the negotiations at a level of reasonable claims (or a word of similar meaning). I answered that it was difficult to reconcile such an expression with Hitler's disclosed demands.

According to the clarifications given this morning to the Counsellor of the Embassy, the readiness for further talks in case of a compromise between



Poland and Germany reflected in the English answer was declared with Italy in mind—to encourage it to take earnest steps for peace.

From a private source I have learnt that the mysterious guest from Germany mentioned yesterday by the press is supposedly Göring's brother-in-law (?)<sup>22</sup> on a personal mission from Hitler with declarations of friendship towards England. As these declarations are said to make no mention of the settlement of the 'Polish question', the guest was sent home but might return with more exhaustive instructions.

Today the French Ambassador received a solemn *démenti* of this information from Halifax.

Raczyński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 485*

## 185

*28 August. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassy in London about the conversation  
with the Ambassador of Great Britain*

Warsaw, 28 August 1939

Cipher cable No. 260

Secret.

The British ambassador has consulted me on the question of an answer to Mr. Hitler. I agreed to inform the German Government that Poland was ready to negotiate, and asked him to define what the English Government understood by the concept of 'international guarantee'.

Please treat the entire question of the consultation as strictly confidential.

Beck

*PWB, doc. 96; PDD 1939/I, doc. 486*

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<sup>22</sup> See doc. 197.

## 186

*28 August. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in Paris on the Polish position with respect to talks with Germany*

Warsaw, 28 August 1939

Cipher cable No. 254.

Secret    Received from Paris 145 and 147

Please extend words of gratitude for informing us of the answer given to Hitler. Having equally sincere and peaceful intentions as the French government, the Polish government is convinced that only resolve and boldness in military decisions and calm in diplomatic talks can in the present crisis calm down the situation. Our known basic points in any *possible* agreement *are* ...not, and will not be, the subject of any compromise.

Sent to Paris, c/c London.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 488*

## 187

*29 August. Declaration of the Under Secretary of State for the Ambassadors of France and Great Britain on the subject of general mobilisation*

*Minister Szembek's Declaration*

Please declare to the allied ambassadors:

- 1) The concentration of German troops along the Polish border is growing continually.
- 2) The entry of German troops to Slovakia constitutes a further threat to the Polish State.
- 3) Border incidents and the Reich's aggressive actions on the territory of the Free City of Danzig leave no room for doubt about the Reich's aggressive intentions.

4) The Polish government has received from the most credible sources, including the government of Great Britain, clear warnings of a German intention to strike against Poland by surprise in the next few days.

5) In those conditions, and at the motion of the government, the President of the Republic of Poland has decreed a general mobilisation.<sup>23</sup>

6) The general mobilisation is only complementary to the military directives already issued, which have placed three quarters of the Polish Army in combat readiness.

7) The imposition of martial law is not intended. Directives usually accompanying general mobilisation will be kept to a minimum.

8) Poland's policy remains unchanged.

Warsaw, 29 August 1939

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 492*

## 188

### *29 August. Circular note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the German propaganda campaign*

Warsaw, 29 August 1939

Cipher cable No. 259

Please inform officially the government to which you are accredited, and make the broadest possible use in the press, of the PAT *communiqué* containing a protest against the slanderous German press and diplomatic campaign on the subject of the alleged discrimination against the German minority in Poland. The aim of our actions should be to overcome this campaign.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 493*

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<sup>23</sup> The announcement of these directives was deferred at the request of both ambassadors. See doc. 189.

## 189

*30 August. Circular note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
on mobilisation directives*

Warsaw, 30 August 1939

Cipher cable No. 269

The mobilisation directives that we deferred yesterday in order not to hamper the action in Berlin,<sup>24</sup> were introduced today. Please stress that despite its ceremonious name, this mobilisation is, in reality, a directive of a lesser scope than the earlier placing of units on a war footing. Given the mobilisation procedure, publication through posters will be used.

Beck

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 500*

## 190

*30 August. Unsigned note  
about the Polish-British exchange of declarations*

On 30 August 1939, the Secretary of the British Embassy, Mr. Hankey, telephoned the Minister's *Chef de Cabinet* (at 6:15 P.M.):

Chamberlain has addressed a message to Hitler: (1) the German note is being considered carefully, (2) a reply will be given late in the afternoon, and (3) he asks that all instructions be given to avoid incidents.

Chamberlain is directing the same appeal as in point 3 to the Polish government.

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<sup>24</sup> This took place at the request of the ambassadors of Great Britain and France. In another circular note, Minister Beck instructed Polish agencies: 'Please do not magnify the fact itself, as the scope of today's mobilisation is smaller than the call-ups until now. Nonetheless, with the execution of today's decree, the entire armed forces of the Republic will be on alert, which is a necessity given the serious nature of the situation. Diplomatic agencies are informing their respective consulates'. PDD 1939/I, doc. 501.

Declaration of the Minister's *Chef de Cabinet* to the Counsellor of the British Embassy, Mr. Norton, at 7:00 P.M.:

„1) Le gouvernement britannique peut être entièrement rassuré que la provocation d'incidents n'est nullement dans les intentions du Gouvernement polonais. Quant à l'Allemagne – nous signalons au Gouvernement britannique la situation à Dantzig qui devient de plus en plus intolérable.

2) Le Gouvernement polonais exprime sa conviction que le Gouvernement britannique ne prendra aucune attitude dans le domaine des problèmes intéressant la Pologne, sans avoir consulté le Gouvernement polonais.”

30 August 1939

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 502*

## 191

### *31 August. Unsigned note on the declaration of the Secretary of the Embassy of Great Britain*

31 August at 8:00 A.M.

Mr. Hankey's communication to the Minister's *Chef de Cabinet*:

The first part of Hitler's answer contains a presentation of the situation in keeping with the German thesis, giving an entirely false picture. On the other hand, the important part of the answer is the acceptance of the proposal for direct discussions with Poland, the acceptance of the principle of international guarantees and a declaration that Germany wishes to respect Poland's vital interests.

The English government thinks it would not be worthwhile to engage in a detailed critique of the first part of the German answer. HMG believes that the Polish government views it equally critically as the English government does. HMG made, however, some clear reservations about individual demands raised by the German government in its note. Moreover, one point was rejected a *limine*, namely that a Polish representative come to Berlin on 30 August.

Presumably, Germany is already working on the draft of an agreement with Poland that they are to communicate to England without delay. There will then be time to think about where and when contact will be made and negotiations conducted.

Colonel Beck will see from the British answer to the German note that HMG proposes a military standstill for the time of the discussions. HMG thinks that the Polish government has no objections in this regard.

HMG is awaiting urgent information about the position of the Polish government, as HMG has been empowered to declare that the Polish government is ready to negotiate with Germany.

HMG hopes that insofar as the methods and general arrangements will be agreed upon, the Polish government will be ready to take up negotiations without delay.

HMG thinks it very important, given the situation in Germany and the situation among world public opinion, that—as long as Germany is willing to negotiate—it should be offered no opportunity to shift responsibility onto Poland.

It is emphasised that HGM had expressed very clearly to Mr. Hitler that it would fulfil its obligations and that there were no misunderstandings on this point.

Poland's position is presently entirely different from that of March, because it now has the British guarantee on the one hand and the promise of international guarantees for every new settlement of the matter on the basis advised by HMG on the other.

A refusal to negotiate will reinforce in Germany those circles that are striving towards war and will make it possible for Hitler to shift the responsibility onto Poland.

The Embassy received the following dispatch:

The German government is working on a project for resolving the dispute. In light of this project and the further course of events, a position will be taken about the time and place for the proposed negotiations.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 506*

## 192

*31 August. Cable from the Ambassador in Berlin  
on information from the Ambassador of Great Britain*

Berlin, 31 August 1939

Received on 31 August 1939 at 10:55 A.M.

Mr. Lipski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

Secret: No. 243

According to information from Henderson, German conditions prepared for the Polish plenipotentiary envoy are:

I. A demilitarised Danzig returns to Germany;

II. Gdynia remains in Poland;

III. A plebiscite is to be held in the corridor, within one year, with its southern boundary: Marienburg, Grudziądz, Bydgoszcz, Schönlanke. The plebiscite to be held on the basis of the population of 1919. Absolute majority to be decisive;

IV. Plebiscite Commission: England, Italy, France, Russia.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 508*

## 193

*31 August. Cable from the Ambassador in Berlin about  
his conversation with the Ambassador of France*

Berlin, 31 August 1939

Received on 31 August 1939 at 11:45 A.M.

Secret

Mr. Lipski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

No. 242

M. Coulondre has told me that Sir Nevile Henderson's information of Germany's intention to wait only until noon of 31 August, originated from

M. von Ribbentrop's entourage. M. Coulondre believes that in the last resort we could inform the German Government after noon on the lines of our answer to President Roosevelt and to the British Government that the Polish Embassy in Berlin was always at the German Government's disposition. It would be a peace gesture.

Obviously such a step could be capitalised upon by the German Government for propaganda purposes to demonstrate our docility.

*PWB, doc. 109; PDD 1939/I, doc. 510*

## 194

*31 August. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Ambassador in Berlin for the conversation  
with the German Minister of Foreign Affairs  
or Secretary of State*

Cable to the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Berlin.

With reference to your reports, please request an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs or the Secretary of State, and inform him as follows: Last night the Polish Government was informed by the British Government of an exchange of views with the Reich Government as to a possibility of direct negotiations between the Polish and the German Governments.<sup>x</sup>

The Polish Government is favourably considering the British Government's suggestion, and will make it a formal reply on the subject during the next few hours at the latest.

End of declaration for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The following passage is for your information:

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<sup>x</sup> In addition, the Ambassador was informed that the term 'agreement' is understood as 'coming to an understanding', and should, therefore, be translated rather as *Verständigung*, not *Vereinbarung*. The Ambassador was further instructed, given his call on the A.A. (in keeping with instructions), not to insist on a particularly swift meeting.



Please do not conduct any material discussions and, should the other side raise any specific demands, either verbally or in writing, please say that you are not empowered to accept or discuss them and that you must turn to your government for further instructions.

*Sent by telephone to Berlin on 31 August at 12:40 P.M. Received by Mr. Karol Kraczkiewicz. 31/8 MŁ*

*PWB, doc. 110; PDD 1939/I, doc. 511*

## 195

### *31 August. Reply of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the English Government's inquiry about the possibility of negotiations with the German Government*

*One copy was given by the Minister to Ambassador Kennard at 12:00 A.M. 31/8. At 1:00 P.M., following the Minister's telephone conversation with Ambassador Noël, I received Mr. Gauquié, to whom I dictated the following declaration in French. JPotocki*

In response to the question of HMG about our position with regard to the possibility of negotiating with the German government, addressed to the Polish government during the night, it is my privilege to communicate what follows:

1) The Polish government confirms its readiness expressed earlier for a direct exchange of views with the Reich government, of course on the basis of the principles proposed by the British government and communicated to me in a cable from Lord Halifax to the British Ambassador in Warsaw on 28 August.

2) The Polish government is also ready, on the principle of reciprocity, to extend a formal guarantee that, in the event of successful negotiations, the Polish military forces will not violate the boundaries of the German Reich, insofar as an analogous guarantee about not violating the boundaries of Poland by the forces of the Reich is also given.

3) In the present situation it is *also* necessary to create a simple provisional *modus vivendi* in the Free City of Danzig.

4) In connection with the suggestions communicated by HMG's to the Polish government, I asked through the British Ambassador on 28 August for a clarification of what HMG understands by international guarantees in relations between Poland and the German Reich. In the absence of a reply to this fundamental question, the Polish government is forced to reserve entirely its position on this matter until it receives complete clarifications.

5) The Polish government hopes that it will be able to continue to make use of the *bons offices* of HMG should negotiations with the Reich government be initiated.

31 August 1939

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 512*

## 196

### *31 August. Note of the Head of the Western Section on possible Polish-German talks*

#### Note.

On the instructions of Minister Beck, as his personal message to Ambassadors Kennard and Noël, I communicated by telephone to Mr. Norton and verbally to Mr. Gauquié at 1:00 P.M. that the points<sup>25</sup> should be treated as strictly confidential and should a press leak emerge, whether in the allied countries or in Germany, Minister Beck reserves the right to make an immediate announcement of these elements of the negotiations that he will judge necessary in order to inform Polish and world public opinion.

(Józef Potocki)

Warsaw, 31 August 1939

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 513*

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<sup>25</sup> See doc. 195.

## 197

*31 August. Cable of the Ambassador in Berlin  
about the mediation of Birger Dahlerus*

Berlin, 31 August 1939

Received on 31 August 1939 at 2:45 P.M.

Mr. Lipski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

No. 244

Secret

The English Ambassador has sent to me, in the company of the Embassy Counsellor, the Swede Dahlerus, who is acting as an intermediary between England and Germany and is a friend of Göring's. Dahlerus stated that Göring, standing up to the extremists, who had wished to incorporate the entire Prussian partition into Germany, raised reduced demands with regard to Danzig and the corridor in keeping with cipher cable No. 243.

I will send the conditions by telephone press cipher as top secret. ... privately with the English Counsellor. Of course, I did not engage in a discussion with Dahlerus.

I consider Dahlerus' *démarche* as further evidence of pressure against us, pressure that was particularly strong today. I am reacting with calm, yet very firmly.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 514*

## 198

*31 August. Cable from the Embassy in Berlin  
about the conversation between the Ambassador in Berlin  
and the German Secretary of State*

Cable from Berlin on 31 August 1939 at 3:15 P.M.

In accordance with the instructions received,<sup>26</sup> M. Lipski asked, at 1:00 P.M., for an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. At 3:00 P.M. the

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<sup>26</sup> See doc. 194.

Under Secretary of State,<sup>27</sup> M. von Weizsäcker, rang up the Ambassador personally, asking him whether he wanted to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs as a special plenipotentiary or in some other capacity.

M. Lipski replied that he was asking for an interview in his capacity of Ambassador to remit a communication from his Government.

M. von Weizsäcker took note of the information and said he would pass it on to M. von Ribbentrop.

*PWB, doc. 111; PDD 1939/I, doc. 515*

## 199

### *31 August. Cable from the Ambassador in London about the British reply to the German note*

London, 31 August 1939

Warsaw cipher cable No. 191

I received only this morning the text of the last English reply to Hitler, supposedly known to You. It bears the stamp of the 'appeasers'. Several outstanding liberals and Churchill and his group declared to me yesterday that they were ready to make a strong speech should the Prime Minister revert to his traditional conciliatory methods. I am expecting parliamentary Greenwood from Labour to pay a visit this afternoon.

Please send instructions.

Raczyński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 516*

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<sup>27</sup> In fact, Secretary of State.

## 200

*31 August. Cable from the Ambassador in London  
about British public opinion*

London, 31 August 1939

Warsaw cipher cable No. 192

Re: Cipher cable No. 191<sup>28</sup>

I fear, as a result of the government's tactics, a dangerous shift in public opinion, which has taken a firm position against Germany's aggression, but, having no inside knowledge of the matter, will be overly inclined during more detailed discussions to support any type of accord at the expense of Poland's concessions. The most notable of our friends here share the above fears.

Raczyński

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 517*

## 201

*31 August. Report by the Under Secretary of State  
on his conversation with the Papal Nuncio*

Top secret

Note on Minister Szembek's conversation with the Papal Nuncio,  
Mgr Cortesi, on 31 August 1939

He made the following declaration:

Given the extremely serious situation threatening an immediate outbreak of war, the Holy See has received information from the most credible sources that should Poland indicate that it is ready to hold direct talks with Germany and does not oppose the return of Danzig to the Reich, the war could be averted. The Holy See thinks that the talks would concern: (1) the return of

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<sup>28</sup> See doc. 199.

Danzig to the Reich, with assurance given of free trade through the Free City and all facilitations in this respect; (2) the so-called corridor; (3) minority issues.

Ad 2) I asked if those were territorial demands of the Reich or rather facilitations in communications between the Reich and East Prussia. The Nuncio responded that he was not certain of this, but he thought that the matter could be made more specific by the Polish government.

The Holy See is precisely informed about the situation as it is seen by the Polish government, but, given the fact that war is looming, it considered it its obligation to inform the Polish government of the above. In doing so, the Holy See wishes to point out that it is solely motivated in its steps by its attachment to Poland and its great fear of the danger of war. In the name of the Holy See, the Cardinal Secretary of State is asking the Polish government to take note of the above declaration and provide a reply.

The Holy See has been informed that should the Polish government show an inclination towards talks having made its position more specific, and should the Reich refuse to hold them, the world would turn against it and it would lose the support of even those who have backed it until now.

During the further course of the discussion, the Nuncio indicated that the Vatican was under the impression that the Reich's political action would be directed in particular against Hungary and Lithuania. Hence it would be very desirable for relations between Hungary and Romania to be settled as soon as possible.

I declared to the Nuncio that I would communicate the essence of his *démarche* to my government.

*PDD 1939/I, doc. 520*

## 202

*31 August. Cable from the Ambassador in Berlin  
on his conversation with the German Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Berlin, 31 August 1939  
Received at 10:30 P.M.

Mr. Lipski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw.

No. 246

Secret.

I was received by M. von Ribbentrop at 6:30 P.M.

I carried out my instructions.<sup>29</sup> M. von Ribbentrop asked if I had special plenipotentiary powers to undertake negotiations. I said no. He then asked whether I had been informed that on London's suggestion the German Government had expressed its readiness to negotiate directly with a plenipotentiary of the Polish Government, furnished with the requisite full powers, who was to have arrived on the preceding day, 30 August. I replied that I had no direct information on the subject. In conclusion, M. von Ribbentrop repeated that he had thought I would be empowered to negotiate. He would communicate my *démarche* to the Chancellor.

*PWB, doc. 112; PDD 1939/I, doc. 523*

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<sup>29</sup> See doc. 194.

## 203

*1 September. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassies in London and Paris about German aggression*

Warsaw, 1 September 1939

Cable No. 281

(1) Please inform the Government to which you are accredited that despite Poland's collaboration in the British initiative,<sup>1</sup> which collaboration is known to the Allied Governments, German forces attacked Polish territory at dawn; simultaneously, a number of localities were bombed from the air.

(2) The Polish Government, resolved to defend the independence and honour of *Poland* to the end, expresses its conviction that in accordance with the existing treaties of alliance, in this struggle it will receive immediate help from its Allies.

/–/ Beck

*London Paris*

*PWB, doc. 121, p. 128; PDD 1939/II, doc. 1*

## 204

*1 September. Cable from the Chef de Cabinet  
of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in Paris*

Polmission

Paris

Germany has attacked the Polish boundary at four points. In his address, Hitler talks of a violation of the boundary by Poland, a claim that is a blatant lie. The alleged band of Polish insurgents in Gleiwitz is an invention of the German General Staff. Please communicate this to all agencies to the west and north of Germany.

/–/ Łubieński

1 September 1939

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 2*

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<sup>1</sup> See doc. 195.



## 205

*2 September. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassies in Paris and London [?] on supplies from the USSR*

Warsaw, 2 September 1939

CIPHER CABLE NO. 286

The Soviet Ambassador came to call and asked why we were not negotiating with the Soviets on the matter of supplies—a possibility that was opened by the ‘Voroshilov interview’.<sup>2</sup>

I gave instructions to Moscow to examine the situation.

/–/ BECK

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 8*

## 206

*3 September. Cable from the Ambassador in Paris  
on the declaration of war on Germany by France and Great Britain*

Paris, 3 September 1939 at 3:48 P.M.  
Warsaw, 3 September 1939 at 4:30 P.M.

Mr. Łukasiewicz to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

No. 195

Secret

Instructions for Coulondre have been sent. The *démarche* will be carried out today at midnight, the ultimatum expires on 4 September at

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<sup>2</sup> Following the breakdown of the Soviet-French-British military talks in Moscow on 27 August, *Izvestia* published an interview with the People’s Commissar for Defence Kliment Voroshilov, who stated that supplies of raw materials and military supplies were a strictly commercial matter not requiring the signing of a mutual assistance agreement.

5:00 A.M. The difference in relation to the English is due to their refusal to initiate military operations this afternoon. In the last phase, it was Gamelin who temporised. I am making categorical demands, given that war has broken out, for immediate and effective military operations. I am to see the President at 6:00 P.M. The French ultimatum can be announced.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 14*

## 207

*3 September. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassy in London about the peace initiative*

Warsaw, 3 September 1939

Cipher No. 289

Please communicate without delay, during the night if necessary, to Lord Halifax: We assess ... the formula under which Halifax has said that the British government did not recognise any conference as long as the German invasion in Poland and Danzig continued. We are already fighting along the entire front with the bulk of the German forces, fighting for every metre—even the garrison in Westerplatte is defending itself. The intervention of the entire air force is taking on an increasingly brutal form. Today we have extensive civilian casualties. Referring to the immediate assistance clause,<sup>3</sup> please inform of the British government's decision without delay ...

/-/ BECK

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 17*

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<sup>3</sup> See the Polish-British alliance agreement of 25 August 1939 (doc. 180).

## 208

*4 September. Report of the Ambassador to the Holy See  
on his discussion with the Pope about the situation in Poland*

Rome, 4 September 1939

Top secret.

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Re: The Vatican on the situation

Despite the conviction that Hitlerism was a contemporary pagan movement and that legally and morally justness is on our side—the Holy See no longer shows the tendency not only to officially condemn the aggression *of Germany against Poland*, but even to adopt a somewhat clearer public stance in this matter. During my audience, the Pope kept nodding at everything I was telling him about our position, yet avoided making pronouncements.. *audience on 2 September at Castel Gandolfo, along with ...*

I made two suggestions: that Pius XII send a letter to Cardinal Hlond with expressions of sympathy for our cause and that an announcement be made in the press that the Pope had blessed the Polish nation during his audience. In both cases, Pius XII replied '*laissez-moi réfléchir*'. As to the *communiqué*, I proposed consulting it with Mgr Montini. Given the Pope's hesitation, the Embassy drew up a text that commits the Vatican as little as possible, the more so as each audience with a representative of a Catholic country usually ends with a Papal blessing for his country (*vide* appendix). Mgr Montini tried to suggest that we announce a *communiqué* without formal acknowledgement on the part of the Vatican, which would not issue a *démenti*. Given, however, that the Pope reserved for himself some time to think about this and that the point was not the *communiqué* itself, actually, but bringing the Pope to adopt a clear stance to the outside, we asked Mgr Montini to arrange the matter formally, with the reservation that if by tomorrow he does not ask us to withhold the *communiqué*, we would give it to the press. After an audience with the Pope, Mgr Montini telephoned, asked that we withhold the *communiqué* and that Cardinal Maglione reserves the right to hold a discussion with us on the subject. The Cardinal, however, did not raise the issue again and, given this, I did not return to it either, especially as Pius XII referred to the formal aspect, i.e., that it was not customary to announce *communiqués* on

private audiences. I did not attach too much importance to the essence of the case, seeing it rather as a trial balloon.

Also typical of the present mood in the Vatican was my conversation with Cardinal Maglione, who had called me to see him today. He asked me for an answer to the Papal address of 31 August and said that the Vatican wished to make public an entire dossier containing the responses of all interested countries except Poland.<sup>4</sup> With a certain embarrassment, he then started to talk about the fact that on 30 August the Nuncio called on the President of the Republic of Poland, who could not receive him on that day, however. Given this, the Nuncio went to see you and communicated the conditions on which—according to the Vatican's information—Germany would be willing to negotiate with Poland. As the Nuncio related it, you did not exactly welcome the step. The Cardinal Secretary of State—still embarrassed—said that the Pope, 'through his love for Poland', felt it his obligation to inform the President and the government about what the opposite side was thinking and that on no account did he wish to do anything that would have been contrary to Poland's interests. I got the impression that the Cardinal wished to provoke some form of explanation on my part, but I did not make it any easier for him. When I mentioned something about your warm feelings toward the Nuncio and that there may have been a misunderstanding, though I had no information on this point, the Cardinal seized this eagerly and summed up the conversation by stating that he also presumed that must have been a misunderstanding.

We can only hypothesise on just what is behind the Vatican's excessive prudence and irritability, and very different factors seem to play a role here, such as:

1) The Vatican, not having any armed forces, economic strength, etc., is particularly sensitive to the question of its prestige, which forms the main basis for its political action.

2) Since the breakdown of the political influence of medieval popes and since the various moral sanctions, such as the interdict, have ceased to have any effect, the Vatican, irrespective of its political sympathies, strives to project an image of neutrality to the outside in all political conflicts. Such is the fresh tradition of the policy of Benedict XV from the time of the last war. Pius XI, especially towards the end of his pontificate, began abandoning this

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<sup>4</sup> See doc. 157.

form of neutrality and spoke out strongly against communism or fascism, and particularly strongly against Nazism. This has exposed the Vatican to certain tremors, mainly in Italy. Pius XII is striving to continue the policies of Pius XI, but he has a different character, a softer one, and besides he is trying to avoid the alleged or real 'mistakes' of his predecessor.

3) In addition to the above, the personal character of Pius XII should also be reckoned with. He has a great sense of duty and responsibility that seems to overwhelm him at times. His sense of prestige is tied with a certain personal irritability, and his conscientiousness with great attention to detail, almost scrupulosity. His long tenure as Secretary of State, a period when he was accountable not only for the interests of the Church, but also to the Pope himself, only made those traits in him more pronounced.

4) Cardinal Maglione is aware of the fact that the Pope has hesitated for a long time before appointing him as his closest collaborator. It seems that this continues to restrict him whenever some bolder initiatives are involved.

5) Political considerations. With all its criticism of Mussolini, especially recently, the Vatican would wish to avoid any dispute with Italy and fears for the future of Italy's internal relations should fascism collapse. This is one of the reasons why the Holy See favours Italy's neutrality and supports Mussolini's recent peace initiative. Besides, the Vatican is not giving up either on playing a humanitarian role during wartime or on political initiative, especially in its later period. Presumably, the Vatican will strive—as was the case in relation to Austria during the last war—to protect the conquered from total defeat and, in the case of Germany make a distinction between racism and the nation. It seems that the Vatican is also reckoning with the possibility of the opposite outcome, i.e., with the defeat of Poland in the war (Cardinal Maglione is asking about the presumed role of the USSR, about whether we will not run out of ammunition, etc.). Also with this eventuality in mind, the Vatican does not want broken relations with Germany in order to be able to mediate.

I am trying to overcome the Vatican's equivocal stance. Basically, the approach of absolutely all its circles is entirely favourable *pro foro interno*. The ambassador of France, among other persons, is trying to act in the same vein. Perhaps it will be possible to obtain certain results as the methods used by Germany to wage war will become increasingly clear. Such facts as the bombing of Jasna Góra, a large number of civilian victims, etc., could play a considerable role and I am asking you to send me genuine information and in as much detail as possible. I presume, however, that a public stance taken by

the Vatican will not be very clear and that achieving significant results in this area is a rather long process.

*K. Papée*  
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the Holy See

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 29*

## 209

### *5 September. Cable from the Ambassador in Paris on the Polish-French alliance agreement*

Paris, 5 September 1939  
Received on 5 September 1939

Mr. Łukasiewicz to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

No. 205

I signed the interpretative protocol to the alliance agreement and the secret protocol. I agreed to Switzerland and Luxembourg.<sup>5</sup> I think that these matters are entirely without meaning today, whereas adding the clause about not signing a separate peace treaty is important, as is emphasising in the eyes of public opinion the identity of our alliances with England and France. There are no other changes. The protocol will be announced by Havas tomorrow.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 30*

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<sup>5</sup> This is a reference to the secret interpretative protocol to the Polish-French alliance agreement signed on 4 September. In contrast to the provisions of the secret protocol to the Polish-British alliance agreement of 25 August 1939, the alliance with France was also to be activated in case of an assault on Switzerland and Luxembourg.

## 210

*5 September. Cable from the Ambassador in London  
on military assistance for Poland*

London, 5 September 1939  
Received on 5 September 1939

Mr. Raczyński to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
in Warsaw

No. 219

Secret.

Re: Cipher cable No. 218

I called on Lord Halifax and submitted your message. With the greatest of emphasis I urged the necessity for immediate military action in the West. On this occasion I referred to the appeal of our Air Force, addressed to-day to Headquarters through the Military Attaché, asking for air action against Germany in order to relieve us.

Lord Halifax took cognizance of my appeal and told me that my letter to Mr. Churchill on the same question had been read at today's Cabinet meeting. He solemnly assured me that from now on Great Britain was devoting herself to the sole aim of defeating Germany. He understood our anxieties and felt them almost as his own. However, the British Government, which stands and will stand by Poland to the end, cannot disperse its forces, which are needed for a decisive blow. When this will take place he does not know and couldn't say in any case.

As far as France is concerned, Generals Ironside and Gort, who were there yesterday, are confident and pleased, both with the spirit of the army and with the decision of the French government to make use of it. Halifax expects that following yesterday's sinking of a trade ship by the Germans,<sup>6</sup> there will be terrible attacks both on the European and the American shores. The Englishmen told me that our military mission would arrive by air to London this evening.

*PWB, doc. 140, PDD 1939/II, doc. 31*

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<sup>6</sup> This is a reference to the sinking of the British passenger ship *Athenia* on 3 September.

## 211

*8 September. Cable from the envoy in Stockholm relating information from the Polish Ambassador in Moscow*

8 September

Mr. Potworowski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

No. 45

The French military attaché in Sweden asks that his colleague in Warsaw enter into contact with him without delay.<sup>7</sup>

[below] Resent cipher cable from Mr. Grzybowski (it was partially illegible).<sup>8</sup>

Secret. To Minister Beck.

Received cipher cable No. 135. Sharonov's suggestions are no longer valid.<sup>9</sup>

Personally, I had the impression that the Soviets would adopt an absolutely reserved and neutral stance. Given this, I tried to obtain more details about Moscow's position during a working discussion with Molotov. Molotov told me that England's entry into the war resulted in an entirely new situation and emphasised that Voroshilov's interview took place before that. In the face of the new situation, the Soviets have to think primarily of protecting their own interests. The Soviets' principled position consists in not helping England against Germany or Germany against England. To my question about how he views Poland's stance, he said that Poland is England, and talked bitterly about the position taken by Poland in the last negotiations. Molotov said: Voroshilov talked of a trade agreement and the existing agreement which, by the way, is not doing well, we wish to carry out. In summary, my impressions of the Soviet position are the following: (1) Molotov does not think it is definite. At the present stage, however, they will adopt a stance of neutrality towards us; (2) I believe the Soviet's basic position is their unwillingness to contribute to the victory of England and Poland. This is perhaps due to the belief that Europe's exhaustion will give them the Baltic

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<sup>7</sup> General Félix Mussé.

<sup>8</sup> This is a reference to the cable sent on 6 September.

<sup>9</sup> See doc. 205.



States, whereas a decisive victory of England and Poland puts this prize in question.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 40*

## 212

### *10 September. Final Report from the Ambassador in Berlin*

Vilnius, 10 September 1939

To the Minister of Foreign Affairs

#### Final report.

In consequence of the German aggression against Poland, which was begun without declaration of war on 1 September 1939, at 4:45 A.M. (the hour at which the Germans started to bombard Westerplatte), I left Berlin with the personnel of the Embassy on 2 September, and travelled to Poland through Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Latvia, so it is only today that I am in a position to present my final report on the termination of my mission in Berlin.

My mission to Germany began in September 1933. I fulfilled it first in the capacity of Minister Plenipotentiary and then, from October 1934, as Ambassador.

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Polish-German relations were based upon the Declaration of 26 January 1934, in which the Governments of both States undertook for a period of at least ten years to refrain from resorting to force to settle any differences which might arise between them.

In the course of the negotiations which I conducted with the German Government and which ended with the Declaration of 26 January 1934, it was expressly specified that existing international obligations of the two States would not be affected by that Declaration, and this found expression in the text itself. This reservation pertained to, as far as Poland was concerned, the Polish-French and Polish-Romanian alliances and to Poland's obligations

under the provisions of the Pact of the League of Nations. During all the time the Declaration had been in force, Poland left the German government in no doubt that Poland maintained all its allied obligations, whose character is purely defensive. This attitude on Poland's part was fully accepted by authoritative German circles.

In the same way the principle of independence for Polish policy, which constituted the starting-point of the conversations with Chancellor Hitler, was fully confirmed in numerous conversations during the years 1934 to 1938 with the Reich's highest officials, and was recognized as the basis of mutual relations.

As you are in possession of my previous reports on Polish-German relations during my mission in Berlin, in this report I shall confine myself to a chronological outline of the last phase of these relations, beginning with October 1938.

The German action in relation to Poland, initiated on 24 October 1938, in the form of suggestions which were withdrawn after a conversation on 19 November and put forward again in January 1939, in March 1939 assumed the form of pressure, supported by the entry of German troops into Slovakia and the naval demonstration at the occupation of Memel.

The question of the return of the Free City of Danzig to the Reich, raised by M. von Ribbentrop on 24 October, was quite unexpected. Danzig questions had been the subject of several exchanges of opinion between the two Governments in previous years. A basis for understanding was provided by the declaration of the Reich Government, explicitly confirmed in the Chancellor's statements of 5 November 1937, and 14 January 1938, that the Reich respected the legal status of the Free City together with Polish rights and interests, while Poland for its part did not intervene in the life of the German population of Danzig.

While the central Reich authorities handled the Danzig situation on the basis of the above principles, in the territory of Danzig itself the activities of Gauleiter Foerster, a Party extremist, were the cause of numerous complications and tense situations from the moment of his arrival in the Free City. It can be said with certainty that M. Foerster was the individual who contributed most to the continual misunderstandings and tension that arose between the two States. Obviously, it is difficult for me to estimate how far M. Foerster acted on his own initiative, and to what degree on the orders of the highest authorities of the Reich.

It frequently happened that after assurances in regard to Danzig questions had been given to me by members of the German Government, during the very next few days M. Foerster's activities, particularly his speeches to the Danzig Party Convention, negated what had been said in Berlin, and thus revived the atmosphere of distrust, particularly as it was known that he had close contacts with the German Chancellor.

In reply to M. von Ribbentrop's suggestions of 24 October, the Polish Government handed him counter-proposals on 19 November 1938.<sup>10</sup>

Subsequently these matters were raised by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Beck, in conversations with Chancellor Hitler at Berchtesgaden on 5 January 1939,<sup>11</sup> with the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. von Ribbentrop, in Munich on 6 January, and during the latter's visit to Warsaw on 26 January 1939,<sup>12</sup> on the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Polish-German Declaration.

In the course of a casual exchange of views with the Chancellor at the reception to the Diplomatic Corps on 2 March, he once more assured me that so long as he stood at the head of the Government of the Reich there was no need to fear that relations between the two countries would be exposed to danger.

During the period from October 1938 to March 1939 the German attitude towards us acquired certain features which in Poland began to give rise an understandable mistrust and criticism.

In connection with the problem of Carpathian Ruthenia terrorist Ukrainian elements, acting to the detriment of Polish interests and good Polish-Ukrainian relations, were supported by German propaganda and Party organs (SS and Gestapo). Vienna became the centre of these activities, and the wireless of that city incessantly disseminated Ukrainian broadcasts hostile to Poland. In Germany Ukrainian maps and pamphlets in the German language, directed against the integrity of the Polish Republic, were distributed.

Whenever Poland intervened in the matter the Germans always replied that their pro-Ukrainian activities were directed against the Soviets and not

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<sup>10</sup> See doc. 14.

<sup>11</sup> See doc. 28.

<sup>12</sup> See doc. 34.

against Poland, and that if Ukrainian terrorist elements were supported by Germany, it was because they constituted the most active element among the Ukrainian *émigrés*.

Similarly, on the territory of Slovakia Germany began to carry on activities hostile to Poland, and this activity grew stronger as the German plan for separating Slovakia from Bohemia and Moravia was gradually realized.

Finally, during this period the attitude of Party elements in relation to Poland began to deteriorate—obviously as the result of instructions from above—and revisionist ideas concerning Polish territories were openly propagated.

In November 1938 direct Polish-German relations were exposed to serious difficulties as the result of the ruthless expulsion of 15,000 Jews of Polish citizenship from Germany.

Summing up, I wish to state that the above period brought with it an unprecedented deterioration in Polish-German relations since the conclusion of the Declaration of 1934, and great efforts had to be made by Poland in order to avoid still greater friction.

The crisis in Polish-German relations began in the first half of March 1939.

Acting by surprise, and without any contact with the Polish Government, the Germans created a new situation on the Polish frontier, annexing Bohemia and Moravia, extending a protectorate over Slovakia, building fortifications and establishing garrisons in Western Slovakia, and, finally, establishing a naval base at Memel.

In the course of these German activities, which developed at lightning speed, I tried in vain from 11 to 13 March to obtain an interview with the German Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State. On the evening of 13 March I chanced to meet General von Keitel, and informed him that—despite German activities affecting Poland so directly—for three days I had been unable to make contact with the German Government. General von Keitel promised to intervene with M. von Ribbentrop the next day on the matter, but this brought no result.

The German assumption of a protectorate over Slovakia was a step explicitly directed against Polish security, and the fact that it was carried out in conditions of complete secrecy from the Polish Government was in contradiction to the principles on which the carrying out of the 1934 Declaration

was based. The military operations against Poland in the southern sector in September completely confirmed this.

It was in this atmosphere of tension between the two countries that I had a conversation on 21 March with the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, at his invitation.<sup>13</sup>

Without going into the details of that interview, I wish only to recall that the tone of M. von Ribbentrop's exposition departed considerably from that in which matters affecting the two Governments had been previously discussed, and was in the nature of definite pressure. He put forward the German claims, and urged that the Polish Government should take the swiftest possible decision. In this conversation M. von Ribbentrop made no reference whatever to the ultimatum in regard to Memel, which he had presented the previous day to the Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs. When I inquired about his meeting with M. Urbšys, he confined himself to a few explanatory remarks of a purely general character.

The news of the entry to German troops into Memel, and of the Chancellor's demonstrative voyage at the head of the German Fleet along our coast, was as great a surprise to Polish public opinion as the German entry into Slovakia had been.

Despite the prevailing atmosphere, which was certainly not conducive to negotiations, the Polish Government did not hold aloof from further discussion with the German Government. On 26 March I handed M. von Ribbentrop our counter-proposals, in the form of a written note,<sup>14</sup> in respect to Danzig and the motorway. Although M. von Ribbentrop's personal reaction to it was of a negative character, he stated that he would communicate a reply only after the matter had been referred to the Chancellor. The reply in question was not transmitted to me, and only on the occasion of his speech to the Reichstag on 28 April did Chancellor Hitler impart it publicly.

As is known, the Polish Government, not wishing to increase the tension, and desirous of leaving the way open for further conversations, maintained discretion as to the subject of the exchanges of opinion which had taken place in March. By his declaration to the Reichstag on 28 April and his unilateral denunciation of the Declaration of 26 January 1934, which forbade resorting

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<sup>13</sup> See doc. 61.

<sup>14</sup> See doc. 68 (appendix).

to force in mutual relations between the two States, Chancellor Hitler annulled the policy inaugurated between Poland and Germany in 1933.

In his conversation with me on 26 March, M. von Ribbentrop spoke strongly against the military steps Poland had taken. Coming from the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs after the German Army's occupation of Prague, the entry into Slovakia, and the naval demonstration off the Polish coast, this objection sounded strange, to say the least. In the face of Germany's obvious steps, of a military character, towards encirclement of Poland to north and south, steps about which, moreover, Poland was left completely uninformed by Berlin, it is difficult to imagine how the responsible Polish authorities could have been expected not to take certain precautionary measures.

Germany's explanation that Poland, by forming an alliance with Great Britain, had joined the so-called 'encirclement front' against Germany, and had thus violated the Declaration of 26 January 1934 is, in light of the situation brought about by German actions, entirely groundless. This is without reference to the legal aspect of the problem, which was thoroughly covered in the Polish Government's memorandum to the Reich Government on 5 May.

The 1934 Declaration was concluded for a term of ten years. For this period both States renounced resorting to force in their mutual relations. The application of force can be direct, that is to say, through a direct attack by the particular State. But it can equally well be applied by indirect methods, which sometimes are even more dangerous, because they are less apparent to the world. The tactics employed by Chancellor Hitler's Government usually relied on the second method.

At the time of the March incidents we had to deal with a definite instance of pressure brought to bear on Poland through its military encirclement.

I should remark that in another conversation which I had with M. von Ribbentrop on 27 March 1939, I made the suggestion that public opinion in both countries might be appeased by the publication of a few reassuring words from the two Governments. The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs rejected this suggestion.

After Chancellor Hitler's speech on 28 April I left for Warsaw, and went back to Berlin in the second half of May.

On my return, I took steps to ascertain whether there was any desire on the German side for talks with us. I was given to understand that authoritative

German circles did not consider the moment suitable for discussions, and that a certain period of time must elapse to allow the atmosphere to clear.

The whole of German diplomacy was taking the line of opposition to Great Britain. The German Press was chiefly attacking Great Britain, endeavouring to represent the attitude Poland had taken towards the German demands as resulting from the Anglo-Polish Agreement.

Grave signs of Germany's aggressive intentions became more and more apparent. Rearmament proceeded at an unprecedented pace, and the general State administration was entirely subordinated to military requirements.

From April onward contraband in arms developed on a large scale in the territory of Danzig, being carried on by land, sea and air. Simultaneously it was observed that fortifications were being clandestinely built. It became apparent that, contrary to international agreements, the Free City, in understanding with the Reich, was heading for complete militarization.

In spite of Danzig's continual violation of binding agreements, the Polish Government, anxious to avoid a conflict with the Reich, displayed until the end the utmost restraint.

From April onward a considerable aggravation of the situation occurred in the sphere of national minorities. The reason for this has to be sought in the German aim to exterminate the Polish element in the Reich, which was to be achieved through the totalitarian legislation and the Party machinery, and by placing the practical control of the entire life of the Polish minority in Germany in the hands of the Gestapo.

On the other hand, the German propaganda machine launched a violent campaign in defence of the allegedly oppressed German minority in Poland. In this connection I desire to recall that National-Socialism has created a special doctrine for Germans living abroad, subordinating them to the interests of Reich foreign policy. This became the subject of numerous conflicts with various countries, even in South Africa.

This National-Socialist activity in Poland increased in strength from April onward, when the German Government decided—as was confirmed by the numerous cases reported during the first days of the war—to exploit the German minority for diversionist, political and even military aims.

During the period of my mission in Berlin I frequently drew the attention of authoritative German circles to the need for minorities, in the interests of good Polish-German relations, to confine their activities to the cultural and

educational sphere. The subjugation of the German minority to Reich policy hostile to Poland was, of course, bound to provoke an understandable reaction on our part.

As in the case of the Sudeten Germans, German propaganda exaggerated every little incident among the German minority in Poland, and in the final phase the Press was daily publishing completely fictitious stories.

Any measures against espionage, treason or sabotage were represented as persecution of the cultural life of the German minority. For lack of other material, the same incidents were written up in various ways, to be republished as new acts of terrorism.

I have much proof that a large part of public opinion in Germany finally ceased to give credence to this exaggerated propaganda.

In spite of the prevailing tension between Poland and Germany, members of the Embassy maintained normal contact on current matters with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. During my frequent absences from Berlin the *Chargé d'affaires*, Prince Lubomirski, often saw the Under Secretary of State, M. Woermann, and other high officials in order to discuss various matters, and he took every opportunity of indicating our desire for action to moderate the tone of the Press in both countries. This, however, produced no response from the head of the Press Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

By the end of July the clandestine mobilization in Danzig was proceeding at an extraordinarily intensive pace.

At the beginning of August the well-known incident of the Free City's attempt to get rid of the Polish Customs control occurred.

On 9 August, the State Secretary, M. von Weizsäcker, asked the Polish *Chargé d'affaires*, Prince Lubomirski, to call on him, and made an oral statement on the Danzig Customs inspectors' incident. This step was tantamount to German Government interference in relations between Poland and the Free City. The State Secretary avoided giving any explanation of this action.

The Polish Government gave its reply, also in oral form, to the German *Chargé d'affaires* in Warsaw the next day.<sup>15</sup>

From the beginning of August frontier incidents staged by the Germans increased in number, not only in the Danzig sector, but along the entire

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<sup>15</sup> Johann von Wühlisch.



Polish-German frontier. The tone of the German Press became more and more aggressive. The entire propaganda machine was directed against Poland and its integrity.

Taking advantage of the yearly invitation for hunting, which this year was sent to me on 11 August by the Field Marshal, General Göring, I wrote a letter to him indicating that I would like to take the opportunity to thank him personally for the invitation. I considered that nothing should be neglected that could contribute to avoiding an armed conflict.

On 21 August came the announcement of M. von Ribbentrop's imminent departure for Moscow to conclude a Soviet-German Pact of Non-Aggression. The Soviet-German negotiations had been shrouded in the deepest secrecy, and rumours of them were received only from certain indirect sources. Down to the last moment the Soviet Embassy in Berlin flatly denied the existence of any political negotiations, intimating that only economic matters were being discussed.

This step on the part of the German Government constituted a complete reversal of their international policy. Under the slogan 'The fight against Bolshevism' Chancellor Hitler had engaged in the Spanish Civil War, and had created the so-called Anti-Comintern Bloc. During the whole of my six-year stay in Berlin the German Chancellor, as well as all his collaborators, continually declared that the foundation of Hitler-German policy was exclusion of Soviet Russia from Europe and the struggle against Communism. M. von Ribbentrop more than once told me of his view that Poland should join the Anti-Comintern Pact and that Russia must be pushed still farther east.

By signing the Pact with Moscow Chancellor Hitler threw over his own principles, thus demonstrating that behind his actions was only an opportunism of the moment.

On 24 August at 5:00 P.M. I was received by Field Marshal Göring, with whom I talked for over an hour. The conversation was of a friendly character; it was more a personal than official exchange of opinion, and M. Göring placed particular emphasis on this circumstance. I recall the more important points of the conversation:

M. Göring expressed regret that the policy of Polish-German understanding lay in ruins and, seeking the causes, declared that but for the Anglo-Polish Alliance the crisis would not have developed on such a scale, in spite of the difficulties over Danzig.

He gave it unequivocally to be understood that he anticipated war with Poland.

He admitted that by concluding a pact with Russia the Reich had made a complete *volte-face*, and explained that in its international relations Germany must choose between England and Russia.

For my part, I pointed out that Poland followed a consistent policy in relation to both Germany and Russia.

I observed that Moscow desired to provoke war in Europe, which Göring did not deny.

I said I was at the Chancellor's disposition if that would assist in finding a way out of the situation. M. Göring assured me he would inform the Chancellor accordingly.

The British Government, and later the French Government, began their efforts at mediation with the Reich Government on 22 August.<sup>16</sup>

I shall not go into the details of these negotiations here, as during that period there was a direct exchange of views between Warsaw, Paris and London. I desire only to point out that I was in continual touch with the French Ambassador, M. Coulondre, and the British Ambassador, Sir Nevile Henderson. Both these ambassadors spared no effort and did their utmost to save the peace and bring about direct negotiations between Poland and Germany to clear up the situation.

I cannot omit mention here of the moderating influence of the Italian Ambassador, M. Attolico, who during the years we spent together in Berlin worked unremittingly in the cause of peace.

On 23 August Sir Nevile Henderson presented M. Hitler with a letter in M. Chamberlain's own hand. He received a negative reply.<sup>17</sup>

From 25 August onward, German action against Poland assumed a character verging on aggression. The troop concentrations on the Polish frontier, observed for several days past, steadily increased in dimensions. It was significant that on that day telephone communication between Germany and the West was cut off. Frontier provocations grew more and more frequent and grave. On that same day Prince Lubomirski handed a note of protest to

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<sup>16</sup> See doc. 176.

<sup>17</sup> On 23 August at the Obersalzberg, Ambassador Henderson presented Hitler with a letter from Chamberlain in which the British Prime Minister warned the German Chancellor that the conclusion of an understanding between Germany and the Soviet Union would not affect British policy toward Poland and its readiness to meet its obligations.

the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs in connection with these incidents. The Consulate at Marienwerder reported the severing of telephone lines. The Consul submitted a protest to the president of the region, and personally intervened with him in respect to the deportation from Marienwerder of the teaching staff of the Polish High School. On his return the Consul was confronted with the police, who had forced their way into the Consulate building and had taken possession of it.

The Chancellor asked the British Ambassador to call on him, and put forward a proposal for an understanding with Great Britain.<sup>18</sup> The next day the British Ambassador flew to London. The Chancellor also received the French Ambassador.

On 26 August I visited the Under Secretary of State, M. Woermann, and handed him a note protesting against the previous day's violation of the Polish frontier on the East Prussian sector by a patrol of ten German soldiers. During this incident a German corporal was shot dead on Polish territory, some 300 metres from the frontier. The Germans left a machine-gun behind.

Then I submitted a note protesting against incidents which had occurred on 24 August on the Silesian sector, during which Polish frontier patrols had been shot at by Germans.

On that same day news was received that M. Foerster had been appointed head of the Free City of Danzig.

And on the same day the French Ambassador handed M. Hitler a letter from M. Daladier.<sup>19</sup>

On 27 August the issue of food-ration cards was announced in Germany and arrangements were made for controlling sales of ready-made clothing. Military and air attachés were informed that they must not leave the district of Berlin without special permission from the German War Office. There followed an extensive calling up of older categories of reservists.

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<sup>18</sup> Hitler proposed, following the resolution of the 'Polish problem', the signing of a pact guaranteeing the integrity of the British Empire. In exchange, Germany expected freedom of action in the East.

<sup>19</sup> The letter contained warnings about France's readiness to carry out its allied obligations toward Poland.

M. Hitler handed the French Ambassador a letter for M. Daladier.

On 28 August the Germans published the notes exchanged between M. Daladier and M. Hitler, in which the latter for the first time officially demanded the union not only of Danzig but also of Pomerania with the Reich. Late in the evening the British Ambassador, who had returned from London, presented the British Government's reply.

On 29 August the German Chancellor informed Sir Neville Henderson that he would expect a Polish representative with full powers on 30 August, and that the German demands concerned the return of Danzig and Pomerania to Germany, as well as protection of the German minority in Poland. The German Government made their participation in an international guarantee to Poland dependent on the Soviet Government's attitude.

On 31 August at 2:00 A.M., I saw Sir Neville Henderson, when he informed me of his conversation with the German Minister for Foreign Affairs. I learned that M. von Ribbentrop had prepared certain demands in the sphere of Polish-German relations. The British Ambassador could not give me any details, as M. von Ribbentrop had read out the German demands very rapidly and had refused to provide him with a copy of the text.

Sir Neville Henderson pointed out how threatening the situation was, and advised the establishment of direct Polish-German contact. We discussed the most effectual means of achieving this.

I told the British Ambassador that I would immediately report to my Government.<sup>20</sup>

To this end, in addition to telegrams, early in the morning I sent Prince Lubomirski to Warsaw. As Germany had suspended all regular means of communication with Poland, Prince Lubomirski motored to Poznań and thence flew to Warsaw, arriving before noon.

Soon after noon I received telegraphic instructions from Warsaw to hand the Minister for Foreign Affairs a declaration of the Polish Government's favourable attitude to any proposal for direct negotiations.

At 1:00 P.M. I asked for an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs for the purpose of presenting my Government's communication.

At 3:00 P.M. the State Secretary, M. von Weizsäcker, telephoned to inquire whether I sought an interview with the Foreign Minister in the

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<sup>20</sup> See docs. 190–192.

capacity of a fully empowered delegate or in some other capacity. I replied that I was asking for an interview as Ambassador, to present a declaration from my Government.

At 6:15 P.M. I was requested to call on M. von Ribbentrop immediately. He received me in the presence of Minister Schmidt.

Having communicated my Government's declaration, I presented it in writing:

'Last night the Polish Government was informed by the British Government of an exchange of views with the Reich Government as to a possibility of direct negotiations between the Polish and the German Governments.

'The Polish Government is favourably considering the British Government's suggestion, and will make them a formal reply on the subject during the next few hours'.<sup>21</sup>

I added that I had been trying to present this declaration since 1:00 P.M.

M. von Ribbentrop asked me whether I had come in the capacity of delegate with full powers, to which I replied that for the time being I had only been instructed to submit the above declaration for the German Government's information.

M. von Ribbentrop asked whether I was acquainted with the latest Anglo-German conversations, to which I answered that I had received indirect information regarding them, since these matters had been handled directly between Warsaw and London.

At the end of our conversation M. von Ribbentrop stated that he had thought I would come as a fully empowered delegate, and that he would inform the Chancellor of the Polish Government's declaration.

Upon leaving the *Auswärtiges Amt* I was again photographed.

On my return to the Embassy I found myself unable to communicate with Warsaw, as the Germans had cut the telephone lines. This prevented my getting in touch with my Government by the quickest means. On 26 August the German authorities had severed direct railway communication with Poland. Telephone communications had similarly been rendered impossible or impeded since the same date.

I informed the French and British Ambassadors of the nature of my conversation with M. von Ribbentrop. I learned of the invitation extended by

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<sup>21</sup> See docs. 194 and 202.

the State Secretary to both Ambassadors and the American *Chargé d'affaires*, to call at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs between 9:00 and 10:00 P.M. There they were informed that as a Polish plenipotentiary had not arrived, it was considered that the German proposals contained in the sixteen points had been rejected by Poland. I wish to state emphatically that the German demands, contained in the sixteen points, have never been handed or communicated to me by the German Government.

The German wireless had broadcast a similar communiqué at 9:00 P.M., publishing the German proposals as comprised in the sixteen points, while the Press issued special editions. Not until the German proposals were published in the Press did I learn of their exact nature.

At about 11:00 P.M. Prince Lubomirski arrived by car from Warsaw.

During the same night the German wireless stations broadcast false information of aggressive action taken by Polish military detachments on the German frontier. The same night I had yet another conversation with the French and British Ambassadors.

In the early hours of 1 September I learned from the wireless that German armed forces had invaded Poland, and that the German air force had bombed a number of Polish towns.

In the morning I received a note from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, stating that in the interests of my personal safety I was requested not to leave the Embassy building. At about 1:00 P.M. Prince Lubomirski called in my name on the Director of Protocol, Baron Doernberg, and asked for my passports.

Arrangements for our departure were discussed. I suggested the route via Hungary, whereas the Ministry for Foreign Affairs considered that for technical reasons departure to Denmark would be more desirable. It was arranged with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that the personnel of the Berlin Consulate would leave simultaneously with that of the Embassy, while the personnel of other Polish consulates would leave separately and by different routes.

I collected the Embassy personnel in the Embassy building.

In accordance with arrangements made between the Polish and Swedish Governments for the protection of the property and citizens of the State of Poland in Germany, in the event of war, I exchanged notes with the Swedish minister, M. Richert, handing over this charge to him. M. Richert and his staff accorded us every attention.

I handed the keys of the Embassy building and those of the Berlin Consulate General to the Counsellor of the Swedish Legation, M. de Post, who was present at our departure.

In the evening of 1 September I received a note from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, requesting me to communicate to the Polish Government the German Government's declaration of its intention to refrain from bombarding open towns, provided a similar commitment was made by the Polish Government. I replied immediately with an unofficial note to say that, owing to the absence of communications, I was not able to transmit the contents of the German note to my Government. Shortly afterwards the Ministry for Foreign Affairs telephoned to say that they were prepared to establish telephonic communication with Warsaw via Denmark, to which I expressed my assent. Thus the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Warsaw were informed of the German note.

On 2 September, the sixth anniversary of my arrival in Berlin, with the members of the Embassy and the Consulate General in Berlin I left in a special train, which departed from the Charlottenburg Station at 8:30 A.M. for Denmark. A representative of Protocol accompanied us to the frontier.

Every courtesy was shown us during the journey.

The halt at the Danish frontier station of St. Peter lasted all the day of 3 September, pending agreement as to the date when the members of the German Embassy in Warsaw were to cross the Lithuanian frontier. We crossed the Danish frontier during the night of 4–5 September.

Immediately before my departure from Germany I was notified by the representative of Protocol that, as two members of the German Embassy had been detained in Poland, he was obliged to hold the Assistant Military Attaché, Captain Biały, and Embassy Attaché M. Szubert, in Germany. I commended them by telephone to the special care of the Swedish Minister in Berlin. On the following day the matter of the detention was settled, and MM. Biały and Szubert duly arrived in Denmark.

In Denmark we were given a most hospitable and cordial reception.

AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND  
Józef Lipski

## 213

*11 September. Cable from the Ambassador in London  
about British military assistance*

London, 11 September 1939  
Received on 12 September 1939

Mr. Raczyński to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No. 235

Secret

Re: Cipher cable No. 234

My conversation today with Lord Halifax suggests that the air force of England and France is acting only strictly in connection with operations. The earlier negative decision about long-range bombardments of various types of ... was upheld. Halifax explained that the decision of the inner cabinet was based on the opinion of the staffs, but did not deny that a role was played by considerations involving the United States. Halifax' words even seem to indicate that there is some commitment in this respect to Roosevelt, perhaps in connection with the latter's efforts to change the neutrality act.

Halifax stressed England's readiness to accommodate us in terms of supplies in all available ways.

He emphasised the cabinet's decision to prepare for a three-year war.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 52*

## 214

*11 September. Cable from the Ambassador in Paris  
about the bombardment of Warsaw*

Paris, 11 September 1939  
Received on 11 September 1939 at 2:00 P.M.

Mr. Łukasiewicz to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No. 41

It is very important for Ambassador Biddle to corroborate in Washington the bombardment of non-military targets in Warsaw.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 55*



## 215

*11 September. Cable from the envoy in Budapest  
about Hungary's refusal to give passage to German troops*

Budapest, 11 September 1939  
Received on 12 September 1939

Mr. Orłowski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No. 152

Secret

Csáky communicated to me, on a highly confidential basis, that yesterday at 4:00 P.M. Ribbentrop demanded by telephone passage for German troops by rail through Kassa. Despite Ribbentrop's insistence, Csáky referred the decision to the government. Today, a war council was hosted by the Regent, during which Csáky was instructed to refuse. Csáky has already carried out this instruction by telephone.

It was decided to refuse passage to troops in arms. Additional precautionary measures were taken. The tunnel and bridges on the Kassa railway line were mined.

Mussolini, who only a few days ago had assured the Hungarian government that Germany would not make such a demand, was informed by telephone. Mussolini was supposedly consternated and advised far-reaching caution. I wish to add that Mussolini undertook to defend Hungary's neutrality.

Sent to: Paris, Rome, top secret.

I have urgent and important news that I cannot communicate as the MFA radio doesn't receive dispatches.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 60*

## 216

*13 September. The appeal for assistance by the Ambassador in Paris  
to the Prime Minister of France*

Paris, le 13 septembre 1939

Monsieur le Président,

Depuis 10 jours nous avons, mon collègue à Londres et moi-même, multiplié les démarches les plus pressantes en insistant auprès du Gouvernement anglais et du Gouvernement français sur l'absolue nécessité d'une action efficace des forces aériennes françaises et anglaises contre l'Allemagne. Cette action ne s'est pas produite jusqu'à présent. Je me trouve donc dans l'obligation de constater que la coopération des forces aériennes anglaises et françaises avec l'Armée polonaise n'est pas réalisée jusqu'aujourd'hui. Je me permets donc, Monsieur le Président, d'attirer votre attention sur les considérations suivantes:

1) L'absence de toute action de l'aviation de nos Alliés contre les objectifs militaires à l'intérieur de l'Allemagne facilite au régime hitlérien le maintien du moral de la population allemande par ailleurs, suivant nos informations, déjà précaire. D'autre part, l'Armée et l'opinion polonaise, avertie depuis quelques mois, par des informations publiques de source officielle, que les usines anglaises produisent des centaines d'avions de bombardement par mois, ne peuvent comprendre que depuis 13 jours que tout notre pays est cruellement bombardé, l'aviation alliée n'a rien entrepris pour empêcher l'Allemagne de continuer ses bombardements, la production de ses avions de guerre et de bombes et qu'elle permet à l'Allemagne de déplacer à volonté et regrouper ses troupes.

2) L'absence d'action de l'aviation militaire alliée, jointe à la teneur du communiqué du Gouvernement britannique proclamant que la Grande-Bretagne prépare une guerre de trois ans, permet à l'Allemagne d'employer actuellement la totalité presque de ses forces aériennes contre la Pologne. Cet état de choses rend extrêmement difficile, sinon impossible, toute manoeuvre stratégique de l'Armée polonaise et transforme la guerre polono-allemande en une lutte de toute la Nation contre l'envahisseur à laquelle doivent prendre part, sans distinction, civils et militaires. Je n'ai pas besoin d'insister, Monsieur le Président, quels sacrifices de vies humaines et quelles destructions cet état de choses aura pour conséquence.

J'ajouterai que l'aviation allemande s'applique à détruire nos voies de communication, surtout celles qui nous relient à la Roumanie et dont la possession représente l'unique possibilité de rester en contact avec les Alliés.

Depuis deux jours les villes polonaises suivantes ont été bombardées violemment par l'aviation allemande: Białystok, Brześć, Lublin, Łuck, Pińsk, etc.

3) Dans ces conditions, les envois de matériel de guerre en Pologne, y inclus le matériel d'aviation, par voie de mer et ensuite par la Roumanie, extrêmement importants pour la continuation des opérations militaires, sont, pourtant, du point de vue de la situation actuelle du front polonais, complètement insuffisants et ne peuvent, à eux seuls, d'aucune manière enrayer l'action destructive de l'aviation allemande qui se poursuit depuis 13 jours et qui se développe avec une intensité croissante.

4) La convention militaire franco-polonaise contient l'assurance qu'il sera procédé à une action d'aviation de l'Armée française aussitôt que possible.<sup>22</sup> J'espère, Monsieur le Président, que cette clause vous permettra d'entreprendre des démarches décisives auprès du Haut Commandement des forces aériennes françaises et anglaises qui déclencheront l'action immédiate de l'aviation alliée contre l'Allemagne de la manière indiquée par moi et par le Haut Commandement polonais, ce qui représente présentement l'élément primordial d'une collaboration efficace des Armées alliées avec l'Armée polonaise.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Président, les assurances de ma très haute considération.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 70*

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<sup>22</sup> This is a reference to the protocol from the Polish-French staff discussions of 19 May 1939, doc 126.

## 217

*14 September. Letter from the Ambassador in London  
to the British Foreign Secretary*

le 14 septembre 1939

Son Excellence  
Le Très Honorable Viscount Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I.,  
etc., etc., etc.,  
Principal Secrétaire d'Etat pour les Affaires Étrangères,

Monsieur le Ministre,

La menace que signifie pour la Pologne l'action ininterrompue de l'aviation allemande jouissant d'une supériorité écrasante au point de vue de nombre sur l'aviation polonaise et dirigée aussi bien contre des buts proprement militaires au cours d'opérations militaires que contre les villes et des bourgades non fortifiées et distantes de centaines de kilomètres du terrain de ces opérations – n'a fait que croître depuis le début des hostilités.

Votre Excellence voudra bien se rappeler que agissant conformément aux instructions de mon Gouvernement je n'ai cessé depuis le Vendredi, 1-er septembre, date de l'agression allemande contre la Pologne, d'attirer l'attention du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté sur l'activité aérienne du Reich incompatible avec les principes énoncés par le Président des Etats-Unis d'Amérique dans son message adressé aux Gouvernements des Etats belligérants.

Depuis le 3 septembre, date à laquelle le Royaume Uni se trouve en guerre avec l'Allemagne, je n'ai pas cessé de renouveler des démarches les plus pressantes auprès du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté en lui représentant que la seule aide efficace que nos alliés pouvaient prêter à la Pologne menacée par la presque totalité des forces allemandes, aide indispensable afin de lui permettre une résistance effective, consistait à engager sérieusement l'aviation allemande par celle de la Grande Bretagne et de la France. Le 5 septembre l'Attaché Militaire de Pologne a remis à l'Etat Major des forces aériennes de Sa Majesté le Mémoire suivant: „L'Etat-Major des forces aériennes polonaises demande au Haut Commandement des Forces Aériennes de Sa Majesté une action immédiate de l'aviation de bombardement britannique contre les aérodromes et les régions industrielles allemandes dans le rayon d'activité de cette aviation afin de dégager la situation en Pologne”.

Le même jour j'ai appuyé cet appel directement auprès de Votre Excellence.

J'ai soulevé la même question envers Votre Excellence oralement le jour suivant.

Le Samedi, le 9 septembre, ayant obtenu des informations plus complètes des chefs de nos missions militaires dans le Royaume Uni et en France ainsi que des nouvelles et pressantes instructions de mon Gouvernement, j'ai donné un compte rendu aussi exact que possible de la situation en Pologne au Chef du Département du Centre au Foreign Office en le priant de soumettre à nouveau notre demande à Votre Excellence. De son côté le Chef de la Mission Militaire Polonaise à Londres, le général Norwid-Neugebauer,<sup>23</sup> a fait le même jour une démarche pareille auprès du Chef de l'Etat Major Impérial, le général Sir Edmund Ironside.

Le Dimanche, le 10 septembre, ayant reçu une nouvelle instruction de mon Gouvernement, m'enjoignant d'attirer l'attention du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté sur la situation sérieuse de la Pologne par le fait surtout de l'action aérienne de l'ennemi et de demander instamment à ce Gouvernement de bien vouloir nous indiquer avec un maximum d'urgence ses plans d'action pour l'avenir – j'ai soumis cette question à Sir Alexander Cadogan au Foreign Office. Le jour suivant Votre Excellence a eu la bonté de m'informer que toute action aérienne devait, selon les décisions du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté, rester limitée à une coopération immédiate et étroite avec les opérations militaires sur la frontière occidentale du Reich et que de l'avis des experts militaires britanniques une action de l'armée aérienne indépendante entreprise sur une plus vaste échelle – n'était pas indiquée.

Le Mercredi, 13 septembre, le général Norwid-Neugebauer ayant reçu certaines nouvelles informations d'un caractère sérieux a adressé au Général Ironside une lettre pressante dans laquelle il attire l'attention de celui-ci sur la situation nouvelle et sur l'importance capitale que présente dans ce moment une aide effective de la part de nos alliés – par tous les moyens accessibles et en premier lieu par une action directe aérienne, ainsi que par des livraisons du matériel. Enfin j'ai reçu en date du 13 septembre au soir de mon Gouvernement l'instruction de faire auprès de Votre Excellence des représentations nouvelles en priant le Gouvernement Royal de reconsidérer encore une fois ses décisions en vue de l'état de fait suivant:

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<sup>23</sup> The mission arrived in Paris on 8 September.

„Depuis deux jours les Allemands ont entrepris un bombardement absolument méthodique des villes ouvertes même les plus éloignées des armées en lutte. Il n’y a pas le moindre doute qu’il s’agit en l’espèce d’une méthode visant à une paralysie complète de la vie intérieure du pays. Ont été bombardées de cette façon entre autres les villes de Lublin, Janów, Zamość, Chelm, Kowel, Łuck par des avions volant à des faibles altitudes et dirigeant leur bombes vers le centre de ces villes.”

Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères a informé de cet état de choses les ambassadeurs étrangers et il a fait parvenir au Gouvernement des Pays Bas une protestation formelle du fait de la violation par le gouvernement allemand des engagements que ce gouvernement avait contractés publiquement.

Je n’ai pas manqué de prendre note de la réponse que Votre Excellence a bien voulu donner hier à la Chambre des Lords à une question qui vous a été adressée et qui se reportait aux menaces de bombardement sans pitié „des villes polonaises récalcitrantes” proférées – selon la presse – dans le quartier général du Fuehrer.

Qu’il me soit permis d’y trouver la confirmation de l’attente de mon Gouvernement et le signe que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté est décidé à ne plus tolérer sans en tirer les conséquences qui s’imposent, les agissements indéfendables de l’Allemagne contre la Pologne alliée.

Je saisis cette occasion pour renouveler à Votre Excellence les assurances de ma plus haute considération, avec laquelle j’ai l’honneur d’être, Monsieur le Ministre, de Votre Excellence le très dévoué et obéissant Serviteur.

/-/ Edouard Raczyński  
Ambassadeur de Pologne

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 76*

## 218

*14 September. Cable from the Ambassador in Moscow  
about the situation in the USSR*

Moscow, via Bucharest, 14 September 1939  
Received on 16 September 1939

Mr. Grzybowski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No. 110

Secret

To Minister Beck

Partial mobilisation conducted by the Soviets<sup>24</sup> has led, for the time being, to economic and transport disturbances and to a certain panic among the population. It seems that it is the point of departure for a larger political scheme on the part of the Soviets. Information from neutral sources indicates that the mobilisation caused surprise and confusion at the German Embassy. The English Ambassador received instructions to sound out through the Czech Envoy the possibility of supplies of airplanes and machine guns for us. The Ambassador is sceptical about such a possibility and will inform me of the outcome.

The French military attaché proclaims the readiness of the Soviets to assist us on condition that they be allowed to go through the Vilnius province and Latvia. The French *Chargé d'affaires* disavows general Palasse and thinks, as I do, that the beginning of a new game—blackmail on the part of the Soviets—cannot be ruled out. In this game Turkey may become a factor, as its situation is changing given Italy's neutrality. Data from ... has a serious impact on the Soviet economy, blocking to a large extent the necessary imports of the means of production. Germany's potential in this sphere is limited and hence the Soviets may agree to accommodate the coalition, but at a price. I am personally inclined to presume that they will strive to obtain political compensation in the Baltic, but I cannot rule out that economic compensation could facilitate the matter.

Please confirm reception.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 77*

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<sup>24</sup> This is a reference to the mobilisation of the Red Army announced on 4 September.

## 219

*14 September. Cable from the Ambassador in Moscow  
on articles in the Soviet daily press*

Moscow, 14 September 1939

Received on 16 September 1939

Mr. Grzybowski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No. 111

Secret

The local press is relating information, supposedly from Berlin, about a rising in Eastern Galicia and rioting among the Byelorussians, who are striving to establish an independent republic. I attach some weight to this information, as it was disseminated among army reservists in Moscow a few days ago.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 78*

## 220

*14 September. Cable from the Ambassador in Moscow  
about an article in Pravda*

Moscow, via Bucharest, 14 September 1939

Received on 16 September 1939

Mr. Grzybowski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No. 116

*Pravda* printed an editorial about the causes of Poland's military defeat,<sup>25</sup> which it sees as a result not only of Germany's technical superiority and a lack of effective assistance from the Western states, but also of errors in Poland's

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<sup>25</sup> This was an unsigned article 'About the causes of Poland's military defeat'. Today we know that it was written by Andrei Zhdanov.



nationalities policy. Minorities in Poland are deprived of all rights, they are treated as colonies and for this reason there is an absence of internal consolidation in Poland without which there is no military strength. The article looks like a piece preparing the ground for a possible decision. TASS issued an official *communiqué* about the violation of the Soviet border on 12 September. Four of our planes landed on Soviet territory.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 81*

## 221

*15 September. Cable from the Ambassador in London:  
No reply from the British Foreign Secretary to the Polish note*

London, via Paris, Bucharest 15 September 1939  
Mr. Raczynski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No. 241

Re: Cipher cable No. 239.

Received Cipher cable No. 3

This afternoon, I remitted a note to Halifax calling for air action to be taken in order to relieve us.<sup>26</sup> I placed great emphasis on the barbarian nature of the last bombardments. In reply, Halifax continued to maintain his former stance. As justification, this time he only mentioned the opinion of military experts, according to whom the strength of Germany's air force is so great that an offensive operation of England's air force in the West would not lead to the desired relief of Poland. Military experts are supposedly opposed to the action we are demanding on strictly strategic and military grounds. In material issues, the English show good will.

Since yesterday, the Embassy has remitted four cipher cables from the English Embassy in Poland to the Foreign Office.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 83*

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<sup>26</sup> See doc. 217.

## 222

*16 September. Cable from the Under Secretary of State  
to the Embassy in Moscow on Polish-Soviet relations*

Polmission Moscow

Received cable of 13 September

Sharonov left Krzemieniec on 12 September for the Soviet Union to consult with his government. He was to return in a few days. There is no news of him. Please find out when he is returning. Prior to his departure he spoke on a friendly tone.

All reports about uprisings *in the Galicia and in the Borderlands* are invented. Please inform the Soviet government.<sup>27</sup>

Szembek

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 85*

## 223

*16 September. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassy in Moscow about purchases from the USSR*

Polmission Moscow

To our questions about purchases in Russia, we have so far been receiving evasive answers. Please ask Molotov whether, in the present difficult situation, Poland can count on: (1) the purchase of food, (2) the purchase of sanitary materials, (3) transit through Soviet territory of war *matériel* from allied countries.

I am treating the above only as a feeler—I am not as concerned about the substance as with sensing a reaction.

Beck

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 87*

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<sup>27</sup> See doc. 219.

## 224

*17 September. Cable from the Ambassador in Moscow  
on his discussion with the Deputy People's Commissar  
for Foreign Affairs*

Ambassador Grzybowski's report on his discussion with Mr. Potyomkin  
Moscou, 17 septembre 1939

M. Potemkine m'a fait venir chez lui aujourd'hui 17 septembre, à trois heures du matin, et m'a donné lecture d'une note de son Gouvernement signée par le Président du Conseil, M. Molotov. La note annonce que le Gouvernement soviétique a donné à ses troupes l'ordre de franchir la frontière polonaise. Les motifs indiqués dans la note étaient de telle sorte que j'ai refusé d'en prendre acte. J'ai formulé une protestation catégorique contre la teneur de la note. Etant donné l'absence en Pologne des représentants diplomatiques de l'Union Soviétique, j'ai seulement consenti à communiquer l'information ci-dessus. Je demande des instructions.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 93*

## 225

*17 September. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Consulate in Chernivtsi about the Soviet attack*

17 September 1939

Cable to the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Cernăți

Immediately send a dispatch of the following substance to Paris, London, Rome, Washington, Tokyo, Bucharest:

Today Soviet troops launched an attack against Poland by crossing the border in a number of places with significant forces. Polish units offered armed resistance. In light of the unequal forces, they are conducting a fighting retreat.

We submitted a protest in Moscow. These actions constitute a classic example of aggression.

Beck

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 94*

## 226

*17 September. Cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
to the Embassies in Paris and London about the Soviet attack*

17 September 1939

Cable No. 414

(London)

Ambassador Grzybowski refused to accept Molotov's note and submitted a protest against the aggression.

I approved his position, instructing him to demand passports and leave Moscow.

The Polish government, acting from the territory of Poland in contact with the diplomatic corps, submitted a protest against the Soviet insinuations.<sup>28</sup> Our border units offered resistance to the invasion.

Please declare to the government to which you are accredited that we expect a decisive protest of the allies against this assault. We reserve for Poland the right to make further demands on the basis of existing agreements.

Please inform of the above our agencies: Paris—in Central Europe and in the South, London—in the North, Baltic region and overseas.

Sent to Paris, London.

BECK

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 96*

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<sup>28</sup> The Soviet note that Potyomkin tried to remit to Grzybowski contained the thesis that 'the German-Polish war has revealed the internal bankruptcy of the Polish State. [...] This signifies that the Polish State and its government have factually ceased to exist. For this reason the treaties concluded between the USSR and Poland are no longer in force'.

## 227

*17 September. Note of the Ambassador in London  
to the British Foreign Secretary  
about the Soviet attack on Poland*

le 17 septembre, 1939

Son Excellence,  
le Très Honorable  
Viscount Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I.  
Principal Secrétaire d'Etat  
Pour les Affaires Etrangères,  
Foreign Office, S.W.1.

Monsieur le Ministre,

Sur l'ordre de mon Gouvernement j'ai l'honneur de communiquer au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique ce qui suit:

Aujourd'hui, le 17 septembre, l'Union des Républiques Socialistes Soviétiques s'est livrée à une agression contre la Pologne.

A l'aube des forces importantes soviétiques ont passé la frontière polonaise en plusieurs points. Les troupes polonaises ont résisté. Vu la supériorité des forces soviétiques les polonaises se replient en combattant.

Le Gouvernement Polonais a protesté à Moscou et a donné des instructions à son Ambassadeur de demander ses passeports. Le Gouvernement Polonais attend de la part du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté allié une protestation catégorique contre l'agression commise par l'Union des Républiques Socialistes Soviétiques.

Le Gouvernement Polonais se réserve de faire valoir les obligations découlant pour ses alliés des Traités en vigueur.

Je saisis cette occasion pour renouveler à Votre Excellence les assurances de la plus haute considération, avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être,

Monsieur le Ministre,  
de Votre Excellence le très dévoué et obéissant Serviteur.

Edouard Raczyński, Ambassadeur de Pologne

## 228

*19 September. Note of the Ambassador in London  
to the British Foreign Secretary on the need to transfer  
the seat of government to France*

le 19 septembre 1939

Son Excellence,  
Le Très Honorable Viscount Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I.,  
etc., etc., etc.,  
Principal Secrétaire d'Etat pour les Affaires Etrangères,  
Foreign Office, S. W. 1.

Monsieur le Ministre,

La situation militaire en Pologne dans la guerre actuelle est de nature de pouvoir nécessiter le transfert du siège du Président de la République et du Gouvernement à l'étranger.

Le Gouvernement Polonais a l'honneur de porter à la connaissance du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique qu'il s'adresse à la même date au Gouvernement de la République Française au sujet de l'exercice de la souveraineté du Président de la République et de l'exercice ex-territorial de ses pouvoirs sur le sol français.

Je saisis cette occasion pour renouveler à Votre Excellence les assurances de ma plus haute considération, avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être,

Monsieur le Ministre, de Votre Excellence le très dévoué et obéissant Serviteur,

*E. Raczyński*  
Ambassadeur de Pologne

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 99*

## 229

*20 September. Record of the conversation between the Ambassador  
in London and the British Foreign Secretary  
about the situation of the government of the Republic of Poland*

Report from Ambassador Raczyński's conversation with Lord Halifax  
on 20 September 1939

I raised with Lord Halifax the matter of the situation of the President of the Republic of Poland and members of the Polish government. In keeping with the telephone consultation with Ambassador Łukasiewicz and at his suggestion, I remitted to Lord Halifax a memorandum I had drawn up (appendix),<sup>29</sup> in which I stressed the necessity for the English government to state publicly that:

1) German (or German-Soviet) pressure exerted on Romania not to let the Polish President and members of the Polish government leave its territory constitutes a violation of accepted principles of neutrality;

2) No consequences of the methods forced upon Romania can in any way affect the sovereign rights of the President and the competence of the government;

3) The only legal authority in Poland is President Mościcki and the government he has appointed.

Lord Halifax took the above *démarche ad referendum*, once again emphasising that he views it favourably in principle. He only voiced doubts in connection with point 1, expressing fear that the disclosure of Romania's great weakness in the face of pressure from its neighbours may not lay in the interest of the allies.

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 100*

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<sup>29</sup> Not included in this publication.

**230**

*23 September. Circular note of the Ambassador in Paris  
on the status of the government of the Republic of Poland in France*

To all diplomatic agencies.

The French government has made it possible for the President of the Republic of Poland and the Polish government to install themselves on French territory while preserving their full sovereign rights and extraterritorial exercise of power.

Should the need arise no efforts should be spared so that the government to which you are accredited does not question that the highest Polish authorities, similarly to those of Belgium in 1914, have all the attributes of sovereignty.<sup>30</sup>

Should the need arise, the above can be notified or used in public announcements.

ŁUKASIEWICZ

Sent on 23 September 1939

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 107*

**231**

*23 September. Circular note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
about measures to be taken in case of withdrawal  
of recognition by the country of accreditation*

CIPHER

Polmission:

1) Budapest,

7) Brussels,

2) Sofia,

8) Berne,

3) Belgrade,

9) Copenhagen,

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<sup>30</sup> This is a reference to a precedent when, in August 1914, following the occupation of Belgium by the Germans, the Belgian government carried out all its functions from French territory.



- |               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 4) Madrid,    | 10) Stockholm,     |
| 5) The Hague, | 11) Oslo,          |
| 6) Rome,      | 12) <i>Teheran</i> |

Should the government to which you are accredited, acting under pressure from Germany or the Soviet Union, recognise the Polish government as nonexistent and deny the Polish agency diplomatic status, please submit a sharp protest, burn the ciphers, transfer the sealed archives to one of the allied legations, and remain in place with the personnel.

BECK

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 108*

## 232

*30 September. Note of the Ambassador in London  
to the British Foreign Secretary  
in protest against the German-Soviet agreement*

le 30 septembre 1939.

Son Excellence  
le Très Honorable Viscount Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I.,  
Principal Secrétaire d'Etat pour les Affaires Etrangères

Monsieur le Ministre,

En présence d'une violation flagrante des droits sacrés de l'Etat Polonais et de la nation polonaise que constitue l'accord du 28 septembre 1939 entre l'Allemagne et l'U.R.S.S. disposant des territoires de la République de Pologne au profit de deux états agresseurs, j'élève au nom du Gouvernement Polonais la protestation la plus formelle et la plus solennelle contre ce complot ourdi entre Berlin et Moscou au mépris de toute obligation internationale et de toute morale humaine.

La Pologne ne reconnaîtra jamais cet acte de violence et forte de la justice de sa cause, elle ne cessera de lutter que le jour où son territoire libéré des envahisseurs, ses droits légitimes seront entièrement rétablis.

Par la résistance héroïque de son armée, par la sacrifice patriotique de toute sa population qui s'est manifesté dans la défense à outrance de la capitale Varsovie, de Lwów, de Wilno, de Gdynia, de Modlin et de tant d'autres villes, la nation polonaise a clairement prouvé au monde sa volonté inébranlable de vivre libre et indépendante.

Se basant sur les sympathies unanimes de tous les pays respectueux de la liberté et de la bonne foi dans les relations entre les peuples et confiance en l'appui soutenu que lui garantissent ses traités d'alliance, la Pologne continuera la lutte par tous les moyens en son pouvoir, confiante en son avenir et en la victoire finale.

Je saisis cette occasion pour renouveler à Votre Excellence les assurances de ma plus haute considération, avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être,

Monsieur le Ministre, de Votre Excellence le très dévoué et obéissant Serviteur,

*E. Raczyński*  
Ambassadeur de Pologne

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 113*

## 233

*[September]. Cable of the Ambassador in Paris to legations  
in The Hague, Brussels and Berne about the registration  
of volunteers for the Polish Army in France*

Please begin—in a manner possible in the country to which you are accredited—to accept and register volunteers for the Polish formation in France.

Following reception by the Embassy in Paris of coded information about the number of volunteers, further instructions will be sent.

Sent to: The Hague, Brussels, Berne.

Łukasiewicz

Sent: September 1939

*PDD 1939/II, doc. 121*

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.	– Auswärtiges Amt
a.i.	– ad interim
C.I.E.	– Confédération Internationale des Étudiants
col.	– colonel
DB	– Diplomat in Berlin
DP	– Diplomat in Paris
DBFP	– Documents on British Foreign Policy
DNB	– Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro
F.O.	– Foreign Office
GCIE	– Grand Knight Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India
GCSI	– Knight Grand Commander of The Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire
GISZ	– Generalny Inspektor Sił Zbrojnych [General Inspector of Armed Forces]
HMG	– His Majesty's Government
IKC	– Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny [The Illustrated Daily Courier]
JSJ	– Jean Szembek, Journal 1933–1939
J.C.A	– Jewish Colonisation Association
K.G.	– The Most Noble Order of the Garter
KOP	– Korpus Ochrony Pogranicza [Border Protection Corps]
MFA	– Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mgr	– Monsignore
MOB	– mobilisation
MP	– Member of Parliament
Narkomindel	– see NKID
NKID	– People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs
NSDAP	– Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
OUN	– Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists
PAT	– Polish Telegraph Agency
PBP	– Poland in the British Parliament 1939–1945
PWB	– Polish White Book
PDD	– Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne [Polish Diplomatic Documents]
Politburo	– Political Bureau
polpred	– political representative
RM	– Reichsmark
SA	– Sturmabteilungen

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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SS	– Schutzstaffeln
TASS	– Information Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union
URSS	– Union des républiques socialistes soviétiques
U.S.	– The United States
USA	– United States of America
USSR	– Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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