Vienna, July 15, 1936.

No. 493

SUBJECT: REPORTED ATTITUDE OF THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT ON THE CONVERSATIONS GOING ON BETWEEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE GERMAN MINISTER, von Papen, TENDING TOWARDS THE IMPROVEMENT OF AUSTRO-GERMAN RELATIONS.

SECRETLY CONFIDENTIAL.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington,

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my strictly confidential despatches No. 475, of July 3, and No. 484, of July 10, 1936, reporting on the conversations which have taken place between the Austrian Foreign Minister and the German Minister to Austria, Mr. von Papen, with reference to an endeavor to improve Austro-German relations.
As already reported, the German Minister has
been in Berlin in order to be able to secure the approval
of concrete propositions to be made to the Austrian Govern-
ment. He saw the Foreign Minister on July 11, on his re-
turn, but I have not yet been able to learn with definite-
ness what the result of the conversation was. The For-
egn Minister, however, told me the day before he saw Mr.
von Papen that he was sure there would be nothing but a
difficult and useless hour's conversation which could lead
to nothing as in the major issue Germany was not prepared
to make any concessions or declarations at this time. I
am inclined to believe that Mr. von Papen returned without
any concrete or acceptable propositions, for the Foreign
Minister left Vienna yesterday for a two weeks holiday on
his estate in Styria as he had planned to do and which he
would not be likely to do in case anything has so far devel-
oped out of these conversations in a definite form.

I have, however, received from one of my colleagues
who is very well informed the following information which is
of interest in this connection. He says that the Foreign
Minister some days ago when he discussed with him the con-
versations going on with Mr. von Papen, informed him that
no matter what propositions Mr. von Papen might make, it
would be necessary for the Austrian Government to consult
first with Italy and France, as well as with Hungary. My
colleague informed me that the Foreign Minister stated to
him definitely that he had said this to Mr. von Papen before
he went to Berlin on the visit above referred to.
My colleague further states that the Foreign Minister informed him that Austria was now also not so deeply interested in conversations with Berlin regarding improvement in relations until after the conclusion of the Danubian pact.

I have not yet been able to verify the foregoing either directly from the Foreign Minister, who has left the city on his holiday, or through any of my other well informed colleagues, but I am inclined to believe that it is a correct statement of the situation. In view of the active support which the Italian and French Governments have been giving to Austria, it is understandable that the Austrian Government would keep Rome and Paris informed concerning any conversations with Berlin. In view of the friendly relations existing between the Austrian and the Hungarian Governments and the problems which they have in common, it is further not unlikely that Vienna and Budapest are keeping themselves mutually informed concerning conversations which they may have with Berlin.

As to the possibility that Austria is not particularly interested in direct conversations with Germany until after the Danubian pact has taken definite form and been accepted, this I believe is traceable to the complete lack of confidence which the Austrian Government has in the engagements of the present Government in Berlin. The Government here does not wish to be put in the position of accepting an agreement between Austria and Germany unless supported.
supported by the projected Danish ports. It realises that should there be direct agreement between Berlin and Vienna it would be one which would present little security for Austria and it would decrease the interest which England is again showing in the Danish ports which the Austrian Government looks forward to as the only safe and continued guarantee of its independence. It is interested therefore in the conclusion of these ports guaranteeing its independence and to which Germany should be a partner if possible, and she will then be prepared to conduct conversations with Germany relating to definite improvement of relations.

Respectfully yours,

George S. Messervith.