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Enclosure 2

Memorandum  
March 28, 1940.

Hotel Metropole,  
Brussels.

It is already the end of March and yet the situation on the Western front remains as stationary as it was during the last seven months. Nor seems to be any chance to widen the conflict and to find a new battlefield either in the North or in the South East of Europe. Whereas the Allies succeeded to immobilize the huge German military machinery, Nazi Germany can certainly book a success by preventing the Allies of finding a new battlefield on Germany's left flank, that is in the Scandinavian North. One must even count that Germany will succeed to cover her right flank and prevent that the South Eastern European states should be dragged into the conflict. Even Turkey, which country otherwise must be counted as a faithful ally of England, would prefer to be kept out of the war if this is possible.

American quarters (up to the highest) in Brussels are convinced that Germany will make an offensive in the West and that this offensive is bound to involve either both of the Low Countries or at least Belgium into the war. I do not agree with this view. I still maintain that Germany cannot make an offensive, owing to her shortage of gasoline (petrol) and iron ore. My estimate of Germany's present stock of gasoline is put at two million tons at the utmost -- this would be just enough for a two weeks offensive. But if they start an offensive, they would need minimum six million tons. Wherefrom to get it? Even if they get their full supply from Rumania, this would yield only about a million and a half more tons per annum and to get this quantity up to Germany they must have four months of free shipping on the Danube. The hopes to get Russian oil and gasoline for this "season" is almost nil.

Under these circumstances I agree with the first part of the message of today despatched by the Berlin correspondent of the Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, a leading Dutch paper, who writes that Germany probably will not start an offensive in the West at all, but will try to consolidate herself in her Lebensraum in order to defeat the effects of the blockade.

All this would indicate that we must expect a quiet and uneventful summer, at least in so far as German initiative is concerned. Colonel Requette, one of the leading military writers of Belgium, in an article today comes to the conclusion that the Allies will have to start something. He does not think that the Allies will embark on an offensive on a large scale, but that the Western front will give up her present sleepy and dreamy state and that bombardment of German railroad lines across the Rhine and similar enterprises will compel the Germans to shoot away much of their stock and use up their gasoline which they now want to spare.

I, however,

I, however, can see another "surprise" coming. it is by no means decided yet, but the idea of it starts to get shape. A strong section of the Nazi leaders now contemplate to turn round and advocate to attack Russia.

In a memorandum sent from Tunis in September last year I described the argumentation of a high French general staff officer who, on basis of certain information and on his local knowledge of the Ukraine, was convinced that if until March 1940 Germany cannot achieve anything decisive, then she will turn round and will attack Soviet-Russia. According to his view this she would do to occupy the Ukraine where she can obtain important iron ore deposits in the Donetz district and, if possible, to penetrate to the Volga oil wells. The French officer was convinced that this was feasible. He argued that with forty divisions left on the Siegfried line Germany could withstand the French and British attack during the six weeks needed for her for the conquest of the Ukraine. The officer stated that the German plans to this effect were drawn up by the consideration that the Ukraine dries up much earlier than the North of Russia. Thus in March or April the Germans can make a push with motorized divisions into the Ukraine, while Russia cannot send reinforcements to the aid of the Ukrainian army because of the wet ground.

I learn that in the Baltic countries serious people are convinced that such a change will come. I know that an American friend of mine who knows Hitler well and who was for two years in Russia sent me a message from Copenhagen that such a change of German tactics is absolutely possible.

Moreover six weeks ago a prominent Dutch newspaper publisher came out from Germany. I met him here in Brussels. We knew each other from The Hague. He told me that when he asked the German Press Chief (Dr. Dietrich) about Germany's attitude to Finland, Dietrich told him:

"Finland was a wonderful experience for us. Now we know the strength and weaknesses of the Russian army and we can turn round against them whenever we want."

During the last three days I have got more direct evidence that such a plan is working in German minds and that this question was part in the conversations on the Brenner.

Ribbentrop is against such a course and the army still does not want to hear of a two front war, but Goering and other influential persons are of a different view. They argue:

"At present the supplies from Russia are almost nil. And there is but very little hope that these supplies will considerably increase, despite the promises and pledges of the Moscovites. Consequently, if the peace of the left  
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and right wing of Germany is assured, why not turn round and conquer the goods we want?"

Such a move, if Hitler can be persuaded to it, would have incalculable consequences, especially from the propaganda point of view. The axis could be fully restored; all the neutrals would be overjoyed, including Rumania, and it certainly would make an impression even in the United States. It may even divide to a certain extent allied home opinion.

As I said, no decision has yet been adopted, but the next weeks (or days) may see the taking of such a decision. The army would certainly shudder, but Hitler is for a bold solution. And this would be a bold solution.

This would also fit with Teleki's journey to Rome. Hungary will remain anti-Bolshevik as long as the present group is ruling. Horthy, Teleki, Bethlen and others were members of a nine-membered leadership group of the secret society of the Double Cross during the Bela Kun regime and they swore that they will keep power in their hand and will never let Bolshevism triumph in Hungary again. The next weeks therefore may bring a quite sensational turn in the present situation, should Hitler listen to the sirenes, murmuring: "Go against the arch-enemy!"

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