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Vienna, December 15, 1936.

No. 902.

SUBJECT: TRANSMITTING MEMORANDA WITH RESPECT TO THE
CORRESPONDENT OF THE NEW YORK TIMES IN VIENNA.

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.~~

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

1/2/

I have the honor to transmit herewith two
strictly confidential memoranda, dated respectively December
10 and December 15, which bear on a letter which the corres-
pondent in Vienna of the NEW YORK TIMES for Southeastern
Europe, wrote to the Greek Minister in Vienna, a copy of
which letter is appended to the memoranda dated December 10.
The second paragraph of this letter was construed by the Greek
Minister as containing what practically amounts to a threat.

The Greek

The Greek Minister in Vienna, whom I have known for a number of years and particularly during the period that we both served in Berlin, and with whom I have very friendly personal as well as official relations, brought this letter to my attention. He was inclined to take a serious view of the second paragraph of the letter. The memoranda herewith transmitted will indicate to the Department the manner in which the incident has been handled and which now seems to be satisfactorily settled.

I am not taking up this matter with the NEW YORK TIMES and I doubt whether it would be desirable for the Department to bring this despatch or its enclosures to the attention of the TIMES for the present. The Department is aware that Mr. Gedyo, who is a British subject, is not only the correspondent in Vienna for Southeastern Europe for the NEW YORK TIMES, but also for the LONDON DAILY TELEGRAPH. He is a correspondent of wide and long experience and is quite well informed with regard to the situation in Central and Southeastern Europe. He is in many respects a good correspondent, but he has been inclined to permit his advanced liberal and socialist views to color his despatches to these two papers. This is particularly well understood, I am informed by the British Legation here, in the editorial offices of the DAILY TELEGRAPH. I may inform the Department that on several occasions when I have been home I have discussed Mr. Gedyo with the editor in chief of the NEW YORK TIMES which is therefore also familiar with the good qualities as well as the weaknesses of its Vienna correspondent.

Mr. Gedyo

Mr. Gedye has on the whole proved to be a good correspondent for the NEW YORK TIMES and through the increasing contact which he has maintained with this Legation it has been possible to get a more objective attitude into his despatches to the TIMES. He is, however, almost totally lacking in tact and is of an impulsive and generous nature. His correspondence on the whole therefore is generally good, but occasionally he writes an article which is still colored by very strong personal prejudices.

In the present instance, which is covered by the appended memoranda, the Legation is of the opinion that Mr. Gedye allowed himself to make unwarranted and unwise threats to a Chief of Mission and to use language which his editorial superiors in the NEW YORK TIMES could not, and would not, approve. I have, however, believed that it would be in the general interest to arrange this matter in such a way that it would have no further immediate consequences, which it has happily been possible to do.

However, I have deemed it advisable to bring the foregoing comment and the appended memoranda to the Department's attention for its confidential information as the possibility always remains that Mr. Gedye may become eventually a problem for the NEW YORK TIMES and for this or some other of our Legations in this part of Europe. Because of his impulsiveness and this tendency to color the news with his personal views, Mr. Gedye is not particularly persona grata to the Austrian authorities. He has recently aroused the antagonism of the

Hungarian

Hungarian authorities through an article to which they took quite serious exception. Several months ago he found himself in an unpleasant situation vis à vis the Yugoslav authorities. Were he the correspondent of a paper of less importance than the NEW YORK TIMES, he would undoubtedly have had more serious difficulties than he has had up to now. I personally have endeavored to assist Mr. Gedyo in every possible way for I recognize his generous impulses and his general capacities as a correspondent, but merely wish to point out, as illustrated by the incident covered by this despatch and the appended memoranda, that his lack of tact may eventually bring him into a position in which this Legation would probably not be able to support him in the manner and to the degree to which it would like to do this.

Respectfully yours,

George S. Messersmith.

Enclosures:

1. Memorandum of December 10
2. Memorandum of December 15.

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GSM-MJP-LJP