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EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

MEXICO CITY

Mexico, D. F.
April 6, 1946

The Ministry of Justice of Austria has requested through the Department of State of the United States of America that I furnish a sworn affidavit with reference to information which I have concerning the personality and actuation of Guido Schmidt during the period that I knew him, this information in the affidavit to be used in a penal court in Vienna before which Guido Schmidt is to be tried for high treason.

I am not in a position to furnish a documented affidavit and to recite specific facts adequately documented. In this connection, I must state that it has not been my practice to maintain a personal diary nor has it been my practice to retain in my personal possession copies of official reports and despatches which I have addressed to my Government at the various posts where I have served my Government in foreign countries. It has been my practice to keep my Government fully informed in despatches and informal letters on all phases of interest to my Government on developments in the countries in which I have served. During the period I served in Austria, from the spring of 1934 until the spring of 1937, I so kept my Government informed, and the despatches and letters are on record in the Department of State of the United States in Washington. In view of the fact that I knew Guido Schmidt well and had considerable contact with him during the three years that I was in Vienna, above mentioned, I would not be able to make a documented affidavit without careful examination of the voluminous files in the Department of State in Washington, which under the circumstances of my present duty is impossible.

My memory, however, and particularly because of the importance of developing events in Austria at that time, is clear with respect to salient facts concerning such developments, and I will in this affidavit recite such pertinent facts and express such observations which I drew from them at the time as is possible under the above-mentioned circumstances.

I hereby certify under oath to the correctness of the facts and circumstances below recited.

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In the early part of 1934, I was named Minister to Austria, while serving as Consul General in Berlin. I proceeded to Austria in the spring of 1934 and assumed my duties as Minister to Austria. One of the first people with whom I had contact was Guido Schmidt. The actual capacity in which he was serving, I am not able to state without reference to documents not available to me, but the circumstances of my contact with him showed that he was an official of the Austrian Government closely attached to then President Miklas and the then Chancellor of Austria Dollfuss and was performing relatively important functions in the Foreign Office. He spoke English very well. His wife was a pleasant woman. They showed great friendliness to me and my wife. From the very outset, there was a friendly and apparently mutual sympathetic contact.

My own views with regard to the developments in Germany under the National Socialist regime, my own views with regard to the activities and attitudes and objectives of the leaders of the National Socialist movement in Germany, and my opinion as to the dangers which National Socialism in Germany and its leaders had for the independence and integrity of smaller States and of the threat to the peace of the world were well known. I make mention of this in this affidavit as the fact that in conversation with Guido Schmidt it appeared that these views were also held by him. I had for him a certain respect and talked to him in confidence. I emphasize this in this affidavit as I had a great deal of contact with him during my stay in Austria and considered him a patriotic and understanding Austrian and considered him loyal to President Miklas, Chancellor Dollfuss, and others in the Government whom he was serving and whose confidence he had and who were so thoroughly understanding of the dangers to Austrian sovereignty from National Socialist Germany and its leaders.

My contact with Guido Schmidt, because of the nature of his position in the Austrian Government, was close and he was frequently a welcome guest in the United States Legation in Vienna, and my wife and I were, on several occasions, the guests of Guido Schmidt and his wife in their home. I make mention of this for if I had not had confidence in his attitude as a patriotic Austrian and as a man of sound ideas, there would not have been this personal contact.

When Franz von Papen arrived in Vienna as Minister of National Socialist Germany, I knew from the contact which I had had with Guido Schmidt above described that he was fully familiar with the history of the activities

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of Franz von Papen during the first World War and of his activities during the period between the end of the first World War and the coming into power of the National Socialist regime in Germany. I knew he was familiar with the fact that Franz von Papen had become an instrument of the National Socialist regime in Germany and of the purposes for which he had been sent to Austria as Minister. I recall a number of conversations, the time and place of which I cannot, of course, specify, during the course of which, after the arrival of Franz von Papen in Vienna as Minister, that Guido Schmidt expressed the opinion that Franz von Papen was in Austria for the specific purpose of undermining the Austrian Government and bringing about its subjugation to and incorporation with National Socialist Germany.

After the assassination of Chancellor Dollfuss through the well-known and historical "Putsch" in Vienna and Chancellor Schuschnigg succeeding him, the position of Guido Schmidt in the Austrian Government became more important because of the confidence which Chancellor Schuschnigg had in him, considering him not only a capable official but one thoroughly understanding of the situations with which the Austrian Government had to deal. He became a close adviser of Chancellor Schuschnigg.

When Baron Berger-Waldenegg, who had been Minister of Foreign Affairs, was sent to Italy as Austrian Minister to that country, Schmidt assumed the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Baron Berger-Waldenegg was a good Austrian, patriotic and fully understanding of the dangers which threatened Austria's independence from Germany, and he had carried through as Minister of Foreign Affairs a firm and dignified and patriotic Austrian policy.

In another affidavit which I have prepared in connection with the Nuremberg trials and which is available there, I have given information concerning the activities of Franz von Papen in Austria during my period of duty in Vienna. I have stated under oath that Franz von Papen in conversation in the German Legation in Vienna made it clear to me that it was his purpose to undermine the Austrian Government and to bring about the integration of Austria with Germany and also to accomplish the same end with respect to other States in Southeastern Europe. In that conversation Franz von Papen made it clear that he intended to gain the sympathy and support of various individuals of importance in Austria to bring about this end.

I left Austria in the spring of 1937 having been appointed an Assistant Secretary of State in the

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Department of State in Washington. During the four or five months preceding my departure from Vienna in 1937 - that is during the first months of that year - I began to get information from the most reliable sources that Guido Schmidt had contact with Franz von Papen of a personal character, and aside from that which he necessarily had with him as an officer of the Austrian Government. I had reliable information that Franz von Papen, availing himself of the well-known ambitions of Guido Schmidt, had selected him as one of the instruments he would use to undermine the authority of the Austrian Government within the country itself. When these reports first came to me from the most responsible and informed sources, it was difficult for me to believe them, and I did not at first believe them because of the confidence which I had had in Guido Schmidt and the belief which I had had in his patriotism, and in his understanding of the dangers which threatened his country. I knew that he was ambitious, but I considered this as a natural thing in an intelligent young man who wished to make his way in the service of his Government.

This information, however, which I received from these reliable sources to the effect that Guido Schmidt had become an instrument of von Papen was reinforced by attitudes and activities of Guido Schmidt which I could myself directly observe. During the first months of 1937, therefore, my personal contact with Guido Schmidt became less as I no longer could give him my confidence, but I was not completely convinced up to the time of my departure from Vienna for Washington in the spring of 1937 that Schmidt had actually turned traitor to the Austrian Government and was actually plotting for the integration of Austria into National Socialist Germany.

When I assumed my duties in Washington in the late spring of 1937, in the very nature of my duties in the Department of State, I continued to have close contact with developments in Austria and so far as the part which Guido Schmidt played after the spring of 1937, there is no doubt, for the historical record is there to show it. There is no doubt that in the latter months of 1936 and in the first months of 1937, Guido Schmidt became a party to the plans of Franz von Papen, the German Minister in Vienna, to undermine Chancellor Schuschnigg and President Miklas and the Austrian Government and to bring about its incorporation into National Socialist Germany, under the promise which Franz von Papen made to him on behalf of the National Socialist regime in Germany that Schmidt would become a very important person in Austria as well as in the structure of the "greater" National Socialist Germany in Europe.

Specific

Specific questions have been put to me for reply in this affidavit being as follows:

1) The personality of Guido Schmidt and his attitude towards Germany and National Socialism.

This has been answered in this affidavit. I believe that his attitude during 1934 and 1935 and the first part of 1936 was definite opposition to National Socialist Germany and National Socialism. Out of sheer opportunism and the desire for personal power and position the historical record will show that he became towards the end of 1936 and thereafter an instrument for the undermining of the heads of the Austrian State and the integration of Austria into Germany.

2) The personal ambitions of Schmidt.

The personal ambitions of Schmidt at the outset were those of a young and intelligent man, but later, under the promises of Franz von Papen and through him of the National Socialist regime, he was willing to become an instrument of that regime in order to become Foreign Minister in his country and through it one of the instruments of delivering it and his superiors to National Socialist Germany.

3) Collusion with German personalities.

I had accurate and definite knowledge before I left Austria in the spring of 1937 that Guido Schmidt was having this personal contact with Franz von Papen and all the indications which I had from my personal observations and dealings with Guido Schmidt, and from the most reliable and informed sources, seemed to prove that he had become an instrument of Franz von Papen and through him of National Socialist Germany. Events closely following my departure from Vienna in 1937 and which are historical record prove that this was so.

4) Part played by Franz von Papen in the period preceding the annexation of Austria.

This has been covered in affidavits I have made in connection with the Nuremberg trials and which are available. There is no doubt from my personal observations, from my contact with Franz von Papen, and from my conversations with Franz von Papen, that his mission in Austria had for its primary purpose the destruction of Austrian independence and its integration into National Socialist Germany.

5) Question whether Guido Schmidt provided representatives of western powers with sufficient

information

information relating to events inside Austria as well as to measures taken by Germany against, and demands made by her upon Austria.

Almost until the very end of my stay, Guido Schmidt maintained the appearances of an Austrian patriot definitely opposed to National Socialist Germany and its objectives against Austria. It was quite obvious, however, to me, as I recall it was to other Chiefs of Mission in Vienna, that in the first months of 1937, Guido Schmidt was playing a double role. On the one hand, he was maintaining openly with me and other Chiefs of Mission an attitude of complete opposition to the objectives of National Socialist Germany, and at the same time was conniving with Franz von Papen and National Socialist chiefs in Germany for the destruction of the sovereignty of his country.

6) The opinion which other American personalities held of Schmidt.

My associates in the United States Legation in Vienna were of the opinion, and even more strongly than I, in the months preceding my departure in 1937, that Guido Schmidt was unquestionably already then plotting with National Socialist Germany for the overthrow of his country. The responsible and accredited American correspondents in Vienna were all of that opinion.

7) Reasons, if known to me, why Mrs. Roosevelt, the mother of the late President Roosevelt, while visiting Austria in 1937 refused to meet Guido Schmidt.

The visit of Mrs. Roosevelt, the mother of the late President Roosevelt, to Austria took place after my departure, and I am not in a position to say categorically why she may have refused to meet Guido Schmidt. Two assumptions, however, may, I believe, be drawn with complete security. One is that the late President Roosevelt was fully familiar with the activities of Guido Schmidt from the information which had been passed on to him through my reports and letters and the reports of my successor in Vienna. A second assumption which may be made with security is that those in charge of the United States Legation in Vienna must have given Mrs. Roosevelt the best available information they had concerning the under-cover activities of Guido Schmidt directed against the independence of his country.

Subscribed and sworn to
before me, _____

George B. Messersmith.

In Mexico, D. F., Mexico
this _____ day of April, 1946