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NO. 1267

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,
Berlin, Germany, April 28, 1933.

SUBJECT: With reference to alleged activity in
increasing the military efficiency of
Germany.

STRICTLY
CONFIDENTIAL

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor to inform the Department that through a source which I have found reliable, I am informed that at a cabinet meeting about three weeks ago, the exact date of which I have not been able to determine, the Reichswehr Minister, General Blomberg, presented a project for increasing the military efficiency of Germany which covers a period of three years. At this cabinet meeting President von Hindenburg is said to have been present. General Blomberg's project covers a three years' program of making Germany again efficient in a military way, that is, to be in a position of taking offense or of meeting any offensive action against it. My informant states that Chancellor Hitler expressed his satisfaction with the program in every detail and his satisfaction that it was presented by

General

General Blomberg; but that it would have to be carried out in one year instead of three. To this General Blomberg is said to have responded that this was impossible. The President is then said to have intervened and suggested a period of two years which was agreed upon. No information is available to my informant as to the nature of the program, and this information is transmitted to the Department as of possible interest; but I am not able to vouch for the accuracy of the statements made therein or that such a program has actually been worked out and presented to the cabinet and agreed upon by it. My informant is usually accurate and has connections which lead me to believe that he may have secured it through one of the persons present at the meeting or through some one immediately and closely associated with him. I shall endeavor to find whether the foregoing can be confirmed and shall not fail to advise the Department.

That the manufacture of certain war material seems to be increasing in Germany may I believe no longer be doubted. The reports from Consul General Dominian at Stuttgart indicate increased activity in the factories in that district. I am informed by a well-informed person who has had close contact with one of the ranking members of the Soviet Mission in Berlin for years, that the Soviet Mission recently

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endeavored to get delivery in May for a considerable supply of the tubular metal framing used in aeroplanes and that they were informed that they could not possibly get delivery until June or July, more likely July, as German factories were busy on material of this kind and were working double shift. I am informed by the same contact that his friend in the Soviet Mission here has told him that during the last three months the Russian Government has been slowly breaking off all military contact with Germany and intends to do so entirely. The Soviet Government has been buying all sorts of military supplies in Germany according to this contact, and was exceedingly anxious to get this metal tubing for aeroplane frames in a very large quantity "before the contact between the Russian and the German military ceased".

The Department is aware that on various occasions Chancellor Hitler has emphasized in public declarations as well as in private conversations, the desire of the German Government for peace. In a recent conversation however, with an American whom he received, Mr. Hitler emphasized the necessity of peace to Germany and to the National Socialist Party in order that it might consolidate its position. This is the first time to my knowledge that Mr. Hitler has coupled even in a private statement or conversation, in his references to the necessity

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for peace, the need for Germany to consolidate her position. There is much reason to believe that the present Government and the leaders of the National Socialist Party are sincere in their desire for peace if one has reference to quiet and undisturbed peace for a limited period; but the sincerity of such declarations with regard to the desire for peace over a long period is inconsistent with the impetus being given in every possible way to extreme militarism among all classes and to the military training of various kinds which is being developed with an extraordinary rapidity even among small children. In my conversations with various persons connected with the National Socialist movement, they have always emphasized the necessity to Germany of peace; but when one judges this remark in the light of other statements, one gathers the distinct impression that this desire for peace for the present comes not so much from a love of peace as from a belief that Germany must have time to pull herself together and to strengthen her position. I cannot get the impression that the attitude of the Germans with whom I come in contact is in any sense optimistic towards peace over a long period.

Two members of the staff of the Consulate General who have recently made trips within a radius of 50 miles of Berlin by automobile, have emphasized that in practically every village and town, in fields and

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in woods, men could be found drilling, engaged in target practice and in various sorts of military maneuvers. All this may be stimulated by the Party for the purpose of diverting the minds of the people from other things, notably that nothing has been done to improve the economic situation. But information is coming to the Consulate General from various sources throughout the country that similar interest in military drill and exercise is being shown all over. A movement of this kind once started is not easily stopped.

As an officer of our Government who gets in contact with a good many people in all conditions of life in Berlin, I cannot for the present have any confidence in declarations with respect to the desire of Germany, either of the Government or of the people, for peace. On the other hand the whole essence of the National Socialist Government is that Germany must reassert her position in the world, and even the spirit of the new church, which an endeavor is being made to organize, is exceedingly militant as has been brought forth in despatch No. 1239 of April 15 from this office.

Respectfully yours,

George S. Messersmith,
American Consul General.

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