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POLAND.

February 26, 1943.

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 1.

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Viscount Halifax to Mr. Eden.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 96.)

Sir,

Washington, February 13, 1943.

I HAVE the honour to report on the events surrounding the recent visit of General Sikorski and their relation to the political activities of Poles and Polish Americans in the United States.

2. It is understood that General Sikorski regards his visit as a success. Whether he really does so and what is the nature of that success is a matter of some interest. The avowed purpose of the visit was to accomplish unity, and there has since been in the Polish American press a good deal of emphasis on the success in this direction which General Sikorski achieved. It is as well, therefore, to examine what is the nature of this unity.

3. It was clear from the first that what General Sikorski wanted most was the support of the American Administration for Polish aspirations in the post-war settlement. That the Russians were well aware of this was shown by the cordial telegram sent to the General by M. Stalin wishing him every success on his visit and recalling the agreement that had been reached between them. As reported in my telegram No. 6248 of the 26th December, the General received no such assurances from the President as in his conversations with me he had said the President had given, and even the letter which at his request the President gave him was couched in only the most general terms. The latter I referred to in my despatch No. 88 of the 11th February.

4. An occurrence which affected the whole course of the visit was the coincidence with the Prime Minister's arrival of the resolution by the Polish National Council in London on the 2nd December expressing Poland's territorial aspirations. As a result of this, General Sikorski found himself in the position of having to defend both the Polish National Council's resolution and the Polish-Russian Treaty of 1941. In his endeavour to please the supporters of both, he failed to be convincing to either. Most of the Polish language press assumed, however, either through wishful thinking or for the purpose of propaganda, that he stood for the frontiers of September 1939.

5. From the moment of his arrival General Sikorski was consistently attacked by M. Matuszewski, the leading Pilsudskist and a brilliant writer, in the Opposition newspaper, *Nowy Swiat*, and through various media employed by Knapp (National Committee of Americans of Polish Descent). The latter organisation, which was formed some while ago, largely at the instigation of M. Matuszewski for the purpose of drawing together the Opposition elements, has increased in strength and has branches in Chicago and Detroit. In Detroit its mouthpiece is the *Dziennik Polski*, a daily newspaper of long standing and large circulation. The admitted purpose of Knapp was described in *Nowy Swiat* on the 4th January in the following terms: "As a part of the American public we can influence the formulation of public opinion in the United States . . . to protect our country, the United States, from a repetition of errors made at Versailles. From our conception of this duty . . . emerges the necessity . . . for American Polonia to defend the programme of the reconstruction of Poland with its eastern frontiers intact and increased at the expense of the Germans in the north and in the west." That Knapp does not, in fact, represent American Polonia at the moment is clear from the opposition to it of the majority of the Polish American press and of the long-founded Polish American Council. It is, indeed, being used by the Polish refugee Opposition, which is very strong, and this Opposition, containing a number of experienced politicians, is making great headway. Given the feelings existing between Poles and Russians, even if they be American citizens, this is not unnatural, since the chief platform of Knapp is resistance to Russian demands. A letter⁽¹⁾ written by M. Matuszewski to the *New York Times* on the 3rd January, a copy of which I enclose, sums up the attitude of the Opposition.

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

[39—19]