

(C O P Y)

C 283292

MOST SECRET AND PERSONAL

MEMORANDUM

We have received assurances in writing from the Vichy Government that they are determined to retain control of their Colonial Empire and Fleet and that they will not take the initiative in attacks on us (memorandum of the 17th October). It may be difficult for them to go beyond this on paper since they must be careful in their correspondence to avoid rousing German suspicions. There have however been two valuable personal contacts with Vichy. The first came to London in October as an emissary of Marshal Petain and has since conveyed our views to the Marshal; more recently Monsieur Dupuy has been in Vichy for a fortnight as Canadian Charge d'Affaires and is now in London. Marshal Petain's emissary has now informed us that the Marshal has given the following assurances:

- 1) France will sign no separate peace with the Axis before the termination of hostilities between the British Empire and Germany.
- 2) France will not cede air or naval bases or the French Fleet to the Axis Powers and will resist by force of arms in North Africa any attempt on the part of the Spanish, Germans or Italians to seize her Colonies.
- 3) France accepts the submission of French Equatorial Africa to General de Gaulle as a fait accompli up to the termination of hostilities, it being understood that French Equatorial Africa will then be restored to France and that no new enterprise will be directed against French West Africa, Morocco and North Africa. (It will be noted that this assurance, by recognising the existing position in Equatorial Africa, goes further than we asked (see paragraph (3) of Circular telegram M 98).

Monsieur Dupuy, the Canadian Charge d'Affaires, had certain important conversations with Marshal Petain on which he is reporting to his Government early next week. It is hoped it will be possible for a summary of his report to be telegraphed later.

We are now considering the situation in the light of the above information.

24th December, 1940