

MEMORANDUM.

MOST SECRET AND PERSONAL.

1. The Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs on March 16th asked His Majesty's Ambassador what the attitude of the United Kingdom and France would be if the Germans attacked the Netherlands without attacking Belgium. The Minister for Foreign Affairs recalled that in a speech on December 19th he had said that the position of the Netherlands would not be a matter of indifference to Belgium; it would be parlous if the Netherlands were to apply to the United Kingdom and France for help and nothing had been decided in advance.

2. Sir L. Oliphant was on March 19th instructed to inform the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the United Kingdom Government appreciate his enquiry and will give a definite answer after consulting the French Government, but that their immediate reaction is as follows:

- (a) If in the event of a German attack on the Netherlands Belgium went to the assistance of the Netherlands the United Kingdom Government are in no doubt whatsoever that the Allies would immediately come with all force to help Belgium.
- (b) In view of the Minister for Foreign Affairs speech of December 19th the United Kingdom Government would be unwilling to assume that, in the event of a German attack on the Netherlands, the Belgian Government would not immediately give active assistance to that country, but in the unlikely event of the Belgian Government deciding on such a course the United Kingdom Government think that the Allies, would in response to a request for assistance from the Netherlands Government, go to the assistance of the Netherlands by operating Air Forces across Belgium, and that they would also think it necessary to send troops into Belgium, with a view not only to protecting themselves but also to giving all possible assistance to the Dutch.