

British Interests in Soviet Union 1583/4/39BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON D.C.

No. 1195.

October 12th 1939.

My Lord,

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With reference to my telegram No. 561 of October 5th, I have the honour to inform you that during a conversation to-day with the Counsellor of this Embassy, Mr. Moffat referred to the enquiry which I made of the Secretary of State regarding the willingness of the United States Government, in the possible event of a rupture of diplomatic relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, to undertake the representation of British interests in Moscow.

2. Mr. Moffat informed Mr. Mallet that the United States Government was quite willing, provided the Soviet Government would give its assent, to take over British interests in the Soviet Union in the event of a rupture of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union. He stated, however, that it was possible that the Soviet Government would not agree to the interests of one government in the Soviet Union being represented by another government. On several occasions in the past when the American Embassy in Moscow had made enquiries of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs regarding the welfare of citizens of countries which had no diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union (for instance Holland), it had been informed categorically

The Right Honourable

that/

The Viscount Halifax, K.G.,
etc., etc., etc.

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that the Soviet Government was unwilling to discuss with the Embassy matters concerning the protection of citizens or interests of a third country.

Mr. Moffat also pointed out that even if the Soviet Government should in principle assent to the representation by the United States Government of British interests in the Soviet Union, conditions in that country were such that the Embassy would be seriously handicapped in its effort to protect such interests. The United States Embassy at Moscow at the present time found it extremely difficult effectively to protect American citizens and interests in the Soviet Union, and it seemed likely that it would encounter even greater difficulties in representing the interests of another country.

I have the honour to be,
with the highest respect,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient,
humble servant,

(Sgd) LOTHIAN.