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Blockade. Ser. 1479/11/39

BRITISH EMBASSY,

8

WASHINGTON D.C.

-/10

No. 471.

November 9th 1939.

Sir,

As you will recollect, on September 10th I had the honour to inform you that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, while they would be compelled to use their belligerent rights to the full, intended to use their best endeavours to facilitate innocent neutral trade so far as was consonant with their determination to prevent contraband goods reaching the enemy. In order to secure their object His Majesty's Government had established contraband control bases at Weymouth, Ramsgate, Kirkwall, Gibraltar and Haifa. Vessels bound for enemy territory or neutral ports affording convenient means of access thereto were urgently advised to call voluntarily at the appropriate base in order that their papers might be examined and that when it had been established that they were not carrying contraband of war they might be given a pass to facilitate the remainder of their voyage. It was explained that any vessels which did not call voluntarily would be liable to be diverted to a contraband control base if an adequate search by His Majesty's ships at sea was not practicable.

*Done
10/11*

The attention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom has now been called to certain provisions of the joint resolution approved on November 4th - the Neutrality Act of 1939 - and of the

proclamation/

The Honourable

Cordell Hull,

HOC:
L/JGF: FRHM:MS

Secretary of State of the United States,
Washington, D.C.

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proclamation issued by the President on the same day under section 3 of the Act, defining "combat areas".

Under section 2, subsections (a) and (g) of the Act it is unlawful for any American vessels to carry any passengers or any articles or any materials to any port in a belligerent country other than those situated within the areas defined in subsection (g). Under section 3 of the Act it is also unlawful for any American vessel to proceed into or through any "combat area". These "combat areas" have now been declared by the President's proclamation of November 4th to include all the navigable waters within the following limitations:-

"Beginning at the intersection of the North Coast of Spain with the meridian of 2° 45' longitude west of Greenwich;

Thence due north to a point in 43° 54' north latitude;

Thence by rhumb line to a point in 45° 00' north latitude; 20° 00' west longitude;

Thence due north to 58° 00' north latitude;

Thence by a rhumb line to latitude 62° north, longitude 2° east;

Thence by rhumb line to latitude 60° north, longitude 5° east;

Thence due east to the mainland of Norway;

Thence along the coastline of Norway, Sweden, the Baltic Sea and dependent waters thereof, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Spain to the point of beginning."

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom appreciate that the effect of the foregoing provisions is to make it unlawful under American law for any American vessel to call at any port in the United Kingdom or at any port in a belligerent country in the Mediterranean. I am, however, instructed by His Majesty's

Principal/

Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
to inform you, however, that His Majesty's
Government in the United Kingdom feel obliged, in
order to prevent contraband goods reaching the
enemy, formally to reserve their rights to exercise
their belligerent rights in respect of United States
vessels in the manner indicated in my note of
September 10th.

I have the honour to be,

with the highest consideration,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

(Sd/-) LOTHIAN