

Prime Minister's Messages (Amic.)

G 40/21/41

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

July 8, 1941.

SECRET

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Acknowledged.

My dear Lord Halifax:

I am enclosing herewith for your information
a paraphrase of a message received here today for
the President from the Prime Minister.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Enc.

Recd.

See file 11/11/41
to Mr. Green Borne

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[Signature]

[Signature]
11.7

His Excellency

The Right Honorable

The Viscount Halifax, K.G.,

British Ambassador.

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM

FROM: American Embassy, London.
TO: Secretary of State, Washington.
DATED: July 7, 1941.

I read the documents on defense plan No. 3 with relief and encouragement. Needed and timely assistance would be furnished by the placing into operation at once of such a plan. The burden at present upon our resources is much too heavy.

2 There are continual changes in the Battle of the Atlantic. Due to the fact that the U-boats are continually working farther West, it has recently been necessary to provide diagonal escorts throughout their passage for the East-bound convoys, and it is necessary now to keep the West-bound convoys intact and provide for them a diagonal escort almost to Newfoundland, rather than disperse them half-way across the Atlantic.

3 As a result, the escorts' strength is at present not more than half of that necessary when we were escorting up to 35 degrees West only. Whether or not these reduced escorts will be sufficient to protect the convoys is very questionable.

4 Two ships were damaged, three U-boats sunk, and five ships of the convoy were sunk in the one trial of strength we have had so far over a convoy with this reduced protection. The convoy [during its passage] was attacked by at least eight U-boats during its passage, according to our estimate, and so we do not consider this unsatisfactory.

5 However, this outcome was attained only by reinforcing the east bound convoy with escorts which we took from two west bound convoys which were by chance in the vicinity. Taking the escort from a west bound convoy means that there will not be adequate protection for the next east bound convoy, and we are at this moment, concerned regarding the safety of an east bound convoy which was left without adequate protection for this reason.

6 It would be possible for us to furnish better protection to the Freetown and Gibraltar convoys, now escorted poorly or not at all, if defense plan No. 3 were introduced.

7 Defense plan No. 3's introduction would also be considerably strengthened by our anti-invasion plans, since a greater portion of our destroyer force, now in the Western Atlantic, could be brought over here.

8 It has been our good fortune to be able to round up all eight of the supply ships of the enemy which were out, and we believe that if we are able to keep them off the seas, their despatching of warship raiders onto the trade routes will be unlikely and the operations of their U-boats will ^{be} impeded. A predominant part in keeping the seas clear would no doubt be played by your striking and task forces with their aircraft carriers.

F 109/57/41
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C. K. ...
on

9 Senator Wheeler's indiscretion concerned me a great deal. In spite of the fact that he set no specific time for the sailing to Iceland of the expedition, his statement was dangerous in that had the enemy discovered that the expedition had left Newfoundland but not where it was headed, Wheeler's statement made the destination clear. The enemy would have had time to shift seven or eight U-boats to an appropriate intercepting position, if they had meant to interfere with this convoy. The present disposition of U-boats, as made known to us by D.F. bearings and signals and the positions in which independent ships and convoys have been attacked, and as we believe it to be, is the basis for this. The safe arrival there of your men is my prayer.