



AMBASSADE DE SUISSE
EN GRANDE-BRETAGNE

aa

LONDON, W. 1, le 28 décembre 1970
77-81, Gloucester Place

Réf. 583.0.s.d. - RK/rk

ad i.A.15.41.10.GB

Confidentiel

Service du protocole
du Département politique fédéral
B e r n e

Monsieur le Ministre,

Par votre lettre du 11 de ce mois, vous avez témoigné votre intérêt pour la communication que j'avais adressée le 20 novembre à Information et presse au sujet de Lord Arran.

D'une autre source, suisse mais également bien informée, j'ai appris qu'un sérieux désaccord avait surgi entre le Captain Evans, chargé de la presse et de l'information à la légation britannique, en fait chef du Service de renseignements, et son collaborateur Gore, qui aspirait à monter son propre réseau. Le futur Lord Arran aurait entre autres provoqué un incident fâcheux avec des Japonais. En dernier ressort, Evans aurait demandé, et obtenu, le rappel de cet encombrant agent.

Ces questions touchent à un domaine trop délicat pour que je puisse espérer davantage de détails. Que des appréciations contradictoires sur la façon de traiter le "cas suisse" eussent existé ressort du livre, déplaisant mais significatif à cet égard, de Sir John Lomax, "The diplomatic Smuggler". Conseiller économique à Berne en 1941, partisan de méthodes radicales à notre égard, Lomax flétrit les faiblesses de son Ministre et du Foreign Office. Les extraits suivants figurent aux pages 120 à 122.

"After sharing in the confident and successful diplomacy of the Madrid embassy, the doubts, timidity and drift of the Berne legation in 1941 were a painful contrast. When the moment of crisis arrived in June 1941, a year later than in Spain, the British side held a fair hand. But the cards were feebly played, the enemy took all the tricks, and the prizes were allowed to slip away one by one. It was infinitely galling to sit as a powerless spectator whilst London tamely submitted to be stripped of Swiss supplies by terms imposed from Berlin...

The mission in Berne was composed of professional diplomats, men attuned to the cautious ways of the bureaux, and accustomed

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to observe and comment rather than to influence events. On the London side, the same was true; control rested in the hands of those who would think their art debased by deploying diplomacy for coercion, and believed that even wartime negotiations should never display hostile intentions...

At a luncheon given to bid farewell to my predecessor, and attended by Swiss top officials I stated my point of view in plain terms. It was not well received by guests or hosts. There was a painful silence; and soon the party broke up. Afterwards I was taken to task by my chief. My remark - he thought - would annoy the Swiss and forfeit their goodwill: it was in poor taste to air controversial matters at a social gathering, and the presence of my colleague, but worse still was to meddle in matters of policy, a preserve of the head of the mission in consultation with the Foreign Office.

I replied that if Swiss goodwill took the form of preferential treatment for the Hitler régime, it was not worth having; and that plain speaking was obviously called for in fairness to the Swiss government which should know in advance the consequences of signing up with the Germans. As for policy making, I pointed out that London could hardly decide anything without knowing the facts, and perhaps we had better telegraph home the terms of the proposed Swiss-German pact.

So a telegram was drawn up, and I insisted that my words at the luncheon should be reported, together with a suggestion that the supplies to Switzerland should be cut off as a preliminary warning. To this my chief added his recommendations that no counter-action should be taken, and gave his reasons. They amounted to the advantage of having a political sounding-board in Europe, plus red-cross and prisoner-of-war matters; and he added that counter-measures would annoy the Swiss and destroy the good social position he had built up in Berne...

But when the answer came, it was my turn to endure the embarrassment which awaits those who speak out of turn. The proposal to impose counter-measures was turned down; instead there was to be first an enquiry to confirm or deny the details of the proposed pact with Berlin and then a mild remonstrance with the Foreign Minister, Pilez-Golaz, a convinced believer in German victory and in a policy of gaining goodwill for the Swiss by helping it on. Naturally the Swiss soon saw that my standpoint was not shared by my government, and so concluded that they had nothing to worry about. The signature of the treaty was delayed as I continued to protest bitterly to the Swiss, but it was all to no purpose. Eventually the pact was signed, and the route for special supplies to the United Kingdom was finally closed."

Veillez agréer, Monsieur le Ministre, l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.

L'Ambassadeur de Suisse:

