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XIX. United States Trade With Spain

Statement by the Acting Secretary of State, Mr. Welles

(Dept. of State Bulletin, March 6, 1943, Vol. VIII, No. 193)

At the time American forces landed in North Africa the President gave the Spanish Government unqualified assurances that no action would be taken by our forces which would call for any departure by the Spanish Government from its position of neutrality in the war. The Spanish Government, on our invitation, gave us unqualified assurances that for its part the Spanish Government was determined to continue its policy of neutrality and that it would resist by force any external aggression against its territories from whatever source.

Our trade with Spain is a two-way trade, and there are certain commodities in Spain which are needed in our war effort. It is naturally in our interest that those Spanish commodities needed in this country should reach the United States rather than fall into enemy hands, and to accomplish this a trade program is necessary. The trade program with Spain has been carefully reviewed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Trade between the United States and Spain is of course subject to the control system jointly maintained by the United States and the British Governments, since the British are likewise engaged in a two-way trade program with Spain. The interchange of goods with Spain is a matter of

joint discussion and programming between United States and British authorities. Before any goods from outside of Spain are permitted by the United States and British authorities to proceed to their destination the fullest assurances satisfactory to both the British and the United States Governments must be given by the importers and the Spanish Government that the goods will not be allowed to reach enemy hands, directly or indirectly.

As regards wartime trade between the United States and Spain, it must be recognized that this trade can be maintained only to such extent as both countries believe to be in their respective national interests. Naturally in the case of the United States all considerations in respect to foreign trade are definitely subordinated to the conduct of the war.

Spain requires a determinable minimum amount of petroleum from the Western Hemisphere to maintain her economic life. The carefully restricted quality of petroleum which has been cleared by the two Governments destined to Spain has with the exception of packaged lubricants been obtained from sources outside of the United States and has been transported exclusively in Spanish tankers. This had had no effect whatsoever on the quantity of petroleum available to any consumers in the United States. The restricted volume of petroleum imports into Spain has provided for minimum current needs and makes the accumulation of stocks impossible. No petroleum products of aviation grade have been included.