

1093

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785017

ACC

10000/109/1079

ITALIAN MERCHANT S
JAN. - AUG. 1945

1094

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785017

10000/109/1079

ITALIAN MERCHANT SHIPS SOLD TO ARGENTINA
JAN. - AUG. 1945

1093

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785017

43

C.O.

Please see files 42 - for action taken by Gen Sec. re

Min 39 & min. 41. Reply awaited.

WBC
2/6/45

1098

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785017

2663

To. C.O.O.

37

Telco 36 is in reply to C.C.'s letter of 17/4/45 re: 30
re - Redemption of Italian Merchant Vessels and to Argentina.
Would you mind taking this matter up with the C.C.? Thank you

CCO
22/4/45

38

ExComm

19. Sec 36. Premiums by Italian

Port Ltd. want the Ship's
in store items. Note parcels
1 x 4 of 17.10.30.

24/5.

39
Econ. Sect. to find out view of 91. Sub.
18/25/4.

40

Capt Amuly

Please handle ref 39 etc.

25/5

41

TO : Economic Section

27 May 45

38.

Examine

19. Sec 36. Presumably Italian

Port list not want the ships

in these terms note paras

1 x 4 of 1721 30.

24/5.

39

Econ Sect. to find out views of 91. Enb.
17/25/4.

40

Capt Arnoldy

Please handle ref 39 etc.

25/8

41

TO : Economic Section

27 May 45

It would be appreciated if you would find out the views of the Italian Government regarding subject matter, in accordance with Minute No 39 which refers, in particular, to Folio 30 and AMQ's reply, Folio 36

2002

A. D. Arnoldy

A. D. ARNOLDY
Captain

785017

31

So hecc

See from your letter at 13
that Mr. Myron Taylor is interested
with problem referred to at HQ
at 30. Should not a copy of 30
have been sent to him?
Li 13/4

32

TO: CSO to Exec Comm'r

Your Minute 31. Quite right. Please add Mr. Myron Taylor and
also Brigadier Parkinson to the distribution list.

*Letter typed
and sent
20 Apr. 45*

*P.
J.A.C.*

20 Apr 45

33

C.S.O.:

Upon phone inquiry, I find that G-5 have referred this matter to
G-4. (Mov & Trn) suggesting that if they cannot act on it, it will be
referred to C.O.S. G-5 will so inform us of what transpires.

*gk
Major.*

28 April 45.

A 30/4.

Lab.

30

34

Please advise today who will inform me if anything definite

has been done

11/5/45

See

35

*Please advise again re from 30 - said we waiting for a reply from
your press group.*

17/5/45

18 May

785017

Let Mr. Myron Taylor
with problem referred to AFH42
at 30. Should not a copy of 30
have been sent to him?

Li 19/4

32

TO: C30 to Exec Comm'r

Your Minute 31. Quite right. Please add Mr. Myron Taylor and
also Brigadier Parkinson to the distribution list.

Letter typed
and sent
20 Apr 45 JH.

P.
J.A.Q.

20 Apr 45

33

G.S.C.:

Upon phone inquiry, I find that G-5 have referred this matter to
G-4 (Mov & Trn) suggesting that if they cannot act on it, it will be
referred to G.C.S. G-5 will so inform us of what transpires.

J.P.
Major.

28 April 45.

A 30/4.

Let. Please copy today's info will inform me if anything definite by
has been done 11/5/45 30/4

500. Please copy again re from 30 - said no waiting for a reply from
Mr. J. W. Trump. 17/5/45

18 May

28.
HEADQUARTERS, ALLIED COMMISSION
Navy Sub-Commission APO 394

NSC/2112
11 April 1945.

MEMORANDUM FOR EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER:

Subject: Italian Merchant Vessels Sold to Argentina.

1. The attached correspondence file is returned. The United States Embassy has correspondence which is believed to be indicative of the attitude of the Argentina Government with reference to the redemption of the subject vessels. The correspondence has been requested from the Embassy but has not been received to date.

2. While the matter has been outstanding since 16 January 1945, Major Rively indicates that the urgency precludes making a complete investigation and study before action is taken. Under these circumstances, there is no objection to forwarding the letter proposed by the Legal Sub-Commission, AC. The views of the Chairman, Mediterranean Shipping Board could be obtained by forwarding a copy of the letter to that office for comment direct to Allied Force Headquarters.

Ch. Hamm

REAR ADMIRAL
CHIEF, NAVY SUB-COMMISSION, AC.

Liaison Div.

31.
Letter to G-5 signed by CC & returned
herewith for despatch. Copies have been withdrawn
for CC's & E.C.'s files.

17. Apl.

W. Starnes
May

FILE TAKEN OVER FROM LIAISON
DIVISION ON 18. April. 45.

H. G.

2001

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785017

27

TO: Chief, Navy Subcommittee

Reference conversation Admiral WARREN - Major STEARNS, the matter of retrieving Italian merchant vessels sold to Argentina has received considerable attention from this Headquarters and AFHQ. However, no positive action has been taken as yet. The latest instructions AC has received from AFHQ (folio 21) state that all further correspondence on this matter should be cleared through the Navy Subcommittee to the Chairman, Mediterranean Shipping Board; accordingly, this matter is turned over to you for whatever action you deem most appropriate.

Legal Subcommittee was brought into the picture and asked to draft an appropriate letter to higher authority suggesting that this subject be referred as soon as possible to the Combined Chiefs of Staff. However, before such action is taken, it is believed some positive decision or recommendation should be obtained from the Chairman, Mediterranean Shipping Board.

Office of the Exec Commr
5 April 45


L. W. STEARNS
Major, AGD

2660

MEMORANDUM

26

TO : Chief Commissioner (through Liaison Division).

1. Herewith is submitted for your approval draft letter to AFHQ.

2. Reference paragraph 3. I do not know whether you feel that we should ask to see the contract. At the moment we have the P.M.'s letter stating categorically (paragraph 2) that the option can only be exercised at the end of the war. Naturally without seeing the contract I cannot confirm or dispute this opinion. If the option were exercisable now CCS or AFHQ might require the Italian Government to exercise it under the Armistice. In any case I feel that after 2 months delay it may seem strange to ask the P.M. for the contract now; on the other hand if we do not, I think we should protect ourselves.

3. Reference paragraph 6. As this letter is only a draft I have not had the correspondence re-typed.

4. Reference paragraph 7. I feel myself that the matter should go to CCS since it only affects CICMED after the ships have been recovered from Argentina.

Legal S/C
3 April 1945

W. E. Behrens

W. E. BEHRENS, Colonel,
Deputy Chief Legal Advisor.

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
APO 394
ECONOMIC SECTION
Supply Division

Ref. 6.01/ES

31 August 1945

MEMORANDUM:

TO: Executive Commissioner

AUG 31 1945

1. Reference your 6526/45/EC of 27 August 1945.
2. The matter has been referred to Mr. Gibson-Graham, Chairman of the Mediterranean Shipping Board, within whose jurisdiction the matter at present rests.
3. Mr. Hanvey, of MWT, who has taken this up with Mr. Gibson-Graham, will inform us in the future of any developments. All such info will be forwarded to your office.
4. A copy of our interim reply to Minister de Casperi's memo of 17 August is forwarded to you for your information.

Charles W. Walton
CHARLES W. WALTON
Colonel
Chief, Supply Division

(Mr. Arnold) *P.G.*

265 *1/4*

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
APO 394
ECONOMIC SECTION

Ref. 6.01/13

31 August 1945

My dear Minister de Gasperi:

Receipt of your Memorandum to the Allied Commission, N. 6/2315/1239 of 17 August 1945 is hereby acknowledged.

The matter has been passed to the Mediterranean Shipping Board, within whose jurisdiction the matter at present rests.

This office has been informed that that office will inform you of further developments in this matter.

Very truly yours,

(Signed)

CHARLES W. WALTON
Col. P. MCKINLEY
Brigadier General, USA
Chief, Supply Division

Dottore Alcide de Gasperi
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Italian Government
R o m e

cc:

- ✓ Executive Commissioner (Ref to 6526/45/EC of 27 August 1945)
Tn S/C
- MWT (Attn: Mr. Hanvey)
25 Corso d'Italia
Rome

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785017

Ext 451

ABA/el

45

Ref: 6526/45/EC

27 August 1945

MEMORANDUM:

TO : Economic Section

1. On 20 August Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' memorandum number 6/2815/1299, 17 August, regarding redemption of Italian vessels sold to Argentina, was passed to your section for action:

2. It would be appreciated if you would inform this office what action has been taken in this case.

A. B. ARNOLDY.

A/Chief Staff Officer
To Executive Commissioner

BAV
31/8
Noted

SEE FILE
28/8
2656/8

6526/ 6526/1299
464
6/28/1945
DUPLICATE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ALLIED CO. LISION

Subject: Redemption of Italian vessels sold to Argentina.

1. Reference is made to Mr. Antolini's letter n.3.01, to Minister De Gasperi, dated 31 May 1945, concerning the redemption by the Italian Government of 8 Italian vessels sold to Argentina under repurchase clause.
2. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs beg to inform the Allied Commission that the Italian Embassy in Buenos Ayres has been instructed officially to notify the Argentine Government that the Italian Government intend to redeem the above mentioned vessels, in conformity with the terms of the agreement signed at Buenos Ayres on August 25th., 1941.
3. By this decision the Italian Government renounces the credits in world-negotiable currency deriving from the sale of such ships.
4. While it is hoped that this decision will be fully appreciated by the Allied Governments, the Italian Government reserves to state their viewpoint as to how said vessels could be best used, as soon as it is possible to secure their redemption.
5. On this subject, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs beg to recall that on March 14th., 1945, they instructed their Embassies in Washington and in London to ask the United States and Great Britain Governments that Italy be allowed, on a footing of equality, to participate in the agreement signed in London on August 5th. 1944 by the United States, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Canada, Greece, Poland and Norway, concerning the pooling of their Mercantile Marines until six months after the end of the war in the Far-east.

Rome, August. 17th., 1945

Coliman Passed For Action

To Econ Sec. 20 Aug 45 2053

DUPLICATE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ALLIED CO. MISSION

Subject: Redemption of Italian Vessels sold to Argentina.

1. Reference is made to Mr. Antolini's letter n.3.01, to Minister De Gasperi, dated 31 May 1945, concerning the redemption by the Italian Government of 8 Italian vessels sold to Argentina under repurchase clause.

2. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs beg to inform the Allied Commission that the Italian Embassy in Buenos Ayres has been instructed officially to notify the Argentine Government that the Italian Government intend to redeem the above mentioned vessels, in conformity with the terms of the agreement signed at Buenos Ayres on August 5th., 1941.

3. By this decision the Italian Government renounces the credits in world-negotiable currency deriving from the sale of such ships.

4. While it is hoped that this decision will be duly appreciated by the Allied Governments, the Italian Government reserves to state their viewpoint as to how said vessels could be best used, as soon as it is possible to secure their redemption.

5. On this subject, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs beg to recall that on March 14th., 1945, they instructed their Embassies in Washington and in London to ask the United States and Great Britain Governments that Italy be allowed, on a footing of equality, to participate in the agreement signed in London on August 5th. 1944 by the United States, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Canada, Greece, Poland and Norway, concerning the pooling of their merchantable marines until six months after the end of the war in the Far-east. *J/ev.*

Rome, August, 17th., 1945

(Original Passed For Action)
To Econ Sec - 20 Aug 45 2032

(Copy Attached)

785017

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785017

6526
0
HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
APO 394
ECONOMIC SECTION

File: 6.01

3/ May 1945

JUN 1 1945
19

My dear Minister de Gasperi:

In reference to your letter of 12 March 1945 to Admiral Stone on the matter of the redemption by the Italian Government of certain merchant vessels sold to Argentina, this office wishes to inform you that a recent ruling on the question has been received from the Combined Shipping Adjustment Board. The ruling is substantially as follows:

"Subject is repurchase by Italians of eight vessels sold to Argentina. We and U.S.A. agree to support repurchase. When bought such vessels must come into same pool as other Italian vessels surrendered under the Armistice."

In view of the fact that you have asked on behalf of your government that these vessels, if recovered, should be left "at the exclusive disposal of Italy -- and therefore, not included in the pool", will you now give us your present views on the matter in the light of this recent ruling.

May this office have your reply at your earliest convenience so that the matter may be then referred to the Chief Commissioner.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd) A. G. Antolini

A. G. ANTOLINI
Acting Vice President
Economic Section

H. E. Dr. Alcide de Gasperi
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Palazzo Chigi
ROME

Original dispatched 1 June.

(COPY ARNOLD)

4 PPA
2654
Su H 43.

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785017

6526
ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
G-5 Section
APO 512

Raison D'etre 586
TBJ/seb

G-5: 561.1-5

18 May 1945

SUBJECT: Redemption of Italian Merchant Vessels
sold to Argentina.

TO : Headquarters, Allied Commission
APO 394.

MAY 21 REC'D

1. Reference is made to 350/385/EC(1) of 17 April.
2. The Ministry of War Transport (Mediterranean), reports that this matter has been taken up with the Combined Shipping Adjustment Board whose reply now received is as follows:

"Subject is repurchase by Italians of eight vessels sold to Argentina. We and U.S.A. agree to support repurchase. When bought such vessels must come in to same pool as other Italian vessels surrendered under the Armistice".
3. In the above circumstances the view has been expressed that it is doubtful whether the Italians would desire to exercise the right to purchase. Should you desire the matter to be pursued further it is requested that you will advise this Section.

For the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5:

T. B. JACKMAN
T. B. JACKMAN
Lt. Colonel.

(Capt Arnold)

See M. 37438
M. 39440

6526/EC
Ref: ~~350/385/EC(1)~~

17 April 1945

SUBJECT: Redemption of Italian Merchant Vessels sold to Argentina

TO : AFHQ, G-5.

1. By letter dated the 16th January 1945 and forwarded to you under cover of this Commission's letter P/350/385 of 26 January 1945, the Prime Minister expressed the desire of the Italian Government to secure the return from Argentina of eight Italian merchant vessels purchased by Argentina in 1941. The Prime Minister requested that the vessels, if returned, should be placed at the disposal of Italy and exempted from the Armistice obligation of being included in the shipping pool.

2. The letter of the 16th January points out that the return of these vessels would to some extent be based on an option contained in the original contract of sale; that strictly such option does not become operative until after the war; and that therefore the Italian Government has no claim in law to the vessels. The Prime Minister feels, however, that on the grounds of humanity there is some prospect of success.

3. The actual contract of sale has not been produced to this Commission, but upon the basis of the Prime Minister's letter, the United Nations are not in a position under the Armistice terms to require the Italian Government to exercise the option in order to obtain the vessels for the shipping pool.

4. On the other hand, the proposal of the Italian Government does involve a waiver, in respect of these vessels, of one of the clauses of the Armistice terms. Of this, the Prime Minister is fully aware. It is to be observed, however, that unless such waiver is made, the Italian Government will not attempt to obtain the return of the vessels, which will not, therefore, be included in the shipping pool in any event.

5. This Commission strongly recommends that the request of the Italian Government be granted and that no corresponding reduction be made in the tonnage now allocated for shipment to Italy. Such a course will afford some measure of relief to the difficult economic condition of this country and will provide additional transportation which is so urgently required.

6. During the last two months this problem has been referred to G-4 (Mov & Tn) Section, and by that Section to the Chairman Mediterranean Shipping Board. It would appear, however, that no decision has been

See Ms. 31-32

See him 26-27-28-31
32-34

B.V. 10/11 Noted A.

B/u 23
4

See M. 34
205
10/4

reached, beyond the suggestion, which in the circumstances is not helpful, that the attention of the Italian Government should be drawn, as convenient, to the terms of the Armistice. Copies of the relevant correspondence are attached.

18. 19. 20. 21

7. This is a matter of urgency which involves a requested waiver of the rights of the United Nations under the Armistice terms and a consideration of the general allocation of shipping to this country. If required to be submitted to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, I recommend that this be done at as early a date as possible, together with the recommendations of this Commission, for an early decision.

ELLERY W. STONE
Rear Admiral, USNR
Chief Commissioner

Copy to: Chief Commissioner
Exec. Commissioner
Navy Sub-Com
Legal Sub-Com

With enclosures
as in para 6.

File 103 18-21

Copies to Mr. Myron Taylor
Brigadier Parkinson

Ref File 12

do - File 18-21

Sent 20 Apr. 45. See Minute 32

Att.

DRAFT

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION

Office of the Chief Commissioner

APO 394

23

Ref: 350/385/EG(L)

April 1945.

SUBJECT : Redemption of Italian Merchant Vessels sold to Argentina.

TO : AFHQ, G-5.

1. By letter dated the 16th Jan 1945 and forwarded to you under cover of this Commission's letter P/350/385 of 26 Jan 1945, the Prime Minister expressed the desire of the Italian Government to secure the return from Argentina of 8 Italian Merchant Vessels purchased by Argentina in 1941. The Prime Minister requested that the vessels, if returned, should be placed at the disposal of Italy and exempted from the Armistice obligation of being included in the shipping pool.

2. The letter of the 16th Jan points out that the return of these vessels would to some extent be based on an option contained in the original contract of sale; that strictly such option does not become operative until after the war; and that therefore the Italian Government has no claim in law to the vessels. The Prime Minister feels, however, that on the grounds of humanity there is some prospect of success.

3. The actual contract of sale has not been produced to this Commission, but upon the basis of the Prime Minister's letter, the United Nations are not in a position under the Armistice Terms to require the Italian Government to exercise the option in order to obtain the vessels for the shipping pool.

4. On the other hand, the proposal of the Italian Government does involve a waiver, in respect of these vessels, of one of the clauses of the Armistice Terms. Of this, the Prime Minister is fully aware. It is to be observed, however, that unless such waiver is made, the Italian Government will not attempt to obtain the return of the vessels, which will not, therefore, be included in the shipping pool in any event.

5. This Commission strongly recommends that the request of the Italian Government be granted and that no corresponding reduction be made in the tonnage now allocated for shipment to Italy. Such a course will afford some measure of relief to the difficult economic condition of this country and will provide additional transportation which is so urgently required.

6. During the last two months this problem has been referred to G4 (Mov & Tn) Sec, and by that Section to the Chairman Mediterranean Shipping Board. It would appear, however, that no decision has been reached, beyond the suggestion, which in the circumstances is not helpful, that the attention of the Italian Government should be drawn, as convenient, to the terms of the Armistice.

Copies of the relevant correspondence are attached.

OK (with changes) My - 1 -

Final letter at 30 2652
See Mins 26-28

785017

(24)

*If required to be
Submitted to*

7. This is a matter of urgency which involves a requested waiver of the rights of the United Nations under the Armistice Terms and a consideration of the general allocation of shipping to this country. ~~I recommend that it should be referred as soon as possible to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and shall be grateful if you will so submit the question, together with the recommendations of this Commission, for an early decision.~~

ELLERY W. STONE,
Rear Admiral, USNR,
Chief Commissioner.

*I recommend that
This be done at an early date
as possible,*

Incls: Copy letter AFHQ (G-4) to HQ AC - 5/9-GDM of 15 Mar 45
" *(18)* Ministry of Foreign Affairs to CC HQ AC -
" *(19)* Ref 21/03137/9 of 12 Mar 45.
" *(20)* Liaison Div HQ AC to AFHQ (G-4) - Ref:
" *(21)* 350/385/EC(L) of 16 Mar 45
" AFHQ (G-4) to Liaison Div HQ AC - Ref:
" 5/9/GDM of 20 Mar 45.

2620

785017

23

best for

Ref: 350/385/20(1)

1 April 1945

My dear Minister de Gasperi:

In reply to your 21/03137 of 12 March 1945,
the matter is still under consideration, and I will
inform you as soon as a decision is reached.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Ellery W. Stone

ELLERY W. STONE
Rear Admiral, USNR
Chief Commissioner

H. E. Dr. Alcide De Gasperi
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Palazzo Chigi
Rome

2649

Capt. Rafferty
Division Division

22

The disposal of the German merchant ships is governed by Art. 14(c) of the "Long" Armistice Terms by the Canningham. The German Agreement of Sept. 23rd 1943 & the amendment thereto. Briefly, these terms lay down that U.S. merchant shipping shall be put into the Allied "pool" for the prosecution of the war.

2. The letter of March 20th. from G-4 (Navy) is unhelpful. The U.S. Govt. are fully aware of the criticisms which arise in the various Armistice Agreements - in fact, the P.M.'s request is specifically that the Armistice terms should be relaxed in this instance - on S.S. of his letter no. 21/0054/38 of Jan. 16th. There is therefore no point in drawing the U.S. Govt's attention "as convenient" to these terms. What we wish to know is - do they propose to stand unimpaired in the implementation of the Armistice terms or are they disposed to relax them in the present case?

3. I suggest that the Navy or Shipping S/C deal with this henceforth - they don't seem to have been consulted before.

4. So far as the U.S. Govt. are concerned, you can only reply that the matter is still under examination.

20/4/44

785017

is governed by D.C. 14(c) and any restriction there
by the Cunningham de Caden Agreement of Sept. 23rd
1943 + the amendment thereto. Briefly, these terms
lay down that U.S. merchant shipping shall be put into
the "pool" for the prosecution of the war.

2. The letter of March 20th. from G-4 (Mr. T.H.)
is unhelpful. The U.S. Govt. are fully aware of the conditions
laid down in the various American documents - in fact,
the P.M.'s request is specifically that the American terms should
be relaxed in this instance - see §3 of his letter no. 21/
0054/3E of Jan. 16th. There is therefore no point in drawing
the U.S. Govt.'s attention "as convenient" to those terms. What
we wish to know is - do they propose to stand
uncompromisingly on the implementation of the American terms
or are they disposed to relax them in the present case?

3. I suggest that the Navy or Shipping S/C deal
with this henceforth - they don't seem to have been consulted
before.

4. So far as the U.S. Govt. are concerned, you can
only reply that the matter is still under examination.

27/10/45



(Sgd) A. S. HALFORD

Subject : DESIRE OF ITALIAN GOVERNMENT TO
RETRIEVE ITALIAN MERCHANT VESSELS
SOLD TO THE GOVERNMENT OF
ARGENTINA.

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS

G-4(MOV & TN) 5/9/GDM

20 Mar 45

To : Liaison Division
Headquarters Allied Commission.

Tel : FREEDOM 302

Ref your 350/385/EC(L) dated 16 Mar 45.

1. The position still remains as stated in my G-4(Mov & Tn) 5/9/GDM of 15 Mar 45.
2. In considering the request contained in para 2&3 of your above quoted letter the attention of the Italian Government should be drawn as convenient to the Terms of the Armistice conditions relative to the employment of the Italian Mercantile Marine.
3. Further correspondence should be addressed through the Navy Sub Commission to Chairman Mediterranean Shipping Board.

VK/KPS.

C.F. Russell
C.F. RUSSELL, Lt.Col.
for Brigadier,
D.Q.M.G. (Mov & Tn).

2647

20

6526 *js*

Liaison Division

Ref: 550/385/EE/(L)

16 March 1945

SUBJECT: Desire of Italian Government to Retrieve Italian Merchant Vessels Sold to the Government of Argentina

TO : G-4 (Mov & Tr), Allied Force Headquarters

1. Further to our P/550/385 of 12 March 1945.
2. A translation of a further letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs is forwarded herewith for your consideration.
3. It will be noted that the Italian Government ask for the explicit assurance that the ships, when recovered, shall be left at the exclusive disposal of Italy.
4. This matter has been outstanding since 26 January 1945, and it is requested that everything be done to obtain an early decision.

For the Chief Commissioner:

R.

Officer-in-Charge
Liaison Division

1 Encl: Ltr No. 21/03137/9 of 12 March 1945

(19)

See (20)

2646

Translation

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
21/03137/9

ROME, 12 March 1941

Dear Admiral,

in his letter (21/00504/38) of January 16th, His Excellency Bonomi drew your kind attention on a question of great and urgent interest for us, that of the recovering of the eight Italian ships handed over to the Argentine Republic in August 1941.

With the same letter, His Excellency Bonomi prospected to you all the various aspects of the question and asked you to submit it to the competent Allied Governments to obtain the explicit assurance that the steamers, when recuperated, would be left at the exclusive disposal of Italy, - and therefore, not included in the pool -, to be able to take immediate action with the Argentine Government to recover the said ships. This would be in fact the only basis for a justified request on our part to the Argentine Government for the anticipated recovering of the said ships.

I have been informed that lately, numerous initiatives among the Italian groups of Latin America wanted to send relief and foodstuffs to the poorest populations of liberated Italy; as for what concerns the resumption of normal relations with American countries, there seem to be great possibilities for the shipping to Italy of essential goods, of which the country is at present so much in need. As usual, the greatest obstacle is the problem of transports, problem which would be partly solved if we could dispose of the eightships we have just mentioned.

I feel certain that you have already taken action with the Washington and London Governments. I shall be most grateful if you will kindly ask the said Governments for a favourable decision about this question which is of great and urgent interest for us.

Thanking you for whatever information you will be able to give me, I remain, my dear Admiral,

Yours very truly,

S. De Gasperi

Admiral Ellery Stone
Chief Commissioner
Allied Commission
Rome

EC DISTRIBUTION

14 Mar 45.

ACTION: Liaison Div (inf)

Dear Admiral,

in his letter (21/00504/36) of January 16th, His Excellency Bonomi drew your kind attention on a question of great and urgent interest for us, that of the recovering of the eight Italian ships handed over to the Argentine Republic in August 1941.

With the same letter, His Excellency Bonomi prospected to you all the various aspects of the question and asked you to submit it to the competent Allied Governments to obtain the explicit assurance that the steamers, when recuperated, would be left at the exclusive disposal of Italy, - and therefore, not included in the pool -, to be able to take immediate action with the Argentine Government to recover the said ships. This would be in fact the only basis for a justified request on our part to the Argentine Government for the anticipated recovering of the said ships.

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Thanking you for whatever information you will be able to give me, I remain, my dear Admiral,

Yours very truly,

S. De Gasperi

204.

See reply per 23

Admiral Ellery Stone
Chief Commissioner
Allied Commission
Rome

EC DISTRIBUTION

14 Nov 45.

ACTION: *Union Div (inf)*
P350/385 of 26/11/45

INFO: *Chief Comm.*
E. Comm.

S.O.

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785017

Liaison Div. 2820

ALL FORCE HEADQUARTERS (18)

G-4(MOV & TN) 5/9 -GDM

15 Mar 45

Tel: FREEDOM 302

Subject:- Desire of Italian Government
to retrieve Italian Merchant
Vessels sold to the Government
of ARGENTINA.

To :- H.Q. Allied Commission. / 656 jls.

- (16)
1. Your P/350/385 of 12 Mar refers.
 2. This matter was submitted to the Ministry of War Transport,
LONDON for opinion or submission to the Combined Shipping Adjustment
Board.
 3. As soon as a reply is received, H.Q. A.C. will be notified.

HEADQUARTERS

17 MAR

A. C.

V. King Maj.

V. KING, Major,
for Brigadier,
D.Q.M.G. (Mov & Tn).

VK/DWG

Copy to: G-5.
M.W.T.R.

See (20)

2644

Il Ministro degli Affari Esteri

21/03/37

Roma, 21 12 MAR 1941

Caro Ammiraglio,

con lettera (21/03/38) del 16 gennaio u.s. S.E. Bonomi aveva attirato la Sua cortese attenzione su di una questione di rilevante ed urgente interesse per noi, quella del riscatto di otto navi italiane, cedute alla Repubblica Argentina in nell'agosto 1941.

Con detta lettera S.E. Bonomi le esprimeva per sommi capi tutti i termini della questione e la pregava di volerla sottoporre ai competenti Governi Alleati al fine di ottenere l'impegno esplicito che i pirasconi, una volta riscupati, verrebbero lasciati ad esclusiva disposizione dell'Italia - e pertanto esentati dall'inclusione nel pool - , per potere poi iniziare subito i paesi col Governo Argentino intesi a conseguire il recupero di detto navilio. Tale sarebbe infatti la sola base di una rinatitante richiesta da parte nostra al Governo Argentino di riscatto anticipato delle navi in parola.

Si risulta che in questi ultimi tempi numerose iniziative sono sorte fra le collettività italiane dell'America Latina per l'invio di soccorsi e di alimenti alle popolazioni più bisognose dell'Italia liberata ed inoltre, nel quadro della ripresa della normale relazione con i paesi americani, rilevanti po diabilità sembrano prospettarsi per l'invio in Italia di tonni in genere di prima necessità, di cui il Paese ha attualmente un si urgente bisogno. Assoluta ostacolo che si pone peraltro a tali realizzazioni è sempre il grave problema dei trasporti, problema che potrebbe essere in parte alleviato ove disponessimo dalle otto navi su citate.

10/4/41

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Con detta lettera S.E. Bonomi ha esprimeva per alcuni casi tutti i termini della questione e la pregava di volerla sottoporre ai competenti Governi Alleati al fine di ottenere l'impegno esplicito che i Piranesi, una volta richiamati, verrebbero lasciati ad esclusiva disposizione dell'Italia - e pertanto esentati dall'inclusione nel pool - , per potere poi inviare subito i paesi del Governo Argentino intesi e conseguire il recupero di detto naviglio. Tale avrebbe infatti la sola base di una giustificata richiesta da parte nostra al Governo Argentino di riaccesso anticipato delle navi in parola.

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Ammiraglio Ellery Stone
Chief Commissioner
Commissione Alleata

R. C. M. S.

See Translation at 10/1/41

XXXXXX

Office of the Executive Commissioner

Ref: P/350/385

12 March 1945

SUBJECT: Desire of Italian Government to Retrieve
Italian Merchant Vessels Sold to the Government
of Argentina.

TO : G-4 (Mov. & Tr), Allied Force Headquarters

1. Reference is made to our letter no. P/350/385 dated 26 January and 17 February 1945, subject as above.
2. It would be appreciated if some reply could be given at an early date.

For the Chief Commissioner:

Captain,
for Brigadier
Executive Commissioner.

See (18)

2042

RESTRICTED

15

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
G-5 Section
APO 512

JB/mls

G-5: 561.1-5

9 March 1945

SUBJECT: Desire of Italian Government to Retrieve Italian
Merchant Vessels Sold to the Government of Argentina.

TO : Headquarters, Allied Commission, APO 394.

1. Reference your P/350/385 of 5 March, subject as above,
requesting that a reply be given you at an early date.
2. As G-4 (Mov. & Tn) this Headquarters have assumed respon-
sibility for this matter, it is suggested that you deal with that
Section direct.

For the Asst. Chief of Staff, G-5:

Julius Byles
JULIUS BYLES,
Major, F.A.

Copy to:
G-4 (Mov & Tn) AFHQ.

RESTRICTED

2641

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER

Ref: I/350/385

5 March 1945

SUBJECT: Desire of Italian Government to Retrieve
Italian Merchant Vessels Sold to the Government
of Argentina

TO : G-5, AFHQ

1. Reference is made to our letters no. I/350/385 dtd 26
January and 17 February 1945.
2. It would be appreciated if some reply could be given at
an early date.

For the Chief Commissioner:

WILLIAM A. J. STEWART

Major,

for Brigadier,
Executive Commissioner.

Copy to: Staff Officer of the
Chief Commissioner, A.C.

See 15

2040

14

259/385

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785017

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION

Office of the Chief Commissioner

APO 394

JAQ/hjp

13

2 March 1945

TO: Political Section, Hq A.C.
(Attention: Major Stewart)

1. Please note attached exchange of correspondence between Mr. Myron Taylor and the Chief Commissioner.

2. Will you please try to get a reply from AFHQ in answer to our letter P/350/385 of 26 January.

3. Also please note that Mr. Myron Taylor has an interest in this matter and should be posted of any progress.

J.A. Quayle

J. A. QUAYLE
Major, R. A.
Staff Officer to CC

2039

2 Incls:

Incl 1 - Ltr fr Mr. M. Taylor
dtd 16 Feb 45

Incl 2 - Ltr, Office of the CC
P/350/385, 2 Mar 45

See Ltr. (79)

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785017

JAQ/hjp

12

Ref: P/350/385

2 March 1945

My dear Mr. Ambassador:

As you know, Admiral Stone is laid up in bed and he therefore wishes me to apologize for the delay in answering your letter of February 16th.

The question of the Italian shipping in Argentine waters is one on which we had been pressing AFHQ for some time but we will now again endeavor to obtain a decision from them, and will keep you informed of any progress that is made.

Sincerely,

J. A. QUAYLE
Major, R. A.
Staff Officer to CG

Hon. Myron C. Taylor
The Personal Representative of the
President of the United States of America
To His Holiness The Pope
2, Via Boncompagni
Rome

cc: pol Sec ✓
EX. COMM'R
CC FILES

263

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785017

THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO HIS HOLINESS THE POPE

FEB 17 REC
CC 768

(11)

February 16, 1945

Dear Admiral Stone:

I call your attention to the following telegram which was sent to the Prime Minister by the President of the Committee for Relief to Italy in the Argentine, and to that clause which refers to the problems concerning transportation. This, I am sure, is an AFHQ matter but I am bringing it to your attention assuming that you will take it up with appropriate agencies, including AFHQ, the objective being to secure at the earliest moment all the donated supplies possible for Italy and in that way relieve the pressure for other areas in which shortages occur.

Sincerely yours,

Myron C. Taylor

Myron C. Taylor

Enclosure:

As stated.

See 12 + 13

Rear Admiral Ellery W. Stone, USNR,
Chief Commissioner,
Allied Commission,
Rome.

FEB 17 1945

10

The following is a telegram sent to His Excellency
Ivanoe Bonomi, by the President of the Committee for
Relief to Italy in the Argentine:

" IN NAME OF THE COMMITTEE FOR RELIEF TO ITALY I BEG YOUR
EXCELLENCY TO ACCEPT OUR HEARTFELT THANKS FOR THE MOST
KIND WORDS SENT TO US THROUGH THE ROYAL EMBASSY.

WHILE THE FIRST SHIPMENT OF RELIEF SUPPLIES FOR CHILDREN
AND ITALIAN PRISONERS OF WAR IS ALREADY ON ITS WAY, THE
COMMITTEE IS PROVIDING FOR NEW SHIPMENTS WHICH WILL BE
PROGRESSIVELY INTENSIFIED.

I TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY OF BEGGING YOU TO USE YOUR KIND
OFFICES IN URGING THE SOLUTION OF PROBLEMS CONCERNING
TRANSPORTATION.

THE ITALIANS AND ARGENTINES ASSOCIATED IN THE COMMITTEE
FOR RELIEF TO ITALY REASSURE YOUR EXCELLENCY OF THE FEELINGS
OF BROTHERHOOD THAT HAVE ALWAYS UNITED THE TWO FRIENDLY
COUNTRIES."

(sgn) RIVAROLA.

1132

785017

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

626/10

File 9

Ref: 2/350/385

17 February 1945

SUBJECT: Desire of Italian Government to
Retrieve Italian Merchant Vessels
Sold to the Government of Argentina.

TO : C-5 Section, Allied Force Headquarters
Copies to: U. S. Political Advisor
British Resident Minister

1. Reference is made to Letter 2/350/385 dated 30 January 1945 transmitting a copy of a letter from the Italian Prime Minister on the above subject.
2. A memorandum has now been received from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, copy of which is enclosed herewith, correcting the ship tonnage figures set forth under No. 1 of said letter.

For the Chief Commissioner:

/s/ Major A. J. STEWART

501 Vice President, Political Section

1 Encl: Copy of Memo No. 6/111/198 dtd 11 Feb 45.

4

See 14 + 15 + 16 + 18

25/3/45

2632

Ministero degli Affari Esteri

6/11/1948

4150 4230 1111

Reference is made to letter N. 51/00002/30 of President of the Council of Ministers, dated January 1948, concerning the redemption of Italian bonds issued over in the Argentine Republic.

Under N. 2 of said letter it is stated that eight of those bonds were definitively sold, totalling 12,535,000 lire, and eight more sold under separate clause, totalling 13,500,000 lire.

The above statement is incorrect inasmuch as said figures actually refer to the issue of the bonds while the above figures concern the redemption of 12,500 and 13,500 lire.



Roma, February 11, 1948.

See action at 9

2031

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785017

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

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LIBRARY



See action at 9

5202

785017

Ref: 1/350/385

26 January 1945

SUBJECT: Desire of Italian Government to
Retrieve Italian Merchant Vessels
Sold to the Government of Argentina.

TO : G-5 Section, Allied Force Headquarters
Copy to : U. S. Political Adviser
British Resident Minister

1. There has been received from the Italian Prime Minister a letter dated January 16, 1945 (No. 21/00504/38) expressing the desire of the Italian Government to effect the return from Argentina of 8 merchant vessels which had been sold to that Government under a redemption clause, "to be claimed 6 months after the end of the war". A copy of the translation of this communication is attached.

2. It would be appreciated were this question to be examined and material furnished the Commission as a basis for a reply to the Italian Government.

For the Chief Commissioner:

WILLIAM W. BARKETT
Vice President, Political Section

Copy to: British Embassy
U. S. Embassy

1 Encl: Ltr No. 21/00504/38 dtd 16.1.45.

2633

350/385

7

COPY OF TRANSLATION

No. 21/00504/38

16 January 1945

Dear Admiral:

As it is to your knowledge, the problem of the redemption of Italian ships, which were turned over to the Argentine Republic following the terms of an agreement, was discussed a few days ago by the Committee of Ministers, dealing with economic problems concerning reconstruction, in accord with the Allied Commission.

I have now the opportunity of giving you some relevant data on the matter, a favorable solution of which would indeed enable us to lighten to some extent the serious shipping crisis in which, unfortunately, we find ourselves and which is hindering considerably the incoming supplies essential to the Italian population.

1. - By an agreement signed at Buenos Aires on August 25th, 1941, the Italian Government sold to the Argentine Republic 16 merchant ships, eight of which (totalling 72,628 gross tonnage) definitely sold and eight (totalling 63,926 gross tonnage) under redemption clause "to be claimed six months after the end of the war". Given the option becomes effective the Argentine Government are bound to "deliver the ships in their own ports within 90 days". In the same agreement it was stated that the total price of the ships - 50% of which should be employed in the purchase of Argentine goods - should be frozen until the end of the war at the Banco Central de la Republica in Buenos Aires. This provision is still in force in compliance also with the decision 3.22 of the Inter-American Financial and Economic Advisory Committee in Washington.

One of the eight vessels sold to Argentine under redemption conditions was sunk by a German U-boat in 1942. The Argentine Government, though not juridically bound to it by the sale agreement, spontaneously offered to replace said ship with a Greek steamer which they were about to purchase. The purchase was not carried out, but it must be assumed that the Argentine Government will keep up their spontaneous offers.

2. - As mentioned above the Italian Government can exercise their right for the redemption of the ships only at the end of the war. It is thus to foresee that in view also of the present deficiency of merchant shipping affecting Argentine, an Italian action aiming at securing in anticipation the recovery of the above ships, would be certainly unsuccessful, if based exclusively on juridical grounds, whose foundations would not be supported by the sale agreement. On the other hand there is furthermore foreseen, in case of contestation, an arbitration to which the Argentine Government could have recourse in order to obtain a favorable decision.

3. - If, however, the Allied Governments could undertake formally and explicitly that the ships in question (should Argentina be willing to return them) would be forthwith transferred to Italy and employed in the transportation of supplies for the country's needs, our action towards the anticipate recovery of the ships could undoubtedly be based not only on juridical but also on humanitarian grounds and would have, therefore, greater chance of success. We could in fact point out to the Argentine Government the urgency of obtaining such shipping to meet without delay the essential necessity of food supplies for the Italian population and thus appeal to humanitarian feelings and motives to which the Argentine Authorities could not remain indifferent.

- 2 -

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Such an action could be certainly attempted by the Italian Government as long as the competent Allied Governments would pledge themselves explicitly that the ships so recovered would be placed at the disposal of Italy and exempted therefore from the obligation of being included in the shipping pool of our merchant navy.

4. - Naturally, were the competent Allied Government willing to pledge themselves as above, the General Staff of the Royal Navy would take the necessary arrangements with the Allied naval authorities in order that safety measures be taken to safeguard these ships against any possible German offence as well as to prevent their capture.

5. - As mentioned above the ships would be employed in supplying the Italian population with essential goods and should obviously fly the Italian flag, as it is the case of our ships included in the United Nations pool.

6. - The crews of said ships are still in Argentina, where they have been excluded on purpose from the repatriation measures which are actually being taken by the Italian Embassy in Buenos Aires on behalf of the sailors of the ships sold to the Argentine Government. The Manning of the recovered ships can therefore be started immediately.

While informing you of the above, I shall be most grateful, dear Admiral, if you will kindly bring the matter to the consideration of the competent Allied Authorities in order to obtain a previous guarantee that the ships in question will be transferred to Italy. Should the British and United States Governments concur to this point, the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs would immediately take the necessary steps with the Argentine Government to the effect of obtaining the anticipated recovery of the ships aforementioned.

I know that you are fully aware of the great urgency of availing ourselves of a certain amount of shipping in order to improve the present low standard of living of the population of liberated Italy. I trust therefore that both the Governments of Washington and London will have no difficulty in pledging themselves in this sense because the ships could not be otherwise recovered for the time being on account of the interest with which the United States and Great Britain are examining the possibility of meeting with similar necessities for the supply of other European States: i.e. France and Greece.

I shall be very grateful to you, dear Admiral, if you will kindly inform me of the steps taken on the matter which is of the greatest importance for Italy.

Thanking you in advance for your kind interest on the subject, I remain etc.

/s/ Ivanoe Bonomi.

TO: Admiral Ellery W. Stone
Chief Commissioner
Allied Commission
R.O.M.E. X

8/10/50/11/10
 16 Jan 45
 4
 Rough translation

Dear Admiral,

As it is to your knowledge, the problem of the redemption of Italian ships, which were turned over to the Argentine Republic following the terms of an agreement, was discussed a few days ago by the Ministers, dealing with economic problems concerning reconstruction, in accord with the Allied Commission.

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Admiral Billy W. Stone
 Chief Commissioner

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1. - By an agreement signed at Buenos Aires on August 25th, 1941, the Italian Government sold to the Argentine Republic 16 merchant ships, eight of which (totalling 72,628 gross tonnage) definitely sold and eight (totalling 53,935 gross tonnage) under redemption clause "to be claimed six months after the end of the war". Once the option becomes effective the Argentine Government are bound to "deliver the ships in their own ports within 90 days". In the same agreement it was stated that the total price of the ships - 50% of which should be employed in the purchase of Argentine goods - should be frozen until the end of the war at the Banco Central de la Republica in Buenos Aires. This provision is still in force in compliance also with the decision N.22 of the Inter-American Financial and Economic Advisory Committee of Washington.

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Admiral Ellery W. Stone
Chief Commissioner
Allied Commission
Rome.

See D + 8

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3. - If, however, the Allied Government could undertake formally and explicitly that the ships in question (should Argentina be willing to return them) would be forthwith transferred to Italy, and employed in the transportation of supplies for the country's needs, our action towards the anticipate recovery of the ships could undoubtedly be based not only on juridical but also on humanitarian grounds and would have, therefore, greater chance of success. We could in fact point out to the Argentine Government the urgency of obtaining such shipping to meet without delay the essential need of food supplies for the Italian population and thus appeal to humanitarian feelings and motives to which the Argentine Authority could not remain indifferent.

Such an action could be certainly attempted by the Italian Govt. as long as the competent Allied Governments would pledge themselves explicitly that the ships so recovered would be placed at the disposal of Italy and exempted therefore from the obligation of being included in the shipping pool of our merchant navy.

4. - Naturally, were the competent Allied Government will to pledge themselves as above, the General Staff of the Royal Navy would take the necessary arrangements with the Allied naval authorities in order that safety measures be taken to safeguard these ships against any possible German offence as well as to prevent their capture.

5. - As mentioned above the ships would be employed in supplying the Italian population with essential goods and should obviously fly the Italian flag, as it is the case of our ships included in the United Nations pool.

6. - The crews of said ships are still in Argentina, where they have been excluded on purpose from the repatriation measures which are actually being taken by the Italian Embassy in Buenos Aires on behalf of the sailors of the ships sold to the Argentine Government. The manning of the recovered ships can therefore be started immediately.

While informing you of the above, I shall be most grateful, dear Admiral, if you will kindly bring the matter to the

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While informing you of the above, I shall be most grateful, dear Admiral, if you will kindly bring the matter to the consideration of the competent Allied Authorities in order to obtain

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Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

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a previous xxxxxxxxxx guarantee that the ships in question will be transferred to Italy. Should the British and United States Governments concur to this point, the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs would in addition take the necessary steps with the Argentine Government to the effect of obtaining the anticipated recovery of the ships aforementioned.

I know that you are fully aware of the great urgency of availing ourselves of a certain amount of shipping in order to improve the present low standard of living of the population of liberated Italy. I trust therefore that both the Governments of Washington and London will see no difficulty in pledging themselves in this sense because the ships could not be otherwise recovered for the time being on account of the interest with which the United States and Great Britain are examining the possibility of meeting with similar necessities for the supply of other European States: i.e. France and Greece.

I shall be very grateful to you, dear Admiral, if you will kindly inform me of the steps taken on the matter which is of the greatest importance for Italy.

Thanking you in advance for your kind interest on the subject, I remain etc.

Signed: Ivanoe Bonomi

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I shall be very grateful to you, dear Admiral, if you will kindly inform me of the steps taken on the matter which is of the greatest importance for Italy.

Thanking you in advance for your kind interest on the subject, I remain etc.

Signed: Ivanoe Bonomi

2031



*Il Presidente
del Consiglio dei Ministri*

Roma, li 16 OTT 1941

21/00504/4

Caro Ammiraglio,

come sarà a Sua conoscenza, la Commissione di Ministri, incaricata della trattazione dei problemi di carattere economico interessanti la ricostruzione, ha qualche giorno fa discusso con la Commissione Alleata la questione del riscatto delle navi italiane cedute alla Repubblica Argentina con tale patto. Desidero formulare, con questa mia lettera, ogni utile elemento sulla questione: una favorevole soluzione di essa potrebbe, infatti, consentirci di alleviare un po' la grave crisi di naviglio in cui purtroppo ci dibattiamo e che ostacola considerevolmente l'afflusso dei rifornimenti essenziali alla popolazione italiana.

1°) Con convenzione, conclusa a Buenos Aires il 25 agosto 1941, il Governo italiano ebbe a vendere a quello argentino seiici navi, otto delle quali (della portata globale di tonnellate metriche lorde 72.628) a titolo definitivo ed otto (della portata di t.m.l. 63.926), con patto di riscatto "da far valere entro sei mesi della fine della guerra". Resa effettiva l'opzione, il Governo argentino ha l'obbligo di "consegnare i piroscafi in propri porti in termine non superiore ai novanta giorni". Nello stesso accordo fu stabilito che il prezzo totale delle navi - da utilizzarsi per il 50 % nell'acquisto di prodotti argentini - sarebbe rimasto bloccato sino alla fine della guerra presso il Banco Central della Repubblica in Buenos Aires. Tale blocco è tuttora efficiente in conformità anche alla Risoluzione n. 22 dell'Inter American Financial and Economic Advisory Committee di Washington.

Una delle otto navi italiane cedute all'Argentina con patto di riscatto fu affondata nel 1942 da un sottomarino tedesco. Il Governo di Buenos Aires, pur non essendovi giuridicamente tenuto a norma della Convenzione di vendita, propose spontaneamente di sostituire detta nave con un piroscafo greco che esso intendeva acquistare: tale acquisto non ebbe, poi, luogo, ma è

Admiral Ellery W. Stone
Chief Commissioner
Commissione Alleata

R o m a

Translation at (4)

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*Il Presidente
del Consiglio dei Ministri*

Roma, li 10 OTT 1941

21/00504/58

Caro Ammiraglio,

come sarà a Sua conoscenza, la Commissione di Ministri, incaricata della trattazione dei problemi di carattere economico interessanti la ricostruzione, ha qualche giorno fa discusso con la Commissione Alleata la questione del riscatto delle navi italiane cedute alla Repubblica Argentina con tale patto. Desidero fornire, con questa mia lettera, ogni utile elemento sulla questione: una favorevole soluzione di essa potrebbe, infatti, consentirci di alleviare un po' la grave crisi di naviglio in cui purtroppo ci dibattiamo e che ostacola considerevolmente l'afflusso dei rifornimenti essenziali alla popolazione italiana.

1°) Con convenzione, conclusa a Buenos Aires il 25 agosto 1941, il Governo italiano ebbe a vendere a quello argentino sedici navi, otto delle quali (della portata globale di tonnellate metriche lorde 72.628) a titolo definitivo ed otto (della portata di t.m.l. 63.926), con patto di riscatto "da far valere entro sei mesi dalla fine della guerra". Resa effettiva l'opzione, il Governo argentino ha l'obbligo di "consegnare i piroscafi in propri porti in termine non superiore ai novanta giorni". Nello stesso accordo fu stabilito che il prezzo totale delle navi - da utilizzarsi per il 50 % nell'acquisto di prodotti argentini - sarebbe rimasto bloccato sino alla fine della guerra presso il Banco Central della Repubblica in Buenos Aires. Tale blocco è tuttora efficiente in conformità anche alla Risoluzione n. 22 dell'Inter American Financial and Economic Advisory Committee di Washington.

Una delle otto navi italiane cedute all'Argentina con patto di riscatto fu affondata nel 1942 da un sottomarino tedesco. Il Governo di Buenos Aires, pur non essendovi giuridicamente tenuto a norma della Convenzione di vendita, propose spontaneamente di sostituire detta nave con un piroscafo greco che esso intendeva acquistare: tale acquisto non ebbe, poi, luogo, ma è

Admiral Ellery W. Stone
Chief Commissioner
Commissione Alleata

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Translation at (4)

2030

da ritenere che il Governo argentino non verrebbe meno alle spontanee offerte di sostituzione fattaci.

2°) Come già accennato il Governo italiano può esercitare il suo diritto di riscatto delle navi soltanto alla fine della guerra. E' quindi da prevedere che - data anche l'attuale deficienza di naviglio mercantile in cui verserebbe l'Argentina - una nostra azione diretta ad ottenere l'anticipato ricupero dei piroscafi in questione sarebbe certamente votata all'insuccesso, qualora fosse esclusivamente basata su ragioni e motivazioni giuridiche, di cui la Convenzione di vendita escluderebbe il fondamento. Mentre, poi, lo stesso accordo prevede anche, nel caso di contestazioni, un giudizio arbitrale al quale il Governo argentino potrebbe far ricorso per ottenere una decisione ad esso favorevole.

3°) Se tuttavia da parte alleata potessimo preventivamente ottenere un impegno formale ed esplicito che tali navi sarebbero - se l'Argentina si inducesse a restituire - senz'altro trasferite all'Italia e impiegate per l'approvvigionamento del paese, la nostra azione diretta all'anticipato ricupero delle navi stesse potrebbe, certamente, invece che su ragioni esclusivamente giuridiche, essere basata anche su ragioni umanitarie ed avere quindi maggiori possibilità di esito favorevole.

Si potrebbe infatti, da parte nostra, prospettare al Governo argentino l'urgenza e la necessità di ottenere tale naviglio per sopprimere alle necessità essenziali ed urgentissime dei rifornimenti alimentari della popolazione italiana e fare così appello a sentimenti e motivazioni umanitarie, cui le autorità di Buenos Aires potrebbero non restare insensibili.

Comunque sarebbe questa certamente un'azione che potrebbe da parte italiana essere tentata, qualora come premessa e condizione preventiva potessimo ottenere dai competenti governi alleati l'impegno esplicito che i piroscafi potuti recuperare verrebbero lasciati ad esclusiva disposizione dell'Italia ed esentati, pertanto, dall'obbligo armistiziale di inclusione nel "pool" che attualmente amministra tutto il naviglio mercantile che ci era rimasto.

4°) Naturalmente, ove i competenti governi alleati volessero assumere l'impegno suindicato, lo Stato Maggiore della R. Marina prenderebbe gli opportuni accordi con le autorità navali alleate perché nei riguardi di queste navi fossero adottate le misure di sicurezza ritenute necessarie e convenienti a salvaguardia di eventuale offesa bellica tedesca e per scongiurare il pericolo di cattura.

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Il Presidente
del Consiglio dei Ministri

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5°) Come già accennato le navi sarebbero adibite ai rifornimenti essenziali della popolazione italiana e dovrebbero ovviamente navigare sotto bandiera italiana, così come è del resto il caso per il nostro naviglio incluso nel "Pool" delle Nazioni Unite.

6°) In Argentina si trovano tuttora gli equipaggi dei piroscafi in questione, i quali sono stati all'uopo esclusi dalle misure di rimpatrio attualmente in corso di preparazione da parte della R. Ambasciata in Buenos Aires per i marittimi delle navi vendute a quel Governo. Si potrà pertanto provvedere subito all'armamento del naviglio recuperato.

Nel portare quanto precede a Sua conoscenza, Le sarò vivamente grato, caro Ammiraglio, se vorrà sottoporre la questione ai competenti Governi alleati al fine di ottenere la preventiva esplicita garanzia di trasferimento all'Italia delle navi che potranno essere recuperate. Appena ottenuto tale esplicito impegno sia da parte dell'a Gran Bretagna che degli Stati Uniti, il R. Ministero degli Affari Esteri inizierebbe subito i passi necessari presso il Governo argentino per cercare di ottenere l'anticipato ricupero del naviglio di cui trattasi. Ella ben conosce la nostra grande urgenza di ottenere una disponibilità di naviglio per migliorare l'attuale bassissimo tenore di vita delle stremate popolazioni dell'Italia liberata. Nutro per questo piena fiducia che i Governi di Washington e di Londra non avranno difficoltà ad assumere tale impegno, sia perché si tratta di navi ora non altrimenti recuperabili e sia dato l'interessamento con cui Stati Uniti ed Inghilterra esaminano la possibilità di venire incontro ad analoghe necessità di naviglio per i rifornimenti di altri Stati europei: alludo alla Francia ed alla Grecia.

Nel pregarla di volermi cortesemente tenermi informato del seguito che avrà la questione, tanto importante per l'Italia, mi è grata l'occasione per rinnovarle, caro Ammiraglio, con i miei vivi ringraziamenti, i sensi della mia alta considerazione.

Caro Ammiraglio, un cordiale saluto

*Il Presidente
del Consiglio dei Ministri*

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Caro Ammiraglio

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