German-Spanish Relations 1939-1941 A Study Of Germany's Efforts To Get Spain To Enter The Second World War

Steven M. Kin
College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors_theses

Recommended Citation
Kin, Steven M., "German-Spanish Relations 1939-1941 A Study Of Germany's Efforts To Get Spain To Enter The Second World War" (1963). Honors Theses. 756.
http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors_theses/756

Available by permission of the author. Reproduction or retransmission of this material in any form is prohibited without expressed written permission of the author.
GERMAN–SPANISH RELATIONS 1939–1941

A Study Of Germany's Efforts To Get Spain To Enter

The Second World War

BY

STEVEN M. KIN

HONORS PROGRAM
SAINT JOHN'S UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
1963
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. THE WAR BEGINS 18

III. SERRANO SUÑER VISITS BERLIN AND ROME 48

IV. HENDAYE, FLORENCE, BERCHTESGADEN, AND BORDIGHERA 80

V. CONCLUSIONS 113

APPENDICES 123

BIBLIOGRAPHY 134
PREFACE

The reader will notice a distinct lack of Spanish sources in this thesis. This is due not to choice, but rather to the absence of available Spanish reference material. Spanish records and documents of the war period are not available to the public. Besides, the Franco Government has not chosen to publish such records or to open its files to historical study. Such records, if they do exist, will probably remain inaccessible until Franco either dies or steps down as head of the Spanish Government.

The sources I did use were obtained primarily from the St. John's University Library. I also obtained reference material from the Library of Congress, the University of Minnesota Library, and the library of Central Michigan University.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In July, 1936, a bloody domestic conflict began in Spain that was to last for thirty-two months. The Spanish parliamentary regime had been degenerating for some time, while agitation arose for Communist infiltration in the decaying Parliamentary Government. Both Leftists and Rightists became impatient with the slowness of the reforms of the Republican Government. The Communists, through the Popular Front coalition, were attempting to achieve control in Spain. When the Popular Front pensioned or transferred to overseas possessions many Army officers having Monarchist or Conservative tendencies, a full scale military revolt occurred. Helping to trigger the actions of the Army generals, was the murder of the Conservative leader, Señor Sotelo, in a series of Communist political assassinations. This revolt, which began on July 18, was actually a counter-revolution against the Communist attempt to control Spain.

Except for General Sanjurjo, who was in Portugal, there was no one prominent leader among the revolting Army leaders. However, General Franco in southwestern Spain, General Quiepo de Llano in Seville, and General Mola in northern Spain, each exerted regional authority. General Sanjurjo was named head of a new Spanish State declared by the rebels, but was killed in an airplane crash while attempting to take off from Marinha, Portugal, to assume his new responsibilities at Burgos. General Franco then assumed, with the support of the rest of the Army, the leadership of the revolt. On July 25, the military leaders met at
Burgos to form a "Junta of National Defense." A few days later, General Franco became a member of the "Junta." On October 1, he was officially named by his fellows as Chief, or Caudillo, of the Spanish State, as well as Commander in Chief of the Nationalist Army.¹

The Communists at first obtained control of the Spanish Government at Madrid, and attempted immediately to fashion a Communist regime resembling that in Russia. The Army, under Franco, fought back, with both sides assassinating political opponents in great numbers. It was Franco's purpose, in leading the Nationalist uprising, to fight against an anticipated Soviet dictatorship, which was already prepared to assume control in Spain. Devoid of any particular ideology, the military revolt was aimed not at the Republic, but rather at anarchical disorder and the Popular Front Government responsible for it.

Both sides to the conflict, the Republican Government as well as Franco's Nationalist Government, sought and soon obtained foreign aid.² While the Germans did not give any assistance to the Spanish rebels before the conflict began, it was no more than a few days after the outbreak of the revolt

¹ Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945 (Washington: U.S. Dept. of State, 1949-1962), Series D, III, 1. In this paper, only volumes from Series D, which covers the period from 1937 to 1945, are used and will hereafter be cited DGFP.

² Ibid., III, Doc. No. 2, 3-4. Wegener, Consul at Tetuán, sent a telegram to the Foreign Minister forwarding the request of Franco and Lt. Col. Beigbeder for "ten troop transport aircraft with maximum seating capacity" to be purchased through private German firms and brought by German pilots to Spanish Morocco. The
that Hitler promised aid to Franco. On July 22, Franco sent
Johannes Bernhardt, a German businessman residing in Morocco, to
Germany to request planes and other war materials. Accompanying
him was the local Nazi Ortsgruppenleiter, Adolf Langenheim. They
were able to see Hitler and Göring, who agreed, on July 26, to
support Franco. Göring urged this course to prevent further spread
of Communism and also because he wanted to test his Luftwaffe in
actual battle conditions. 4

In order to expedite delivery of arms and aircraft to
Franco, the Spanish trading company Hisma, Ltda. and its German
delivery of the planes was held up for several days, because the
German Foreign Ministry did not favor it.

3 Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert assert that German
Auslandsorganization (the Foreign Organization of the Nazi Party
concerned with German Nationals living abroad) agents were pro-
viding the groundwork for German support of Franco even before the
outbreak of the Civil War. They base their claims on the reports
of Loyalist authorities who raided the AO headquarters in Barcelona
and seized their files. See: Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert,
The Diplomats: 1919-1939 (Princeton: Princeton University Press,
1953), pp. 428-29. At least one author acknowledges that, prior to
the beginning of the conflict, there was much propaganda in Spain
about Nazi Germany and that "close relations were reached between
the Falangists and the local Nazi leaders." See Hugh Thomas, The
However, I have been unable to find any evidence that Germany pro-
vided the rebels with arms or active assistance prior to the begin-
ing of the Civil War.

4 International Military Tribunal, The Trial of the Major
War Criminals (Nuremberg, 1947-1949), IX, 280-81. Göring, in a
discussion with Mussolini in April, 1937, told with satisfaction
how, at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, Franco's Moroccan
troops were flown to Spain with the help of German Ju 53 transport
planes. He said to Mussolini, "Franco has much to thank us for. I
hope he'll remember it later." See: Paul Schmidt, Hitler's Inter-
counterpart, Rowak, were formed. These firms promoted the exchange of German military supplies for Spanish raw materials and concessions; they were set up within a week of the request made to Hitler by Franco through Bernhardt and Langenheim.

Early in August, France proposed a plan of non-intervention by which the interested countries (Great Britain, Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union) were to refrain from aiding either of the parties fighting for power in Spain. The policy of non-intervention was adopted and formally agreed to by the British, German, Italian, and Russian governments. However, only the British strictly observed it. The Soviet Union gave aid to the Loyalists. Both Germany and Italy supported the Nationalists. Even in France, where the Communists in the Government advocated giving aid to the Loyalists, M. Cot, the French Air Minister, secretly sent

---

5 Hisma, Ltda. is a contraction of Compañía Hispano-Marroquí de Transportes. Rowak stands for Rohstoffe-und-Waren-Einkaufsgesellschaft. Later, other Spanish companies were formed and then grouped together in a new holding company, Sofindus (Sociedad Financiera Industrial Ltda.). Herbert Feis points out that the German state trading organization began almost immediately to obtain goods from Spain, attempting to give Germany an advantage in what was supposed to be a balance of trade between the two countries. He says: "For several years it [the German trading organization] secured far more than it gave; Germany was until 1942 a drain upon Spanish economic life." See: Herbert Feis, The Spanish Story: Franco and the Nations at War (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1948), p. 23.


7 The Loyalists were those who supported the Republican government in Madrid.

8 The Nationalists were those who supported Franco.
planes and equipment to the Republican Army.

On November 18, Germany broke off diplomatic relations with the Republican Government at Valencia (it had been moved there from Madrid) and formally recognized the de jure government of Franco at Burgos. For Hitler (and Mussolini) the Spanish Civil War seemed a splendid opportunity to extend the range of Fascist power, strike a blow at Communism, and test troops and weapons under combat conditions. By the end of 1936, Germany, together with Italy and Portugal, was openly providing military aid to the Nationalists. Baron von Neurath, the German Foreign Minister, in a telegram sent to the German Embassy in Italy on December 5, 1936, insisted that

in the Spanish conflict Germany has predominantly the negative goal of not permitting the Iberian Peninsula to come under Bolshevist domination, which would involve the danger of its spreading to the rest of Western Europe.9

As Carlton J. H. Hayes later put it:

The Axis allies could not afford to let the Spanish Civil War enhance the prestige of Russia and France and cement their alliance. This was the thing most likely to happen if the Republicans won the war.10

Herr von Ribbentrop, German Ambassador to Great Britain, had wanted Germany, in 1936, to keep out of Spanish affairs. He feared complications with Britain, which would undoubtedly disapprove German intervention in Spain. However, Ribbentrop


realized that Hitler feared communism in Spain because he believed it would spread to France and thus seriously endanger Germany.\textsuperscript{11} So, explaining that Germany could not tolerate a communist Spain, Hitler ordered aircraft sent to Franco.

During 1936, the German Foreign Office experts, though not opposed to the idea of exploiting the situation in Spain to Germany's advantage, feared, as did Ribbentrop, that a thoroughgoing commitment in Spain would increase the opposition of the Western Powers and perhaps involve Germany in a disastrous war.\textsuperscript{12} Among those taking a different stand was Admiral Canaris, head of the Counter Intelligence Section of the German War Ministry and a personal friend of Franco. Canaris advocated total German support to the Nationalists.\textsuperscript{13} Actually, there was no definite German policy. One reason for this, say Craig and Gilbert, was the "welter of irresponsible agents wandering about in Spain."\textsuperscript{14} In this category they place Göring, Ribbentrop, Canaris, Bernhardt, and Wilhelm Faupel.\textsuperscript{15}


\textsuperscript{12}See editor's note in \textit{DGFP}, III, 1-2. Until the Munich Pact in 1938, this feeling was particularly strong in Germany. German policy had been to refuse to commit enough forces to Spain to secure a Nationalist victory. After the Munich Pact, however, Germany felt she could violate the Non-Intervention Pact without fear since it seemed Britain would not go to war over Spain (or hardly anything else, for that matter).

\textsuperscript{13}Craig and Gilbert, p. 430.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15}Faupel was German Chargé d'Affaires in Spain from
While the varied approaches of these men hindered the formation of a standardized German policy in Spain, Germany did, during 1937 and 1938, have certain objectives. In the so-called Hossbach Conference held in the Reich Chancellery in Berlin on November 5, 1937, German policy in Spain was summarized. Hitler did not desire an immediate or complete victory for Franco. He wanted the tension in the Mediterranean maintained. The Führer was interested in maintaining Italian intervention in Spain and in Italian possession of the Balearic Islands, although he realized that permanent Italian ownership of the Balearics would be opposed by Britain and France, even to the extent that they might go to war over those islands. In the event of such a war, Spain would probably have to side with Britain and France. Göring felt that, in view of Hitler's statements, Germany should withdraw its military undertakings in Spain. Hitler, however, felt that a decision be reserved "for a proper moment."

November, 1936, to February, 1937, when he became Ambassador to the Spanish Nationalist Government, a position he held until September, 1937.

16 In a speech at Würzburg on June 27, 1937, Hitler said he supported Franco to gain possession of Spanish iron ore. This, no doubt, was an oversimplification of the matter. See: Thomas, p. 459. Actually, Germany wanted to prevent a Republican victory without necessarily insuring a Nationalist one. Germany wanted to gain time, deferring "for as long as possible the time when we might have to commit ourselves to a fundamental decision on the further development of the non-intervention policy." See: DGFF, III, Doc. No. 511, 572-73.


18 Ibid. Present at this meeting were Hitler; Field Marshal von Blomberg, War Minister; Colonel General Baron von Fritsch, Commander in Chief, Army; Admiral Raeder, Commander in
Toward the end of 1937 Hitler reduced his aid to Franco. Along with his advisers, he distrusted the Caudillo. Although both sides received foreign help during the Civil War, the assistance, including that of Germany, was neither constant nor dependable. The Wilhelmstrasse and the Army Command advocated caution regarding participation in the Spanish conflict. Thus, Hitler carefully limited both his military commitments and political risks. That he was somewhat hesitant about aiding Franco is evident in the report of the Hossbach Conference.\(^{19}\) Nevertheless, at a meeting in Rome on November 6, 1937, involving the Duce, his Foreign Minister, Count Galeazzo Ciano, and von Ribbentrop, it was agreed that Axis support be given Franco in Aragon, where the Caudillo launched an offensive and routed the Republicans in the spring of 1938. At this meeting it was decided that, immediately after the battle in Aragon, the Axis "will make contact [with Franco] to define his political relations with us."\(^{20}\)

Franco must also adhere to the Anti-Comintern Pact which had been formed between Germany and Japan on November 17, 1936, and joined on November 6, 1937, by Italy. In addition, a Tri-partite Pact was to be formed, whereby Franco would be required to bring Spanish policy into agreement with that of the Rome-Berlin Axis. By this time it was felt, at least by Ciano, that Spain should

---

Chief, Navy; Colonel General Göring, Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe; Baron von Neurath, Foreign Minister; Colonel Hossbach, Adjutant to the Führer.

\(^{19}\)Ibid.

remain closely associated with the Axis Powers because German and Italian aid saved Nationalist Spain. Mussolini reached the same conclusion. He believed that Franco's ideology, being similar to his own and Hitler's, would strengthen Franco's ties with the Axis. Axis pressure would also serve this same purpose. Franco finally joined the Anti-Comintern Pact on March 27, 1939, just a few days after he celebrated his entry into Madrid.

A short time later, on March 31, Eberhard von Stohrer, German Ambassador in Spain, and Count Jordana, Foreign Minister of the Spanish Nationalist Government, signed at Burgos a Treaty of Friendship between Germany and Spain. The two countries agreed to consult and inform each other continuously concerning their common interests. They also agreed to lend mutual diplomatic support and to refrain from aiding a third party against the other treaty partner. In Article IX of that treaty the

---

21 There is little doubt that Franco's forces were fortunate in being able to receive sufficient German and Italian reinforcements and supplies to gain ultimate victory. While there are no detailed figures concerning the number and character of German materials sent to Spain, it is known that German aid to Franco amounted to over 500 million reichsmarks of war material, with 88 million of this being used on salaries and expenses, which Spain was not asked to repay. Direct deliveries to Spain account for 124 million. 354 million is attributed to the Condor Legion. See: DFF, III, Doc. No. 783, 692-94. The Condor Legion, composed of German troop replacements sent to Spain under the command of General von Sperrle and responsible only to him, had a maximum strength, in the autumn of 1936, of 10,000 men. Included in the Condor Legion were anti-tank companies, anti-aircraft units, tank companies, bomber squadrons, a fighter group, and a seaplane reconnaissance and experimental squadron. In total, the number of Germans who directly helped the Nationalists numbered around 16,000. See: Thomas, p. 634.

22 Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, pp. 144-45.
contracting parties declared that they would

intensify economic relations between their countries as much as possible and affirm their intention of having Germany and Spain supplement each other and cooperate in economic matters in every way. ²³

Both parties had already declared in Article VI that in the event of warlike complications with any third power they would "avoid anything in the political, military, and economic fields that might be disadvantageous to its treaty partner or of advantage to its opponent." ²⁴

The Axis Powers had intervened in Spain to tip the balance of power in their favor. Both Germany and Italy hoped to gain tangible compensation for their intervention in the Civil War. Italy desired the Balearic Islands. Germany's aims, according to von Neurath, were "preponderantly of a commercial character." ²⁵ Germany wanted to obtain economic concessions in Spain and Spanish Morocco. ²⁶

In a protocol signed at Burgos by Faupel and Jordana on July 12, 1937, Germany and Spain agreed to increase economic cooperation then and in the future, although a comprehensive settlement of the economic relations between Spain and Germany was postponed. The Spanish Nationalist Government declared that

²³DGFP, III, Doc. No. 773, 884-86.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., III, Doc. No. 142, 152-53. Telegram on December 5, 1936, to the Embassy in Italy.

²⁶Foremost among the economic concessions desired by Germany was participation in Spanish iron ore mines. In a plan called the Montana Project, which was designed to guarantee
it was prepared to conclude with Germany, its first trade agreement with any country, reserving the right to treat Italy in the same manner as Germany. On July 15, the same two signatories signed a protocol declaring that both countries would help each other as much as possible in the exchange of raw materials, food, and manufactured goods. The protocol affirmed "in a general and binding form their mutual endeavor to advance commerce between their countries in a manner which will result in the greatest possible expansion." The next day Faupel and Jordana said that

the German Government and the Spanish Nationalist Government consider that it is in both their interests to support one another mutually in advancing production,

Germany a steady supply of Spanish minerals, Germany got control of 75 Spanish mines. A Spanish mining law was signed permitting German capital to participate in Spanish mines to the extent of 40%, with the possibility of exceptions higher than this percentage. Spain agreed to pay all the expenses in Spain of the Condor Legion and to import 5 million Reichsmarks worth of mining machinery, which would be repaid in ore. See: DGFP, III, Doc. No. 698, 795-96. (Telegram from Stohrer to the Foreign Ministry on November 19, 1938.) The Nationalist Government agreed to all this because it badly needed new war supplies in order to begin new offensives. Hugh Thomas says that the "refurbishment of the Condor Legion and other supplies sent by Germany to Nationalist Spain was the most important act of foreign intervention in the course of the war. It enabled Franco to mount a new offensive almost immediately, and so to strike the Republic when they had exhausted their supplies. Had it not been for this aid... a compromise peace, despite all Franco's protestations, might have been inevitable." See: Thomas, p. 566.

DGFP, III, Doc. No. 392, 413-14. The editor notes that on the same day at Burgos an agreement supplementary to the German-Spanish Commercial Treaty of May 7, 1926, was signed by Jordana and Faupel. This agreement provided for unrestricted most-favored-nation treatment. The Supplementary agreement appears in the Reichsgesetzblatt, 1937, II, 521.

DGFP, III, Doc. No. 394, 417.
thus contributing to increasing the well-being of their countries.²⁹

Spain also agreed to pay its debts for war materials in reichsmarks, with 4% annual interest. In order to guarantee repayment, Spain promised to send raw materials to Germany and to let Germany participate in Spanish reconstruction and redevelopment.³⁰

Guided by the viewpoint expressed on July 12, the delegations of the two governments carried on negotiations on economic and financial questions at Burgos from June 12 to July 5, 1939. Agreement in principle was reached on the future exchange of goods and payments between Spain and Germany. The future exchange was expected to expand and intensify reciprocal economic relations between the two countries.³¹

On the battlefield Franco’s forces had managed, during 1938, to cut Loyalist Spain into two parts, and in 1939 they conquered Catalonia by capturing Barcelona. This Catalan campaign, launched at Christmas in 1938, was both successful and decisive. The Loyalists, realizing the helplessness of their situation because they were blockaded by Franco and were thus unable to get enough supplies from France, surrendered on March 28, 1939. Had he not exchanged many mining rights for German arms, Franco could never have launched his successful Catalan campaign. German (and Italian) aid to Franco was certainly

²⁹Ibid., III, Doc. No. 397, 421-22.

³⁰Ibid.

an important, perhaps the most important, factor in giving him ultimate victory.32

Throughout the summer of 1939, the question persisted concerning Spain's stand with regard to Germany in the event of a war. On July 2, Stohrer informed the German Foreign Ministry that he had discussed with the Spanish authorities statements attributed to two Spanish generals about Spain's attitude in a future war.33 Stohrer reported that he explained to the Spanish Foreign Minister that it would not be expedient for Spain or for us if the Spanish Government were to show their cards in advance over the attitude they would adopt in a possible war. What we expected at present from Spain, in the event of a European war, was, as he knew, expressed in the Fuehrer's letter, in his own hand, written to General

32 There were, of course, other important factors in Franco's victory. Franco himself provided the leadership necessary for victory. His ability to achieve unity among the various Nationalist factions—Falange, Church, Monarchists, Carlistas, and Army—gave him an advantage over the relatively disunified Republicans. Ramon Serrano Suñer, Minister of the Interior until October 17, 1939, helped greatly in securing political synthesis among Franco's followers. Another factor which undoubtedly hampered the Republican cause, and thereby helped Franco, was the policy of non-intervention by Britain, France, and the United States. The Republicans were thus forced to rely heavily on the Soviet Union and the Comintern for war materials.

33 In a footnote, the editor of Documents on German Foreign Policy says, "According to reports in The Times of June 17 and 21 General Kindeland, Chief of the Spanish Air Force, while on a mission to Italy, had given an interview to La Stampa on June 15, in which he was reported to have said that if Italy were involved in war 'none of the Spanish Services, the Air Force least of all, will be able to remain impassive.' A few days later General Aranda, Head of the Spanish Military Mission to Berlin, whilst on an official visit there, declared to a British newspaper correspondent that Spain would assume no obligations towards foreign countries except in the form of commercial and cultural treaties." See footnote in DGFP, VI, 630-31.
Franco in March.\textsuperscript{34} But it would be a grave error to bring this to the notice of Germany’s potential opponents in such a war just now.

On the contrary we must attach the greatest importance to Spain’s attitude in a future war remaining a completely unknown quantity for France and Britain. This would not only tie down French forces in the Pyrenees frontier but above all would also serve the cause of peace, as the intentions of France and Britain for armed intervention in problems which were no concern of theirs would be greatly discouraged by the fear that Spain might side with the Axis.

The Minister agreed with me on all points and emphasized . . . that Spain had no thought of committing herself politically in advance in any way or of surrendering her freedom of action.\textsuperscript{35}

But Franco realized the role the Axis had played in his victory and in a meeting with Ciano at San Sebastian on July 19, 1939, he confirmed his intention of following more and more definitely the policy of the Rome-Berlin Axis. Spain’s general condition did not "allow him to identify himself with the political system of the totalitarian countries" just yet, however.\textsuperscript{36}

He expressed a wish for five years of peace, during which Spain might recover and prepare to identify herself with the Axis system. Franco had already expressed his feeling toward the Axis by joining the Anti-Comintern Pact and by signing a Pact of Friendship with Germany. Relations with Germany were such that, should a war involving her come, Spain was almost pledged to observe a favorable neutrality towards Germany and the Axis.

\textsuperscript{34}This letter has not been found.

\textsuperscript{35}DGFP, VI, Doc. No. 605, pp. 830-31. Unlike the other volumes of this series which I used, this volume was published in London by Her Majesty’s Printing House in 1956.

\textsuperscript{36}Ciano, Ciano’s Diplomatic Papers, p. 291.
Franco knew, however, that he could maintain neutrality only during a short war. A long war would require assumption of a more definite position.\textsuperscript{37} To prepare for such a possibility Franco would need a long period of peace, which would allow Spain to recover from the Civil War and permit his own regime to become more firmly established. Actually, Franco could not have entered a war, even if he so wished, because of Spain's general condition. There were shortages of bread, meat, and milk. Many factories were closed, and machinery was out of order. Raw materials were lacking. Railroads were in a state of disrepair. There was no gold and few exportable surpluses. Since both Germany and Italy wanted payment and since attempted state direction of Spain's economy did not produce any improvement, Franco had to look to Britain and the United States, as well as to several South American countries. He asked for goods on credit, hoping to get them in return for promises.

By the summer of 1938 the Spanish people were tired of war, certainly not anxious for any more killing and destruction. They wanted to rebuild, not to become involved in more conflict. Franco shared these feelings. As early as autumn 1938, when England and France inquired as to what the Caudillo would do in the event of a European war, Count Jordana replied with a promise of Spanish neutrality.\textsuperscript{38} German Under-Secretary of State Woermann, in a telegram to the Embassy in Spain, told the Spanish Ambassador

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{38}DGFP, III, Doc. No. 666, 749-50.
that Germany would understand Spain's remaining neutral in a European war, but expected her not to negotiate on this with England and France. He added that Germany would also expect Spain to be benevolently neutral.\(^{39}\) In estimating the various nations in relation to their positions in 1939, Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the German Army, regarded Spain, along with Italy, as a friend, saying: "Spain will look with disfavor upon any victory of the democratic nations. Democracies would introduce a monarchy dependent on the Western powers."\(^{40}\)

Many Spanish leaders, including Franco, deeply feared and hated the Communists. Thus, when Germany signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union on August 23, 1939, Franco was understandably bitter.\(^{41}\) He still wanted to show his friendship to Germany, but, even though his sympathies were with the Axis powers, due in large part, probably, out of gratitude for the military assistance they had given him, he had no choice but to declare Spain's neutrality when war did break out in Europe in September, 1939. The official announcement by the Spanish Government on September 4, 1939, read as follows:

Officially recognizing the state of war which unfortunately exists between Poland, Britain and France on the

\(^{39}\)Ibid., III, Doc. No. 669, 752.

\(^{40}\)Franz Halder, War Journal of Franz Halder: August 14, 1939 to September 24, 1942, I, 7. Obtained from the Library of Congress Card Catalog No. 240,422 H 112. Engineer School Library, Bldg. 270. Fort Belvoir, Va. This entry was made on August 14, 1939, during preliminary planning of the Poland Campaign of fall, 1939.

\(^{41}\)In this Treaty of Non-Aggression, Germany and the Soviet Union agreed to refrain from attacking each other, or supporting
one hand and Germany on the other, I ordain by the present decree the most strict neutrality on the part of Spanish subjects in accordance with contemporary laws and principles of international law. 42

From this point on, Germany, the other Axis powers, and the Allied nations vied for Franco's support, mainly because of Spain's strategic position. But Franco decided to remain neutral, even though his sympathies were with the Axis powers. Churchill has said that Franco's policy throughout the war was "entirely selfish and cold-blooded." 43 He accused Franco of being concerned only for Spain and Spanish interests, with no feeling of gratitude to Hitler and Mussolini for their help. Franco, he said, "thought only about keeping his blood-drained people out of another war." 43 Yet Churchill, along with the other Allied leaders, had good reason to be thankful that Franco followed this policy, for Germany, as will be shown, attempted unsuccessfully after the outbreak of World War II to get Spain to enter the war on her side.

---

44 Ibid.
CHAPTER TWO

THE WAR BEGINS

When war broke out in Europe on September 1, 1939, with the German invasion of Poland, Franco and his Falange had been in power for only five months. Yet, by this time, Franco's foreign policy was becoming increasingly clear, for on March 27, 1939, he had signed an Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany. On March 31, these same two countries signed a Treaty of Friendship. During the months that followed, Spain was almost as anti-democratic as she was anti-Communist, with particularly vicious propaganda attacks being made against the United States. The Allied Nations, of course, were greatly concerned.

While Stohrer, German Ambassador to Spain, and others felt fairly certain that they could count on Spain's friendship, they did have moments of doubt, and not unreasonably so. Spanish foreign policy had been based on two elements: self-interest and anti-Communism. Spain could be expected to pursue this policy almost without exception. Opposition to Communism, in particular, determined much of Spanish policy. As Emmet J. Hughes said:

Since April 1, 1939, there has never been a time when the Franco regime has lost an opportunity to denounce and, in any possible way, to fight against Communism as an ideology and Russia as its national protagonist.1

Thus, as previously mentioned, Franco was understandably disturbed when, on August 23, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed a Non-Aggression Pact. German officials were uncertain

about Franco's reaction. It seemed likely that Franco would be opposed to the alliance, for, after all, the Soviet Union had actively supported the Republican government in Madrid during the Spanish Civil War. Certainly Franco would not easily forget this. Carlton J. H. Hayes has explained that

... Franco and the Spanish Nationalists had less cause for loving Hitler in Germany than for detesting Stalinist Russia. To become, even indirectly, an ally of Russia, would have seemed to them utterly fantastic, an ultimate *reductio ad absurdum.*

Strangely enough, while the Franco government later professed that whatever aid it gave to Germany during the war was meant only to combat Russian Communism, it is interesting to note that the most flagrant and greatest amount of Spanish aid to Germany was given during that period when the Russo-German Pact was still in operation, namely between the outbreak of the war and the German invasion of Russia in June, 1941.

However, German officials did not know this late in the summer of 1939. Shortly before the actual outbreak of war, Stohrer became concerned when he heard French press reports that Spain had promised France to remain neutral in event of war. In a telegram to the German Foreign Ministry on August 28, Stohrer reported that he had met with Colonel Juan Beigbeder, the recently appointed Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs.³ Denying the

---


³Colonel Juan Beigbeder y Atienza, replacing Count Jordana, was appointed Foreign Minister in a new cabinet formed by Franco on August 10, 1939.
reports, Beigbeder indicated measures taken beneficial to the Axis by referring to the building of Spanish fortifications in the Pyrenees and in Spanish Morocco, the strong reinforcements of troops there, and the formation of a new Gibraltar command of one division. ⁴

On August 31, the night before Nazi panzer divisions raced across the frontiers of Poland, Stohrer again reported that although the Spanish Government, on the outbreak of war, would be compelled by Anglo-French pressure to proclaim neutrality, it would be a benevolent neutrality toward Germany. He based his judgment on the personal assurance of Franco, statements of Colonel Beigbeder, and the German-Spanish Treaty of Friendship of March 31, 1939. Stohrer recommended that care be taken not to make too obvious demands upon the Spanish for fear of severe French and British pressure, which would then surely increase and lessen Spain's benevolent neutrality toward Germany. ⁵ On the next day, Stohrer called on Beigbeder and Minister of the Interior, Serrano Suñer, to discuss Spain's probable attitude in the impending war. Beigbeder stated that the Spanish Government would presumably proclaim its neutrality, but gave assurance of all possible assistance to Germany. Serrano Suñer added that

---


⁵ Ibid., VII, Doc. No. 479, 465-66.
Germany could count upon Spanish support. Thus, when war did break out, Germany and Spain were on reasonably friendly terms, with Spain indicating her willingness and even desire to aid the Axis cause, while still remaining officially a neutral.

During the fall of 1939, the Spanish Government desired to continue economic relations with Germany, but it was difficult for it to deviate from an honest neutral course. Even though British sources in Spain uncovered many projects before they could be carried out and British and French ships kept watch along the Spanish coasts and among the Spanish islands, Spain nevertheless assured Germany on October 19 that, despite the war, it still wished to carry on trade and as much of the economic collaboration envisaged prior to the war as possible. This trade had to be channeled through Italy and under camouflage, but Germany was eager to receive a maximum quantity of Spanish raw materials. At the same time she tried to prevent Spain from resuming export of raw materials to the Allied Powers. Despite German and Spanish efforts, particularly to supply German submarines with Spanish aid, many plans for continued economic relations had to be postponed.

On December 22, Germany and Spain signed a secret economic protocol at Madrid reaffirming their desire for mutual trade which had been expressed in the Treaty of Friendship of March 31, 1939.

---


7 Ibid., VII, Doc. No. 282, 322. These raw materials included pyrite, potash, wolfram, and iron ore.
and in the protocols of July 13 and 15, 1939. In this protocol Stohrer and Beigbeder expressed the intentions of their respective countries to continue cooperation, even though events made it impossible to develop economic relations between Germany and Spain as was hoped in July, 1939. Spain agreed that such goods as iron ore, zinc, lead, mercury, wool, hides, and wolfram—goods that Germany particularly desired—would be reserved for export to Germany if at all possible. Spain also promised to try to meet Germany's import demands for Spanish goods, "except for those needed by Spain and those which in view of the foreign exchange Spain felt it had to reserve for export to other countries."

The arrangements made in the Protocol of December 22, 1939, were meant only for the duration of the war, although it was intended to serve also as a transition to a projected comprehensive trade agreement between Germany and Spain after the war. Because of the conditions of the international trade between Germany and neutral Spain, more comprehensive agreements could not be concluded at the moment. The Protocol assured Germany

---

8 *Ibid.*, VIII, Doc. No. 482, 568-69. In a footnote to this document, the editor tells of a more specific agreement made on the same day. In this agreement the basic principles for German-Spanish economic relations were formulated. A joint commission was established to authorize private transactions between firms of the two countries. Among other things, it was decided that economic agreements with other countries and economic policies in general must not hamper the post-war resumption of normal economic relations between Spain and Germany.

that all of her claims existing prior to the negotiations in the summer of 1939, as well as the results of those negotiations, were to remain in effect for the duration of the war and thereafter until an economic agreement could be reached.  

Without a doubt Spain had been placed in a disadvantageous debtor position by huge Nazi credit balances built up in Spain because of supplies furnished by the German clearing agency Hisma, during the Civil War. While Spain continued to have economic difficulties, "the first years of World War II witnessed a steady betterment of Germany's economic standing on Iberian soil."  

In addition to the economic agreements with Germany, Spain also carried on negotiations with France and England. Spain signed an economic protocol with France in January, 1940. Then, because Germany was unable to provide Spain with petroleum and other materials, Spain had to turn to Britain and the result was an economic agreement signed in March. Britain received some authority over Spanish shipping. Furthermore, in order to be allowed to import goods from the Allies, Spain had to promise to refrain from exporting specified commodities to the Axis. 

The agreements with Britain and France, unlike the secret German-Spanish agreements, were published in full and permitted Spain

---

10 DGFP, VIII, Doc. No. 482, 568-69.

11 Hughes, p. 242.

12 Ibid., p. 243.
to obtain materials essential to her welfare. Both France and Britain thought such arrangements would help keep Spain out of the conflict.\textsuperscript{13}

German victories mounted in the spring of 1940. After she invaded Poland in September, 1939, Germany proceeded, by means of Blitz tactics and the aid of traitors and Fifth Columnists, to conquer both Denmark and Norway early in April, 1940. The momentum increased. On May 10 the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg were attacked without warning by German bombers, tanks, parachutists, and troops. Effective resistance by the armies of these countries collapsed within a week. British and French forces, which had been dispatched into Belgium to cooperate with the Belgian army in its resistance, found their efforts against the onrushing German forces futile. Beigbeder and Franco both expressed approval of Germany's actions.\textsuperscript{14}

The German forces then broke through the Sedan–Montmédy sector of the Maginot Line and penetrated deep into northern France. On May 26, the Belgian army capitulated. By moving

\textsuperscript{13} Feis, pp. 23-25. Actually, Spain's dependence upon Britain and the United States for commodities such as petroleum, cotton, and foodstuffs was one important reason for her strict neutrality—at least until the spring of 1940—even though Spanish sympathies did lie with the Axis cause. Economic dependence on Britain and the United States and exhaustion due to the strife of the Civil War, rather than love for the democracies, kept Spain out of the war. In fact, Spain was in the awkward position of accepting aid from the Allies while at the same time hoping to obtain imperial gains at their expense. Serrano Suñer substantiates this claim. See: Ramón Serrano Suñer, Entre Hendaya y Gibraltar (9th ed.; Madrid: Ediciones y Publicaciones Españolas, 1947), pp. 129-31.

\textsuperscript{14} DGFP, IX, Doc. No. 225, 315.
rapidly toward Abbéville, near the French coast, the Germans managed to separate the British expeditionary force of some 250,000 men, along with some French forces, from the main French armies. Faced by superior German troops, the trapped Anglo-French forces were forced to evacuate to England from the beaches of Dunkirk on May 28, leaving behind almost all their equipment. The fall of France was approaching.

In the meantime, Spain, though on friendly terms with Italy, was concerned over the prospects of that country's participation in the war. Spain feared that Italian intervention might not only consist of an attack against France, but also of an attempt to seize the Spanish Balearic Islands. Spain was also frightened that Britain and France might attempt to obtain control of the Balearics. Beigbeder, early in April, had told Stohrer that Spain would automatically enter the war should Italy do so. In a telegram to the German Foreign Ministry on April 16, Stohrer related that Beigbeder "expected attacks by England and France as soon as these countries were convinced that Italy's entry into the war, which they feared, was imminent."\(^{15}\) In the same telegram Stohrer related that Beigbeder said that expected British and French occupation of Tangier, the Gibraltar zone, and the Balearic Islands would be considered a violation of Spanish neutrality and would be met with armed force. Stohrer further indicated that the fear of war in Spain was balanced by hopes of gains, such as control of Gibraltar and the acquisition of

\(^{15}\) Ibid., IX, Doc. No. 129, 191.
Tangier, which Spain as an ally of the Axis might expect in the case of an Axis victory.\textsuperscript{16}

Spanish leaders repeatedly affirmed that Spain would remain neutral unless directly attacked. On May 5, Alexander Weddell, American Ambassador in Spain, reported that Beigbeder had assured him of Spain's neutrality, adding that Spain "was determined to maintain this neutrality if necessary by force of arms against anyone who acted against the sovereignty of the country."\textsuperscript{17} By the end of May, Spanish leaders seemed less concerned than previously about the possibility of Spain becoming involved in the war. Beigbeder indicated that even the anticipated entry of Italy into the war would not draw Spain into the conflict. He expressed confidence in a speedy German victory, which in turn would lessen the chances of American intervention and a possible endangering of Spain's position.\textsuperscript{18} On June 3, Franco sent a note to Hitler explaining that Spain had been forced to remain neutral due to her political and economic situation, even though he desired to serve Hitler's cause. Franco also expressed his satisfaction over Hitler's victories.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., IX, Doc. No. 129, 190-92.


\textsuperscript{18}DGFP, IX, Doc. No. 285, 396.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., Doc. No. 378, 509-10. Although Spain professed to be neutral, German officials did exert considerable influence within Spain. Falangist agitation in Madrid became extremely hostile toward the British. On June 7, Sir Samuel Hoare, whom
On June 10, when German troops in France had moved as far south as the Seine River, Italy formally declared war against France and Great Britain. Italian forces promptly invaded southeastern France, thus making France's defeat almost certain. Paris was evacuated on June 13 and the next day German troops entered the city. Three days later Marshal Pétain replaced Paul Reynaud as head of the French government. On June 17, 1940, Pétain asked the Germans for an armistice; it was signed on June 22 at Compiegne.

Now that Italy had entered the war, the Allies were seriously worried about Spanish neutrality, but Beigbeder reaffirmed Spain's neutral position. Spain's reaction to the Italian move came on June 12. On that day Franco made an announcement that Spain had changed from a position of "neutrality" to one of "non-belligerency." It appeared that Franco, anticipating a rather short war, was beginning to take a position favorable to Churchill had appointed as the British Ambassador to Spain on May 17, wrote a letter to Mr. Duff Cooper, British Minister of Information, concerning this fact. Hoare said: "... I have never seen so complete a control of the means of communication, press, propaganda, aviation, etc., as the Germans have here. Indeed, I go so far as to say that the Embassy and I are only existing here on German suffrance." See: Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel Hoare, Complacent Dictator (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1947), p. 14.

20 Foreign Relations of the United States ... 1940, II, Doc. No. 176, 796.

21 Ibid., II, Doc. No. 186, 797. The German Ambassador to Spain, Stohrer, interpreted the Spanish decree as an act favorable to Germany. He reported to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin on June 13: "This declaration has, without doubt, been made in order to give Spain greater freedom during the war as regards the conduct of her foreign policy, also towards Germany." See: DGFP, IX, Doc. No. 423, 560. Herbert Feis has said concerning this matter: "... on June 12th, Franco announced that
the Axis in hopes of being able to share the spoils Hitler and Mussolini would reap.

Although Franco was conscious of his country's exhaustion and weakened economic condition due to the Civil War, he thought the time proper for Spain to begin to realize the ambitions he and his Falangist supporters had for territorial expansion in northwestern Africa. During June, while France was being defeated,

Spain henceforth would be a 'non-belligerent.' Italy had once said the same, interpreting it to mean all aid to Germany without declaring war; then, when it was a chance that seemed safe, hitched on to victory. The Spanish government was plainly excited by this example. See: Feis, p. 32. Weddell, American Ambassador to Spain, seeking clarification of the Spanish Government's attitude on this question, talked with Franco on June 22. Reporting Franco's reply, Weddell said: "In reply the Caudillo, referring to previous declarations of neutrality, said that the war in Scandinavia, as in Poland, had been remote. Now the war clouds have come much nearer. Italian dead lie in Spanish fields and Spain's sympathy toward Italy was very great—in a word, the phrase of non-belligerency might be interpreted as descriptive of a state of more definite sympathy toward Italy and a wide awake attitude. I asked bluntly whether Spain would enter the war. He parried this, remarking 'The United States is nearer to war than we are.'" Weddell reported no comments by Franco concerning Spanish sympathy toward Germany other than quoting Franco as describing Hitler as a "very human man." See Weddell's report to the U.S. Secretary of State, Cordell Hull: Foreign Relations of the United States ... 1940, II, Doc. No. 232, 868. A position of "neutrality" indicated that Spain intended neither to take an active part in the war nor to give aid to any of the belligerents. A declaration of "non-belligerency", however, meant that Spain was no longer neutral, and implied that she would inactively support one of the belligerents. Spain's "non-belligerency" connoted that she might eventually imitate Italy and join Germany by actually fighting on the side of the Axis. This declaration of "non-belligerency" indicated that Spain's sympathies lay with the Axis. Though she might eventually fight alongside the Axis, Spain's "non-belligerency" indicated that, for the time being, she would aid the Axis cause, perhaps by means of pro-Axis propaganda, or perhaps even by trade arrangements favorable to the Axis, but unfavorable to the Allies. In a sense, the declaration of "non-belligerency" was an act of appeasement to Germany; it actually involved many words, but few deeds.
Franco, intent upon seizing French Morocco, concentrated nearly 100,000 troops in Spanish Morocco. On June 14, with France all but conquered, these troops promptly occupied the International Zone of Tangier as a means of protection "to ensure the neutrality of Tangier." Diplomatic negotiations to obtain concessions from France in Morocco proved unsuccessful, so Franco determined that Spain would have to participate actively in the conflict in order to share in the spoils of war. He had in mind assuming control of Gibraltar. Thus, on June 16, Franco sent General Vigón to see Hitler and Ribbentrop at the Castle of Acoz. Vigón indicated Spain's intention to attack Gibraltar and received Hitler's approval. Hitler promised support for Spanish claims on Gibraltar. Vigón then indicated that Spain would have to overcome such difficulties as food supplies and possible American landings in Morocco or Portugal before she could act. Hitler replied by promising Germany's aid, but he avoided discussion of Spanish claims in Africa, saying that Mussolini should be consulted first.

22 DGFP, IX, Doc. No. 429, 565.

23 Herbert Feis maintains that Franco destroyed his chances of obtaining concessions in French Morocco by increasing the Spanish forces in Spanish Morocco, for it discouraged the French Military Commander in Morocco, General Nogues, from carrying on the fight against Germany. Feis says that Nogues "concluded that resistance was impossible, since the weak French armies would be attacked at once on the Riffian front. Had the war spread to Morocco, it is almost certain that Spain and Germany would have come to terms." See: Feis, pp. 35-36.

Franco seemed ready to enter the conflict. But the problem of Spain's weakened condition due to the Civil War loomed large. Langer and Gleason have said:

Like Mussolini earlier, Franco was therefore intent on entering the war on Germany's side, but only when satisfied that the end was drawing near and that no great military effort would be involved. As conditions for intervention he would, of course, require advance assurance that Spanish claims would be satisfied, as well as the provision of munitions and food without which hostilities were simply impossible.²⁵

Britain, it appeared to Franco, would be unable to resist for long against the apparently unbeatable Axis forces. With England defeated the war would certainly end abruptly. The time seemed opportune to enter the war. Franco presumed that Spain could then participate in an Axis victory, and share in the spoils by gaining territory in northwestern Africa. He expected to do this without expending much effort or further endangering Spain's weakened condition. Though fully aware that Spain was "too exhausted to participate in a prolonged war and too dependent on economic supplies from Britain and the United States to systematically antagonize those powers,"²⁶ Franco nevertheless submitted a note on June 19 to the German Government indicating Spain's readiness to take part in the war in return for certain African territories plus materials necessary for carrying on


war. Thus, the Caudillo, assuming the conflict would end shortly, was ready to participate in the war provided that Hitler and Mussolini agreed to Spain's rather extensive claims to colonial spoils.

Hitler failed to send an immediate, favorable reply to Franco's proposals, but decided rather to study them and consult his General Staff before making a definite decision. He felt he was in a position, having brought about the military collapse of France, to deal with the Spanish proposals in a leisurely manner. On June 25, Weizsäcker, State Secretary of the Germany Foreign Ministry, made a rather noncommittal reply to the Spanish memorandum of June 19:

The Reich Government welcomes most warmly the Spanish attitude that after suitable preparation of public opinion, Spain is ready, if need be, to enter the war. As far as Spain's desires for assistance with military equipment in this event is concerned, Germany will at the proper time give them most sympathetic consideration. As soon as the further military situation after conclusion of the French armistice can be ascertained, the Reich Government will again consult the Spanish Government.

Hitler was doubtful about accepting the Spanish proposal for various reasons. He looked with disfavor upon those who wished to come to his assistance just when it seemed he was on the verge of victory. Besides, Spanish entrance into the war at this point might prove to be more harmful than helpful, for certainly the Allies would refuse all aid to Franco if he joined the Axis. Franco would then be entirely dependent upon the Axis

---

27 See Appendix A for the memorandum containing the full text of Franco's offer of intervention.

28 Ibid., X, Doc. No. 16, 15-16.
for his support. Hitler did not want to concede to Franco his claims on Morocco, for, after the military collapse of France, Hitler thought he could count on the cooperation of the Vichy Government. Therefore he thought the French empire should remain intact. Emmett Hughes has stated that

... the Fuehrer was fascinated by the possibility of converting France (through) Vichy from a former enemy into a genuine and active ally. This intriguing scheme prohibited any thought of slicing off French Morocco and delivering it as a bribe to Madrid.

Germany felt that if the French were threatened with the loss of North Africa, they might renounce the armistice signed on June 22 and capitulate to the British. In the French armistice terms, care had been taken not to make demands on North Africa. Presumably, this omission indicated a fear by the Germans that the French might move to Algeria and continue the war from there as allies of the British. If that happened, the combined British and French forces might occupy Morocco before the Axis could take any effective action there.

While Hitler had high hopes for French cooperation, Count Ciano, Italian Foreign Minister, thought that France would not cooperate and, in a conversation with Hitler on July 7, argued that France's North African possessions should be divided between

---

29 This was brought out in a memorandum by Stohrer on August 8, 1940. See: DGPP, X, Doc. No. 313, 444-45. This document is also in The Spanish Government and the Axis: Official German Documents (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1946), No. 1, 4-6.

30 Hughes, p. 272.

31 See the German-French Armistice Treaty of June 22, 1940, in DGPP, IX, Doc. No. 523, 671-76.
Italy and Spain. Hitler challenged this idea, indicating that Germany was not yet in a position to occupy French territories in Africa which she desired for herself. The Führer also pointed out that the armistice with France must be prolonged in order that Germany might maintain control over the west coast of France; from here Germany could attack English commerce and perhaps even England. Hitler also mentioned that control of this region was necessary to maintain communications with Spain, "a country most useful for the Axis game whatever happened, and indispensable should one wish to make an attack on Gibraltar."

On July 13, 1940, Hitler told his Chief of Staff, Franz Halder, that he intended to bring Spain into the Axis. Speaking of his meeting with Hitler, Halder said:

The Führer wants to draw Spain into the game in order to build up a front against Britain extending from the North Cap (sic) to Morocc. Ribbentrop will go to Spain.

But the conflict at the moment over claims to the French colonial spoils overcame any idea of accepting Spain into the Axis. Moreover, Ribbentrop never went to Spain to make arrangements for Spain's intervention in the war.

Both Britain and the United States sought to keep Spain

---


out of the Axis camp. Spanish military action supporting Hitler would pose serious problems for the Allies. Besides attempting to dislodge Britain from Gibraltar, the Axis Powers, supported by Spain, would not only dominate North Africa and the western Mediterranean, but also endanger British trade routes from South America and the Cape of Good Hope. Indeed, during June, the picture looked dark for the Allies. France had fallen; Britain was being threatened; Nazi troops had reached the Pyrenees. There was the possibility that Hitler's troops would enter Spain, march on to Gibraltar, seize it for Spain, and then occupy Morocco and French North Africa for themselves. Sir Samuel Hoare wrote to Lord Halifax on June 26:

The arrival of the Germans on the Pyrenees is a tremendous event in the eyes of every Spaniard... Will it mean, at least for the time being, a continuance of the present precarious position of non-belligerency with the constant German pressure, but with no overt act of German domination?... The view... that mostly impresses me is that the Germans will not attempt direct action in Spain until they have made their attack upon Great Britain.  

But the Allies could hardly stand by without taking some sort of action. Cordell Hull, the American Secretary of State, has summarized the Allied approach in meeting the threat of Spanish intervention in the war:

Our diplomacy, working parallel with that of Britain, strove to emphasize that Spain's best interests lay in refraining from war and in maintaining normal economic relations with the United States and the British Empire. In this policy there was no appeasement of Spain.

---

34 Hoare, p. 19.

Indeed, Britain and the United States had a strong economic hold on Spain. In June, 1940, when Spanish intervention seemed near, the Allies took steps to reduce the export of petroleum products to Spain. Concerned over the size of Spanish oil reserves, the British Government indicated to the United States its fear that the Spanish Government might be stockpiling lubricating oil and aviation gasoline in excess of her normal peacetime needs either for the purpose of attacking Gibraltar or Morocco or else for transhipment to the Axis Powers. Realizing that some restrictive steps must be taken, but not wanting to take such drastic measures that Spain would be forced into the war on the side of the Axis, the American State Department agreed to restrict the number of American tankers available for Spanish charter and to limit carefully petroleum exports to Spain.  

Unable to bring the Germans to terms, Franco realized that he had no choice, at least for the present, but to maintain somewhat friendly relations with Britain and the United States. Langer and Gleason consider that "the Fuehrer 'missed the bus,' and that by his indifference he gave Britain and the United States an opportunity to save the situation."  

Similarly, Herbert Feis believes that Hitler's refusal to accept Spanish intervention in the summer of 1940, coupled with the Allied oil

---

36 Ibid., I, 874-75. Also: Langer and Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation, p. 757. For a detailed account of the discussions between Britain and the United States over this matter, see: Feis, Chapters VI and VII.

restrictions, caused Spain to pivot from the Axis to the Allies. Spain wanted American oil, for Franco thought that Germany would refuse to supply Spain's needs except on objectionable terms. Franco also was afraid that the entire Spanish economy would collapse if he remained at odds with the United States. At any rate, Franco, though he favored the Axis, allowed his Foreign Minister, Col. Beigbeder, to attempt to maintain decent relations with the United States and Britain. Beigbeder, who advocated the continuance of friendly relations with the Allies, approached the American Ambassador in Spain, Alexander Weddell, with a request for larger oil supplies. The Spanish Foreign Minister assured Weddell that Spain intended to stay out of the Axis camp. He made a similar approach to the British Ambassador, Sir Samuel Hoare. Both Weddell and Hoare agreed that concessions to Spain were necessary in order to keep her from becoming completely dependent on Germany. They thus advised their respective governments to make new arrangements whereby Spain would be allowed to purchase enough oil to meet her own requirements and to transport this oil in her own tankers. Their recommendations were put into effect. By this step, the Allies managed to maintain a somewhat workable relationship with Spain.\textsuperscript{39}

While the United States and Britain were making efforts

\textsuperscript{38} Feis, p. 49.

to keep Spain out of the war, Hitler was concentrating on trying
defeat England. Having achieved spectacular victories over
Poland, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France with relative
case, Hitler expected England to yield easily. Beginning on
the night of June 19, Germany commenced an all out air attack on
Britain. This Battle of Britain continued throughout 1940 and
did not subside until the opening of the Russian front in June,
1941. On July 19, 1940, Hitler made a peace plea before the
Reichstag, his objective being to intimidate the English people
and force them to sue for peace. His speech, however, had the
opposite effect. British resistance stiffened. Failing to
subdue England by persuasion and air attacks, Hitler sought other
ways to injure her. Langer and Gleason indicate that

... at the end of July German military circles were
agreed that if an invasion of England proved impossible
during 1940, the only alternative would be to attack
Gibraltar through Spain, support the Italians with tanks
in a campaign against Egypt, arrange for an assault on Haifa
or Suez, and bait the Russians to induce them to advance
through Iran to the Persian Gulf.\footnote{Ibid., p. 659.}  

Hitler felt that, by occupying Gibraltar, he would be
able to control the entrance to the Mediterranean and, in effect,
command much of the Mediterranean area. Thus, by the end of
July, Hitler began to look more seriously toward Spain. Previously,
on July 7, Hitler had indicated to Count Ciano that an attack on
Gibraltar could be made only with Spain's help. Furthermore,
the British could not be driven out by attacks from the sea and
air, but must be attacked by land by Spaniards themselves, aided
by special weapons. 41

Ribbentrop, on August 2, informed the German Embassy in Spain that "what we want to achieve now is Spain's early entry into the war." 42 Upon Ribbentrop's request, Stohrer made a visit to Berlin, where, on August 8, he presented a secret memorandum in which he carefully reviewed the situation. 43 Both the Spanish Foreign Minister and the Minister of the Interior, he indicated, had in the past few days referred to the Spanish offer of intervention of June 19. Stohrer assumed this to mean Spain was still willing to keep the promise made in that offer.

Reviewing the Spanish conditions for entry into the war, Stohrer estimated that Spain would require extensive military and economic support (gasoline and grain, in particular), thus placing a heavy burden on the Germans. 44 Stohrer stressed that, in her present condition, Spain could at most wage war for only a very few months. He admitted that a Spanish declaration of

41 DGFP, X, Doc. No. 129, 151.

42 Ibid., X, Doc. No. 274, 396.

43 Ibid.

44 Stohrer indicates that enclosed with his memorandum is a memorandum by Admiral Canaris (Chief of German Military Intelligence), giving detailed information regarding the extent of military assistance needed by Spain to carry on war. An editor's footnote in DGFP, X, Doc. No. 313, 443, indicates that the memorandum was not found. In The Spanish Government and the Axis . . ., No. 1, 3, the editor indicates the memorandum was not printed. At any rate, I was unable to find it.
war on England would be a severe blow to that country's prestige and to her prospects for victory. England's trade with Spain would be cut off, she would receive no more ores or pyrite from Spain, and she would lose her property rights in ore and copper mines.

Proceeding to a discussion of strategic questions, Stohrer stated that a victorious execution of an operation to take Gibraltar would mean control of the western Mediterranean. However, should England become aware of Spain's war preparations, she might seize the territory around Gibraltar, occupy the Canary Islands, Tangier, and the Spanish colonies in West Africa, and perhaps even the Balearic Islands, before Spain could act. England might also occupy portions of Portugal, posing for Spain the problem of a land front. Because of the critical economic situation in Spain, probable starvation, and possible political and military setbacks, domestic riots might also occur in Spain. Stohrer outlined the difficulties of transporting materials over the Pyrenees, the differences in gauge between French and Spanish railroads, and the necessity for using coastal roads for long distances between Bayonne and San Sebastián. Here the railroad and road are exposed, and would be endangered by seaborne attack. Stohrer concluded:

If the operation is undertaken, it is in any case

---

45 On August 20, Stohrer reported that Beigbeder, the Spanish Foreign Minister, had told him that day that a secret agreement had been made that Portugal would give Spain an entirely free hand for an attack on Gibraltar. See: DGFP, X, Doc. No. 369, 514-15. Also: Doc. No. 95, 105-6, and Doc. No. 176, 224-25.
necessary:

1. To have the preparations go forward in as camouflaged a manner as possible, to make available in Spain supplies of gasoline and war material (ammunition, bombs) which can be unobtrusively transported by railroad and truck, and, not until the last moment, to bring the heavy guns collected in the south of France across the border by fast transit and into the prepared emplacements, while the air arm is absolutely not to make its appearance until the operation begins in earnest.

2. The moment for initiating the preparations and the operation itself must be adjusted to the expected development of things in England itself, in order to avoid a too early entry of Spain into the war, that is to say, a period of war unendurable for Spain, and thus in certain circumstances the beginning of a source of danger for us. 46

The Ambassador's analysis of the situation could hardly be considered decidedly favorable or encouraging.

Franz Halder was also somewhat pessimistic. According to German intelligence reports he had received, Spain would not do anything against Gibraltar on her own accord. Because of Spain's economic problems and her rather extravagant territorial demands, Halder believed it would be difficult to draw Spain into the war. 47 Even though many obstacles were present, the fact remained that Franco was willing to enter the war on the Axis side. Halder acknowledged this. He also accurately perceived that the problem lay in Spain's excessive demands, which Hitler refused to grant. At the moment, both sides refused to yield. 48

---


47 Halder, IV, 154. Journal entry for August 9, 1940.

48 Ibid., IV, 170. Entry for August 23, 1940.
In a letter which he sent to Mussolini on August 15, Franco again expressed his continued willingness to enter the war. He requested Mussolini's support in persuading Hitler to permit Spain to realize her aspiration of entering the conflict, a move Franco believed would allow Spain to achieve her national objectives. The Duce replied on August 25. He was not surprised in receiving Franco’s letter, for he said:

"Ever since the outbreak of the war I have been constantly of the opinion that "your" Spain, the Spain of the Falangist Revolution, could not remain neutral to the end but at the right moment would change to non-belligerency and finally to intervention."

The Italian leader expressed further his conviction that Spain, in order to have a truly victorious revolution, must set for herself international goals—in other words, territory in Africa. He also revealed his confidence that England would soon be defeated and that the Axis would emerge victorious from the war. He closed the letter by saying that Spain, in her aspirations, could "count on the full solidarity of fascist Italy."

On August 20, Stohrer reported a discussion he had with Beigbeder. During the conversation, Beigbeder referred to Spain’s offer of intervention of June 19, 1940. This gave Stohrer the

---


50 DGFP, X, Doc. No. 392, 542. This is the Italian translation. For the German translation, which differs only slightly ("decision" instead of "decisions", "Lebensraum" instead of "vital space", and "Fascist" instead of "fascist"), see: The Spanish Government and the Axis, No. 3, 8.

definite impression that Beigbeder considered Spain's participation in the war an absolute certainty. Stohrer also indicated that the Minister was strangely unworried about the economic consequences of Spain's entry into the war. The Minister, it seemed, expected England to be defeated soon.\footnote{DGFP, X, Doc. No. 369, 514-15.} Beigbeder, however, was giving quite the opposite impression to both Weddell and Hoare.\footnote{Hoare, pp. 50-54. Also: Foreign Relations of the United States . . . 1940, II, Doc. No. 358, 801-02.} Thus, it is not certain whether Stohrer had valid grounds for the report he sent to Berlin, particularly since Colonel Beigbeder, like his predecessor, Count Jordana, was known to be "strongly opposed to any entangling alliance with the Axis or to Spanish participation in the war on any terms."\footnote{Carlton J. H. Hayes, Wartime Mission in Spain (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1945), p. 63.} On August 21, Stohrer, in a top secret telegram to Berlin, reported a conversation he had with Admiral Canaris. Canaris told Stohrer that the Spanish General Vigón had informed him that Franco said he would not only consider as useful an early entry into the war, but would even "reconcile himself to a war of longer duration."\footnote{DGFP, X, Doc. No. 373, 521. Since the information had reached Stohrer in a rather roundabout manner, it is impossible to determine whether Franco actually said this. Lack of available Spanish records and personal accounts by Franco himself prohibit anything more than mere speculation concerning this matter.}
Great Britain, which Hitler had hoped would fall under the air attack, continued to resist. Hitler began to abandon any ideas of directly invading Britain. Göring, Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe, and Raeder, Commander in Chief of the German Navy, suggested that the British be driven from the Mediterranean, thus opening for the Axis vast amounts of supplies in the Near East. In addition, the British trade routes could be attacked from the flanks. This strategy, however, would require Spanish participation, even though such a move might cause the Allies to seize the Canary Islands.\(^56\)

On August 27, Stohrer sent a secret memorandum to Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister, containing the preliminary draft of a protocol which stated the mutual obligations to be assumed by both Spain and Germany should Spain enter the war. Stohrer, rather pessimistically but also realistically, reminded Ribbentrop of Spain's weakened condition, of the differences in temperament and character between the German and Spanish people, and of Spain's inability to maintain orderly conditions at home and in the Spanish Moroccan zone, let alone in the desired French Morocco. The protocol draft itself provided that the Spanish Government, in accord with the Axis Powers, determine the time of Spain's entrance into the war. Spain alone would be responsible for her military operations, although they would be carried out in close accord with the German military authorities. Germany

\(^56\) Langer and Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation, p. 740.
was to make available to the Spanish Government the necessary war material (Admiral Canaris and General Vigón were already discussing what military equipment Spain would need for a Gibraltar operation). Germany was also to supply Spain with the raw materials, foods, and goods which she absolutely needed and which she was unable to obtain elsewhere. Spain would be required to pay for the war materials and economic supplies and for debts arising out of the Spanish Civil War, either through deliveries of raw materials, or possibly in cash or investments in Spain. Germany was to promise Spain, after the war with England ended, possession of Gibraltar and the Tangier Zone, as well as portions of Oran and French Morocco. Both Spain and Germany would also declare their intentions of continuing to develop, after the war, friendly relations, particularly in the military, economic, and cultural spheres.57 The pact, however, was never put into effect.

Meanwhile, Serrano Suñer, Minister of the Interior, leader of the Falangist Party, anti-democratic and pro-Axis, brother-in-law of Franco, contrived through Stohrer to be invited to visit Germany to discuss the conditions surrounding Spain's entry in the war.58 Franco allowed his brother-in-law to make the trip, but, as later events seemed to prove, he must

57 See Appendix B for the text of the preliminary protocol draft.

58 Stohrer had reported to Berlin as early as June 26, 1940, that Suñer wished to visit Germany. See: Dopp, X, Doc. No. 67, 97. In this same document, Stohrer expresses his opinion that Serrano Suñer was presently the most influential and most
have given him orders to adhere strictly to the terms of the
Spanish memorandum of August 8.

Between the end of August and the beginning of the meetings
in Berlin over two weeks later, it became almost certain that
Britain would not negotiate a peace. It appeared that she would
continue to fight. A careless action on Spain's part would result
in her or her islands (particularly the Canaries) being involved
in a long war. Both Hoare and Weddell emphasized the danger to
Spain should she do anything imprudent. Thus, Serrano Suñer's
visit to Berlin was to be viewed with some apprehension by the
Allies and by the Spanish people.

Without waiting for Serrano Suñer to go to Berlin and
return with a promise of food and raw materials, Franco put before
the American government a loan request. On September 7, Alexander
Weddell, American Ambassador to Spain, sent a telegram to the
Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, informing him that Spain was
going dangerously low in her supplies of foodstuffs and raw

important Spanish politician. He says that Serrano Suñer's friend-
ship to the Axis came about more through Italy and associations
with Mussolini and Ciano, beginning perhaps with Serrano Suñer's
visit to Rome in June, 1939 (See: Count Galeazzo Ciano, The
Ciano Diaries, 1932-1943 (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc.,
1946), pp. 94-97. Also: Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers,
p. 295), than with Germany. However, he still advised maintaining
a friendly attitude toward Serrano Suñer.

As an indication both of Suñer's influence and of his
anti-democratic feelings, Herbert Feis reports that, during
August, 1940, Suñer controlled both the press and radio in Spain
and was attempting to arouse the Spanish people against Britain
and the United States. Feis says: "He (Suñer) was glad of any
quarrel, and ready to risk the loss of overseas supplies in the
thought that Germany would take care of Spanish needs. The refusal
of Germany to do so during the next three months was to prove one
of the reasons why the drive for intervention failed." See:
Feis, pp. 48-49.
materials, particularly wheat, gasoline, and cotton. The Spanish Government, he said, had estimated it would need credit of $100,000,000 in order to purchase these supplies in the United States. Weddell replied to the request by explaining that he had previously discussed with Franco the possibility of supplying to Spain certain surplus commodities from the United States provided that Spain continued to remain neutral and show sincere interest in maintaining and developing friendly commercial and political relations with the United States. Weddell recommended a benevolent attitude toward Spain; he advised giving sympathetic consideration to the Spanish proposal. The American Ambassador also expressed his belief that the Spanish Government was trying to resist Axis pressure to enter the war, but that it would require some relief in order to be able to hold out much longer. Weddell requested instructions as to what sort of a reply he should make to the Spanish Government, but it was not until September 19 that he was authorized to present an answer to Spanish officials. It stated that the American Government, as well as the British Government, which was consulted, was unprepared to approve such an important proposal, especially when it learned that the pro-Axis Falangist, Serrano Suñer, was going to Berlin to confer with the German officials. The British and American Governments decided to wait and see what resulted from that meeting before taking any measures to grant the Spanish request.\footnote{\textit{Foreign Relations of the United States} ... 1940, II, Doc. No. 455, 805-806. Also: Hull, I, 875; Langer and Gleason, \textit{The Challenge to Isolation}, p. 739.}
Meanwhile, Germany was also having economic difficulties. An economic agreement signed by Germany and the Soviet Union on February 11, 1940, was coming to an end, and Russian deliveries of raw materials, especially grain, mineral oil, cotton, metals, and phosphates were expected to end soon. One of the special purposes of Serrano Suñer's mission to Berlin was to obtain German food supplies, including grain. But Germany was in no position to supply Spain with grain, at least not in any large amounts, for her grain supply was running short and was expected to last only about a year. This was the situation when Serrano Suñer left for Berlin on September 12 with his demands.  

---

60 Feis, p. 77.
CHAPTER THREE

SERRANO SUÑER VISITS BERLIN AND ROME

One of the main purposes of Serrano Suñer's visit to Berlin in September, 1940, was to soothe Germany's growing irritation with Spain. Although Franco had indicated Spain's willingness to enter the war on the side of the Axis as early as June, 1940, Hitler was not at all impressed with Franco's offer. Not only did it appear that Franco was willing to intervene merely at a time when Axis victory seemed near, but the Caudillo had also demanded military equipment, economic assistance, and territorial spoils which Hitler considered much greater than the support Spain could hope to offer in return. Thus, in June, when it appeared unlikely that England would be able to hold out much longer, Hitler did not see any need for what he considered at the time to be superfluous Spanish support.

However, as the summer wore on and British resistance continued, Hitler began to see a real need for Spanish intervention. The Führer had changed his mind about a direct invasion of England and began instead to look toward the Western Mediterranean. He had thoughts both of hampering British shipping in that area and of preventing any Allied attempts to penetrate Western Europe by way of West Africa or the Iberian Peninsula. In particular, he wanted to capture Gibraltar from the British and to establish a base in the Canary Islands. These operations—at least the operation to take Gibraltar—would require Spanish cooperation. Hitler believed the Canaries could be taken by the air operations of the Luftwaffe without active Spanish help,
although Spain's consent, while not absolutely necessary, would be desirable.¹

But Franco, because of the appalling economic condition of Spain and because neither the expected invasion nor the capitulation of Britain occurred, began to stress the conditions for intervention—rather burdensome economic support and extensive territorial spoils in Northwest Africa. Hitler felt unable to agree, particularly in French Morocco, for fear of alienating Vichy France. Germany thus had good reason for becoming aggrieved with Spain. Serrano Suñer's visit to Berlin, it was hoped, would help solve some of these problems existing between Spain and Germany.

Although he was definitely pro-Axis, Serrano Suñer traveled to Berlin more with the hope of gaining advantages for his native Spain than of furthering the Nazi cause. He believed, however, that the two sentiments were not mutually exclusive. In his opinion, Spain's hopes lay with the Axis. But, after several days of discussion, he harbored no illusions that Hitler, if Spain's assistance was absolutely necessary for the success of the Axis cause and if Spain refused to cooperate, could not invade and humble Spain in much the same manner as he had France.²


Prior to Serrano Suñer's arrival, Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister, received from Stohrer a memorandum outlining the essential points to be considered in the meetings with Serrano Suñer. Stohrer advised Ribbentrop that, in deciding about the expediency of Spain's entry into the war, it should be especially noted that:

Spain is militarily and economically weak, politically disunited at home, and therefore incapable of waging a war of more than a few month's duration. All the more so because public opinion in Spain since the 3-year Civil War is averse to new warlike complications. Spain's entry into the war ought therefore to be as late as possible and in any case only by agreement with the Reich Government.  

In addition, Stohrer suggested that during the negotiations with Serrano Suñer Spain's important domestic problems should be discussed and the fact stressed that Germany wished to advise and help Spain, to make her strong, but not to intrude. He also referred to Serrano Suñer's unpopularity at home, especially among Army circles, and suggested that in all public pronouncements concerning Serrano Suñer's visit the achievements of Franco and the Falange also be mentioned.

When Serrano Suñer reached Berlin, he was given a cordial welcome. Ribbentrop received the Spanish representative for the first time at 11:00 A.M. on September 16. Serrano Suñer expressed his thanks for the greeting given him, but Ribbentrop apologized, explaining that the danger of air raids prevented

and Gleason, The Undeclared War, p. 61.

3Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945 (Washington: U. S. Dept. of State, 1949-1962), Series D, XI, Doc. No. 30, 39. (Hereafter this series will be referred to as DGFP.) The memorandum was sent from Madrid on September 6, 1940.
the German Government from extending as warm a reception as it would have liked. Pointing out that his visit marked the first official contact between Spain and Germany, and that he acted as the representative of the Spanish Government and the personal agent of Franco, Serrano Suñer emphasized from the beginning Spain's desire to participate in the war. Without her economic difficulties, particularly the lack of grain, gasoline, and war materials, she would have done so already. He then expressed Spain's willingness to join the war in spite of her difficulties; she would do so "in proportion to the support that could be given her in augmenting her inadequate supplies." But Spain needed assurance of the delivery of the materials that were absolutely necessary for her to be able to engage in the struggle. Serrano Suñer remarked that in Spain it had been noted with surprise that the materials for carrying on war, especially artillery with which to defend the Straits of Gibraltar and the Canary Islands, had not yet arrived from Germany. Spain also was waiting impatiently for the possibility to begin an operation against Gibraltar. But first she would need ten long-bore (38-centimeter) artillery guns to be set up as coastal batteries in Tarifa, in order to forestall possible landings there by the English.

Ribbentrop had begun the conversation assuming that Spain would enter the war whenever called upon, but Serrano Suñer carefully avoided setting a date. He instead began, with the aid of a map, to point out Spain's territorial claims. He emphasized Spain's desire for all of French Morocco, the region of Oran.

DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 63, 83.
(which Spain wanted because of the Spanish population there), and a small border rectification south of the Spanish colony Rio de Oro as far as Bahia del Galgo. He particularly characterized French Morocco as Spain's Lebensraum and her natural objective for expansion. According to Serrano Suñer, Morocco was an area which from the economic standpoint would compensate for certain of Spain's deficiencies in agricultural production. The phosphates from that region could be used in the manufacture of fertilizers necessary for Spanish agriculture. In addition, Serrano Suñer envisaged Morocco as becoming politically united; that is, the combining of the various zones of Morocco—Tangier Zone, French Zone, and Spanish Zone—under Spanish supervision. In this manner, Spain would increase her own security, for she would be eliminating the threat involved in bordering French territory in North Africa. Ribbentrop countered that since the defeat of France the French-Spanish border could no longer represent any sort of threat. Serrano Suñer, however, replied that "Spain had enough to do with her European borders and wanted to make the Moroccan border absolutely sure by shifting it to the Sahara."5

Ribbentrop replied that he could agree in principle to Spain's territorial demands, but said he would come back later to certain details. He spoke of the fact that the Spanish note in June regarding claims in Morocco and Gibraltar had not been answered because the question was so important that it had to be studied closely.6 He was glad, however, that he could now discuss the

---

5 Ibid., p. 85.

6 See above, pp. 30-32.
question personally with a Spanish Cabinet member.

But, instead of talking about Spain's territorial demands, the German Foreign Minister turned to a discussion of Germany's own aspirations in Africa. He indicated that Germany wanted two Moroccan ports—Agadir and Mogador—as bases, and the regions around them. He then referred to Hitler's wish that Spain might cede one of the Canary Islands as an outlying base against distant enemies. Serrano Suñer objected strongly to this because it would be incompatible with Spanish national feeling. Ribbentrop concluded by announcing Germany's economic requirements, including a promise by Spain to pay her debts to Germany, and assurance of part of the raw materials (copper, iron, and phosphates) from Morocco. Though he seemed willing to comply with German economic wishes, Serrano Suñer was not very responsive to the territorial demands. Ribbentrop then asked Serrano Suñer when Spain could enter the war; "Suñer replied that Spain would be ready for the war the moment the installation of the 10 long-bore guns at Gibraltar was completed."

Serrano Suñer had reasserted Spain's demands for Morocco, part of Algeria, and parts of other French colonies, and military equipment needed for an operation against Gibraltar, as well as Spanish requirements of munitions, food, and fuel. Ribbentrop had countered with German demands for ports and economic rights in Morocco, and an air base in the Canary Islands. Since neither side would yield, the discussion ended in a stalemate after having lasted more than three hours.

---

7Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 63, 91.
Serrano Suñer did not like Ribbentrop, mainly because of his overbearing manner and somewhat crude method of trying to get his own way. But the Spanish representative was very much impressed with Hitler, with whom he had his first interview the next day.9 Serrano Suñer began the conversation by delivering to the Führer a short oral message from Franco, who expressed to Hitler his good wishes, gratitude, and continued loyalty. Serrano Suñer, because he had already informed Ribbentrop of Spain's demands, emphasized to Hitler that the Spanish attitude toward Germany remained unchanged. Paul Otto Schmidt, interpreter for the German Foreign Ministry, recorded:

It was not a question of a revision of Spanish foreign policy, but only of clarification of the conditions under which Spain was ready to fight the war with Germany. Whenever Spain's supply of foodstuffs and war material was secure she could immediately enter the war.10

Hitler then attempted to prove that taking Gibraltar and the Straits would be easy. The view of his experts and experienced officers, said Hitler, was that Spain would not need as much or the kind of equipment it had indicated. Serrano Suñer again expressed the wish that Germany provide ten 38-centimeter guns, which the Spaniards considered necessary for Gibraltar. The Führer explained that this would be impossible due to problems of transportation and installation. Declaring that artillery

9Serrano Suñer, p. 158.

would, for the most part, be ineffective against Gibraltar anyway, Hitler promised that Germany would provide both an air force and specially trained troops—like those that had taken Fort Eben-Emael in Belgium—for the attack on Gibraltar and the expulsion of enemy ships from the Straits. Aerial bombs of the type used in overwhelming the Maginot Line (1000-, 1,400-, and 1,800- kilogram bombs) should prove effective against Gibraltar. Covering all points of combat operations, Hitler dismissed any possibility of a successful British landing anywhere on the continent, Spain, or Portugal because of the air supremacy of German dive bombers, which could keep the English fleet away from Gibraltar and the entire vicinity. The Führer promised that

... Germany would do everything in her power to help Spain. For once Spain entered the war, Germany would have every interest in her success, since indeed a Spanish victory would be a German one at the same time. In the Gibraltar undertaking, it would be primarily a matter of taking the fortress itself with extraordinary speed and protecting the Straits.11

This exposition impressed Serrano Suárez, who thanked Hitler and pointed out that in previous discussions which Franco had had with German military experts, such as Admiral Canaris, the German intentions had seemed almost contrary to those put forth by the Führer. Serrano Suárez then asked Hitler to state his views in writing so that he could convey them to Franco. This Hitler promised to do.12

Hitler refrained from discussing controversial territorial

11 DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 66, 94-95.

12 Ibid., p. 95.
claims, except to say that he realized that Spain raised her
territorial demands "for reasons of domestic strengthening of the
regime and of external security."\textsuperscript{13} Hitler also interjected a
plea for an air base in the Canary Islands, saying that "the Con-
tinent would be dependent upon that power which kept the outlying
islands occupied, especially if it concerned a power with naval
superiority."\textsuperscript{14} But Serrano Suñer retorted, exclaiming that "the
defense of the Canary Islands could probably best be arranged
within the framework of a military alliance between Germany, Italy,
and Spain."\textsuperscript{15} According to Hitler, however, bases were needed
in the Atlantic islands and on the African coast in order to
defend "against the Western Hemisphere the parts of the earth--
Europe and Africa--designated as the Eastern Hemisphere."\textsuperscript{16}
Serrano Suñer maintained resolutely that "the defense of the
European-African area . . . must take place within the framework
of a military alliance of the three powers and of a wise policy."\textsuperscript{17}
The interview was concluded after an hour with Hitler proposing
the idea of a possible future meeting between Franco and himself
at the Spanish-French border.

In an hour-long conversation that same day between Serrano
Suñer and Ribbentrop, the Reich Foreign Minister said the dis-
cussions would have to be continued on September 22, since he had

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., pp. 96-97.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 97. Also: Langer and Gleason, The Undeclared
War, p. 740.

\textsuperscript{15}DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 63, 97.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.
to leave for meetings in Rome with Mussolini and Ciano. In the meantime, Serrano Suñer would have sent a written report to Franco in Madrid and also have inspected the Maginot Line and the French coast. Ribbentrop also wished to clarify the situation by summarizing the German viewpoint. It appeared to him that the success of the operation was completely assured. He promised also that Spain's grain and raw materials demands would be thoroughly studied. Assurance was given that the quantities which Spain would need for her military operations would almost certainly be delivered, provided Germany had or was able to spare them. Ribbentrop also touched on the territorial questions, promising that

... Germany would take Morocco away from France in her peace treaty with that country and give it to Spain, with the exception of the bases of Mogador and Agadir and their hinterland as well as certain economic reservations, to be determined by friendly agreement, in the form of German participation in the Moroccan sources of raw materials (phosphates, manganese). 18

When Ribbentrop again asked Serrano Suñer whether Spain was willing to cede one of the Canary Islands to Germany, the Spaniard remarked that

... for national reasons it was absolutely impossible for Spain to cede islands which belonged to Spain historically and constituted a part of Spain. 19

While Serrano Suñer would not deviate from his point of view, he did express a willingness to inform Franco of Germany's wishes, adding, however, his doubt "as to whether Franco would be able to meet the wishes regarding cession of one of the Canary Islands." 20

---

18 Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 67, 100.
19 Ibid., p. 101.
20 Ibid.
The conversation was then ended.

This same day Hitler wrote to Mussolini, expressing his conviction of the importance of making it possible for Spain to enter the war. Of the requests made by Spain, Hitler thought the military requests, requiring the detachment of some artillery and a number of special troops, could be easily satisfied. However, he considered the economic requests more difficult. Ribben-trop, in his visit to Rome, was to report to the Duce with the details.21

On September 18, Hitler, as he had promised Serrano Suñer, wrote to Franco, expressing his belief that Spain could solve many of her problems, particularly supply problems, by entering the war on the side of the Axis. Spanish intervention would begin, he said, with the expulsion of the English fleet from Gibraltar, followed by Spain's seizure of that fortified rock. The Führer, as he had done the previous day for Serrano Suñer, made an elaborate analysis of the military questions concerned with such an operation. Hitler then shrewdly indicated his belief that England, after losing Gibraltar, would try to seize a naval base in the Canary Islands. Thus, there existed a need for establishing a base for German dive bombers or long-range fighters there, probably at Las Palmas. Germany would be willing to provide the military means for an attack on Gibraltar, and as much eco-nomic help as possible. In this letter, Hitler seems to have been willing to grant such Spanish demands as seemed necessary to initiate the Gibraltar operation. Concluding, the Führer

21Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 68, 104.
remarked that Spain, should she decide to intervene, could count on Germany's loyalty and help until victory was secured.\textsuperscript{22}

Franco replied on September 22. Although he flatly rejected Ribbentrop's request for naval bases in the Moroccan ports of Agadir and Mogador, the Caudillo agreed in general with the German ideas brought out in the meetings involving Hitler, Ribbentrop, and Serrano Suñer. Franco then thanked the Führer for the idea of providing him with the opportunity for them to meet near the Spanish border. For the remainder of the letter, Franco concerned himself with giving opinions about the individual points of Hitler's letter. Only Spain's isolation and lack of resources indispensable for her national existence, said Franco, had kept her out of the war so far.

The Caudillo also tried to rectify a mistake made by Serrano Suñer. Instead of large caliber (38-centimeter), stationary guns with which to protect the Spanish coasts, Franco desired mobile pieces of about 20 centimeters. He also expressed a sentiment concerning the Canary Islands quite contrary to that indicated by Serrano Suñer. Franco was not certain of being able, with the means at his disposal, to defend these islands from an attack by the British fleet, or even to assure them of indispensable supplies. He therefore agreed to the need of placing dive bombers or long-range fighters in Las Palmas, but said nothing of allowing the Germans to establish a base there. The

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 70, 106-8. Franz Halder noted in his journal on September 23: "Gibraltar: Fuehrer is writing to Franco with the object of enlisting his participation in Gibraltar. Promises fulfillment of all Spanish demands." See: Halder, War Journal ..., IV, 205.
Generalissimo then concluded:

I would like to thank you once again, dear Führer, for the offer of solidarity. I reply with the assurance of my unchangeable and sincere adherence to you personally, to the German people, and to the cause for which you fight. I hope, in defense of this cause, to be able to renew the old bonds of comradeship between our armies.23

Meanwhile, Ribbentrop had journeyed to Rome to confer with Mussolini. On September 19, Ribbentrop and the Duce met at the Palazzo Venezia in the presence of Count Ciano, Italian Foreign Minister; von Mackensen, German Ambassador in Italy; and Dino Alfieri, Italian Ambassador in Germany. The German Foreign Minister reported on his conversation with Serrano Suñer, saying that Spain was ready to enter the war and had informed the German Government of her requirements, including supplies of grain, gasoline, and other materials, certain specialized weapons, plus a guarantee that at the end of the war the western coastal strip of Morocco would be transferred to Spanish sovereignty. Hitler, said Ribbentrop, was in favor of these concessions for the sake of ensuring Spain's entry into the war, having as its immediate object the occupation of Gibraltar. The Reich Minister then showed a map of Spain's territorial demands to the Duce, who confirmed that the Spanish aspirations in no wise conflicted with Italy. If the Duce agreed, probed Ribbentrop, a protocol with Serrano Suñer would be drawn up on his return to Berlin in order to lay down the conditions for Spain's participation in the war. Ribbentrop also informed Mussolini that Serrano Suñer intended to visit Rome before returning to Spain.24

23DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 88, 155.
24Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 73, 113-23.
Mussolini agreed that Spanish intervention would be a great event, and that by capturing Gibraltar Spain would both inflict a severe blow upon Britain and ensure free access to the Atlantic for Italy. Referring to a possible date of intervention, the Duce thought it would perhaps be best if Spain waited until after the winter. Having begun at 5:00 P.M., the conversation, after two hours, finally came to a close.25

The next day another meeting took place. Ribbentrop had the intention of signing a secret protocol with Serrano Suñer concerning Spain's entry into the war. But he wanted to do this at the same time as an agreement was signed with Japan (negotiations concerning which were at the moment taking place in Berlin). The Duce agreed to this plan, in turn proposing that a military alliance in the form of a tripartite pact with Spain be concluded—also in secret. Ribbentrop, expressing his ideas concerning the negotiations with Serrano Suñer, emphasized the Spanish refusal to accept the German request for cession of one of the Canary Islands. The German Foreign Minister then shrewdly analyzed the Spanish bargaining method, noting that

... the Spaniards were surely loyal friends of the Axis and would fulfill to the letter any commitment once entered into. But on specific points, such as the one just mentioned, for example, they were somewhat difficult.26

At a meeting between Ribbentrop and Mussolini on September 22, the German Foreign Minister informed the Duce than an envoy had been sent to Serrano Suñer, then in Brussels, to inform him


26DGPP, XI, Doc. No. 79, 135.
in accordance with the German-Italian agreement to conclude a tripartite pact with Spain. Serrano Suñer was supposed to inform Franco of this wish as soon as possible. Ribbentrop expressed his hope that Franco would reply within a few days in order that a secret alliance with Spain could be signed approximately at the same time as the Japanese pact.²⁷ The meeting concluded and Ribbentrop returned to Berlin.

The German Foreign Minister reached Berlin on September 23, and the following morning he met with Serrano Suñer, just back from Brussels. Ribbentrop conveyed the greetings of both Ciano and Mussolini, who hoped to welcome Serrano Suñer in Rome on his return trip. Serrano Suñer expressed his thanks and stated that he had transmitted to Madrid the information he had received in Brussels from Ribbentrop concerning the tripartite pact to be concluded with Spain. Franco had not as yet expressed any views regarding such a pact. Serrano Suñer then revealed that Franco was greatly satisfied with Hitler's letter of September 18, except for the German claim for bases in Morocco. Franco, it seemed, had recognized a certain sign of distrust toward Spain by the Führer. To correct this, the Spanish representative "reemphasized that his attitude toward Germany was not a momentary opportunism, but an eternal reality."²⁸

Serrano Suñer then touched on economic problems, declaring that the Spanish experts felt the Germans had in some cases made demands harmful to Spanish interests, thus indirectly harming

²⁷Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 87, 150-151.

²⁸Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 97, 168.
German interests. Franco, said Serrano Suñer, had agreed with Hitler’s letter on all points except those regarding Germany’s claims for bases in Agadir and Mogador, plus Germany’s economic demands in Morocco.

Turning to the question of the tripartite alliance between Spain, Germany, and Italy, the suggestion for which had come from Italy, Ribbentrop suggested that the signing of this agreement ought to take place while Serrano Suñer was still in Germany. It must remain secret, however, or else the operation against Gibraltar would be much more difficult to execute than if the English were unaware of such an alliance. The German Minister advised against making the treaty statement very long, suggesting that

... only the following need be stated: "Spain, Germany, and Italy have decided to conclude a military alliance, and will support each other everywhere, politically, militarily, and economically. The pact has been concluded for a period of ten years."

All specifics would be contained in supplementary protocols, and the date of Spain’s entry into the war would be fixed in a secret clause, to the effect that, as soon as the necessary preparations had been made, the war would be started by Spain with an attack on Gibraltar. Provisions would be made that in the peace treaty Morocco would be transferred to Spain with certain German reservations, but Ribbentrop neglected to elaborate on what those reservations would be. The German Foreign Minister then asked Serrano Suñer "to state whether in principle Spain

---

29 Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 79, 134-35.

30 Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 97, 169.
would be prepared to conclude such a pact.  

Serrano Suñer evaded a direct answer; he merely said that it would depend on the political climate in Spain, for there were those who believed that Germany did not correctly understand Spain's difficulties, the sacrifices she had made, and her economic situation. In this light, a treaty would have to be drawn up with extraordinary care, and

... in the Spanish view this protocol ought to contain three points: 1. Spain's decision to participate now in the war; 2. the assurance of military and material aid to Spain; and 3. the recognition of Spain's territorial and national demands.  

When Serrano Suñer spoke of the distrust expressed in Germany's demand for bases, Ribbentrop replied that Germany's desires for two bases in Morocco and the transfer of an island in the Canaries to Germany ought to be understood from the point of view of common defense requirements. The demand for bases was not an expression of distrust, but was made in view of possible future developments which would force Germany not only to defend her own position, but with it simultaneously that of Spain. The Spanish representative then asked why, in view of the proposed military alliance, Germany still wanted bases. Ribbentrop replied that if Spain depended on German support only when an English attack came, the aid would come too late. Thus, German aid, including the establishment of a German air base in the Canaries, should begin immediately. Serrano Suñer then reasserted that Franco had rejected the German proposal for such a venture, as

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., p. 170.
well as the two Moroccan ports demanded by Germany. The discussions having been devoted primarily to general political questions which would result from Spain's entry into the war, without any real decisions made regarding joint conduct of the war, the meeting closed.  

On the afternoon of September 25, Hitler received Serrano Suñer for a rather lengthy conversation—the second since the Spanish cabinet member had arrived in Berlin. He referred to the attempt begun on September 22 by the Free French, under General Charles de Gaulle, aided by British naval forces, to take possession of Dakar in French West Africa. Dakar was presently being held by the Vichy French, who successfully resisted de Gaulle's abortive landing attempt. Thus far the Vichy French had resisted the combined English-Free French attack. The Führer pointed out that if the English should succeed in Dakar, an attempt by the British forces would undoubtedly also be made to get a foothold in French Morocco. The Führer believed that England would try especially hard to get possession of bases in North Africa, and that Britain considered Gibraltar to be of utmost importance.  

Because of the strong resistance of the Vichy

---

33 Ibid., pp. 170-74.

34 The editor explains that, although the memorandum of this meeting is dated September 27, "no corroborative evidence has been found that Hitler actually received Serrano Suñer for a further conversation on September 27, and the presumption is strong that the date September on the... memorandum is a mistake, clerical or otherwise." The correct date, therefore, should be September 25. See editor's note: DGFP, XI, 184.

French, however, the attack on Dakar was abandoned.  

Hitler then mentioned the prospects of speaking with Franco personally, and Serrano Suñer accepted that idea "as the only possible solution of the delicate and urgent problems which had come up during the course of the Berlin conversations."  

Throughout this meeting, Hitler failed to appear impressive or give an appearance of self-importance. In fact, Serrano Suñer was struck by Hitler's lack of dignity, a complete reversal of the impression Hitler had made on him in their first meeting. Alan Bullock has said:

This contrast between the grandiose pretensions of the regime and the underlying vulgarity and childishness of its rulers was the most permanent impression which Suñer carried away from his visit to Berlin.

---

36 See: Langer and Gleason, The Undeclared War, p. 65. In his memoirs, Charles de Gaulle relates that it was his plan to avoid a direct attack on Dakar (well fortified against a sea-born attack), which was both the capital and main port of French West Africa. Instead, he intended to land his Free French troops at Konakry, and proceed by land to Dakar, picking up native support along the way. Such a plan would require the naval cover of the British fleet. De Gaulle approached Churchill, who agreed that Dakar should be attacked, but disapproved of de Gaulle's plan. He insisted on a direct attack, making use of a large fleet. The Vichy Governor at Dakar would be given a chance to let Free French representatives land without resistance; if he refused, the combined British-French forces would attack. De Gaulle agreed to Churchill's plan, and directed the operation, which took place September 23-25. The Vichy French forces successfully resisted de Gaulle's attack and de Gaulle mentions that he was bitterly reproached for his lack of success by many British and French officials. But the leader of Free France was encouraged by the persistence and unshakable loyalty of the Free French forces that took part in the expedition. Charles de Gaulle, The War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle: The Call to Honour, 1940-1942, trans. Jonathan Griffin (New York: The Viking Press, 1955), pp. 113-130.


On September 27, Germany, Italy, and Japan concluded a Three-Power Pact at Berlin, pledging total aid to each other for a period of ten years. The same day, Serrano Suñer gave Stohrer a memorandum setting forth the conditions upon which Spain would sign an alliance with Germany and Italy and enter the war.

On September 28, the director of Germany's Economic Policy Department submitted to Ribbentrop a memorandum informing him that three documents had been drafted and given to the Spanish delegation for submission to their Government. The first document was a draft of an agreement on economic questions relating to possible Spanish intervention. It provided that French-owned mines in French Morocco were to become German possessions subject to the granting of some Spanish participation. Also, any French and English-owned mining enterprises in Spain would be transferred to joint German-Spanish ownership. The second document was a draft of a special German-Spanish agreement on reciprocal deliveries. The remaining document was a summary of some further

39 DGPP, XI, Doc. No. 118, 204-5.

40 For the text of this memorandum, see Appendix C.

41 DGPP, XI, Doc. No. 125, 214-16.

42 For the full text of this draft of an agreement on economic questions, see DGPP, XI, Doc. No. 126, 216-19.

43 Although the full text of this draft was not printed, its provisions are summarized: "In this it is promised that Germany will deliver to Spain most of the foodstuffs and raw materials declared necessary to Spain in the event of war, in accordance with Spain's most urgent requirements as determined by mutual agreement. The promise of definite quantities is avoided. German deliveries are to be compensated for by Spanish raw materials." An editor's footnote to this summary indicates that on September 27, at a meeting of German economic experts at the Foreign Ministry, it
economic questions that were discussed in meetings between the Spanish delegation and officials of the German Government.\textsuperscript{44}

That same day, Hitler met with Count Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, who was in Berlin for the signing of the Tripartite Pact. The Führer asked Ciano whether the possibility existed for a meeting with the Duce at the Brenner Pass. Hitler wanted to discuss the situation in general and the Spanish question in particular. Ciano replied that Mussolini would be most anxious to meet with the Führer. Hitler explained to Ciano that Germany, on the basis of experiences gained in the Spanish Civil War, had learned that progress with the Spanish could not be made without concrete and detailed agreements. He then revealed that:

The Spanish proposals to Germany, somewhat crassly expressed, go as far as the following:
1. Germany is to deliver for the coming year 400,000–700,000 tons of grain;
2. Germany is to deliver all the fuel;
3. Germany is to deliver the lacking equipment for the Army;
4. Germany is to put up artillery, airplanes, as well as special weapons and special troops for the conquest of Gibraltar;
5. Germany is to hand over all of Morocco and besides that, Oran, and is to help her get a border revision west of Rio de Oro;

was felt that Germany could deliver only rye, but no wheat, to Spain. \textit{DGFP, XI,} Doc. No. 125, 215.

\textsuperscript{44} The full text of this document was not printed, though its provisions were summarized: "The principle point contained therein is that negotiations should take place at once regarding the amount and liquidation of German claims against Spain arising out of deliveries during the Civil War, and that the Spanish representatives expressed the opinion that this liquidation would be possible in a relatively short time, some 5 to 6 years from the beginning of peace, through deliveries of raw materials." \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{45} According to \textit{DGFP, XI,} Doc. No. 246, 420, this should be "south".
6. Spain is to promise to Germany, in return, her friendship.\(^{46}\)

The Führer expressed his fear that the agreements concerning Morocco might become known in France. If the French knew that Morocco would be lost to them at the conclusion of the war, they would probably come to an agreement with the English. For this reason, it would be better for Germany if France remained in Morocco and defended it against the British. Hitler thought that, if the Spanish were to occupy the territory, Spain would probably only call for German and Italian assistance in the event of an English attack. Hitler stressed the importance of considering the whole question in the light of its usefulness and its military significance, especially since the deliveries demanded of Germany would represent a great sacrifice, which after all could not be made in return for the good graces of the Spanish.\(^{47}\)

The Führer then mentioned the proposed meeting with Franco on the Spanish-French border. He had not as yet decided whether to meet with Franco; it would depend on his discussion with Mussolini.

In any case he [Hitler] was not convinced that Spain had "the same intensity of will for giving as for taking." Moreover it was customary for allies to support one another reciprocally; in the case of Spain, however, the reciprocity would have to be missed.\(^{48}\)

Hitler firmly believed that without the help of Germany and Italy Franco would not be ruling Spain. Expressing the view

---

\(^{46}\) Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 124, 212. Also found in The Spanish Government and the Axis, No. 6, 17.

\(^{47}\) Ibid.

\(^{48}\) DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 124, 213. Also: The Spanish Government and the Axis, No. 6, 18.
that Spanish intervention threatened to be too costly, Hitler remarked that a discussion with the Duce would be necessary before any far-reaching decisions could be made. A date for the meeting between the two Axis leaders at the Brenner Pass was set for October 4. Thus, Hitler, who only a few days earlier seemed ready to make just about any concession necessary to get Spain into the war and an operation started against Gibraltar, had evidently pondered the matter, for he now seemed to think that Franco's demands were completely unreasonable, particularly in view of Spain's weakness and her niggardly offers in return.

Before returning to Spain, Serrano Suñer stopped at Rome, where he met on October 1 with Mussolini and Ciano, who had just returned from Berlin. The Spanish representative informed the Duce that Spain, which always gave moral support to the Axis, was not making military preparations for an attack on British controlled Gibraltar. The Duce said that Spain could not remain out of the war for long, and must therefore accelerate her military preparations with the help of the Axis Powers. But Spain's intervention, he added, "must be decided on collectively when it will be as little of a burden as possible to Spain and as great a help as possible to the common cause." 49

The Duce ended the conversation by affirming his faith in the Spanish contribution to the victory of the Axis and by stating his intention of examining soon the practical aspects of the Spanish question—a reference probably to his forthcoming

49 Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, p. 394.
Brenner Pass meeting with Hitler.\textsuperscript{50} Having been away from Spain since September 12, Serrano Suñer left immediately for home.

Serrano Suñer's talks in Berlin and Rome during September and early October indicated for the first time the differences between Franco's idea of what Spain should give and receive, and Hitler's. The talks showed the disparity between the German and Spanish terms. Agreement was lacking. It had become clear that Germany wished to hold the uppermost place in the European world, and that Hitler would be unwilling to accept Spain as a co-equal partner in the Axis.

While the negotiations in Berlin and Rome were proceeding, Spain was still faced with an approaching crisis with respect to foodstuffs and raw materials—wheat, cotton, and gasoline. Thus far no reply had been given concerning Spain's request for a $1,000,000 credit from the United States. Cordell Hull, who was United States Secretary of State at the time, has said:

I authorized Weddell on September 19 to indicate to the Spanish Government that we were aware of Spain's economic difficulties and wished to foster all mutually beneficial economic relationships between our two countries, such action on our part could be justified only if we had sufficient assurance that it would have a lasting and genuine economic result and would conform to the general international political principles for which we stood. We would likewise have to receive assurances against the reexport of commodities obtained through credits.\textsuperscript{51}

On September 30, Weddell met with Beigbeder, the Spanish Foreign Minister, who . . . stated that while it was impossible for political

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.

reasons for his Government to make a public declaration or to sign a protocol to define in advance the attitude of the Spanish Government, he could assure me [Weddell] officially in the name of his Government that Spain would remain out of the European conflict unless and until she was attacked. . . . He stated that . . . one particularly dangerous spot existed for Spain and that this was French Morocco, attempts against which by the De Gaulle Government or Great Britain or Germany or Italy would be treated as a hostile act.  

Beigbeder, referring to Serrano Suñer's visit to Berlin,

. . . stated that the visit had been one of courtesy and stressed that Spain was not a signatory of the Tripartite Pact which created a "new order" in the world the implication being that Spain had remained out of this in accordance with its policy of "Spanish prudence".

On October 3, Weddell reported to Hull that Beigbeder had told him that an announcement by President Roosevelt that the United States would supply Spain with wheat could change Spanish and European policy. The psychological moment had come, he added, and a cargo of wheat from America would have a profound effect.

The next day, Hull, after consulting President Roosevelt, informed Weddell that the President was ready to request the American Red Cross, acting on behalf of the United States Government, to begin shipping a quantity of wheat to Spain immediately, provided Franco gave certain assurances in advance.

---


53 Ibid., pp. 810-11.

54 Ibid., p. 812.

55 These assurances were that: "1. No wheat from any source is being or will be exported from Spain; 2. The American Red Cross will be permitted, in cooperation with the Spanish Red
On October 7, Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador to the United States, informed Hull "that his Government was in harmony with this view and that this was the psychological time for such action."\(^{56}\) The following day, Weddell informed Hull that he had met with Franco, who gave his personal assurances that the conditions would be met.\(^{57}\) Hull cabled Weddell on October 12 that Roosevelt had "requested the American Red Cross to make arrangements at once for a shipment of wheat, or flour if preferred, to help meet immediate needs of the civilian population of Spain."\(^{58}\) Hull told Weddell to inform Franco that the United States was "prepared to discuss the bases for extension of credits to Spain with the accredited representatives of the Spanish Government."\(^{59}\)

However, these negotiations were far from complete when, on October 16, pro-Axis Serrano Suffer, recently returned from his visits to Berlin and Rome, replaced Beigbeder as Spanish Foreign

---

Cross or such other Spanish organization as the American Red Cross may designate, to supervise and handle the arrangements for distribution of this wheat to the needy population of Spain; \(^3\). The Spanish press will be informed and permitted to give full publicity to these shipments of wheat from the United States, including details regarding the arrangements that may be made for distribution in Spain." See: Foreign Relations of the United States . . . 1940, II, Doc. No. 243, 813. Also: Hull, I, 876.


\(^{57}\) Foreign Relations of the United States . . . 1940, II, Doc. No. 542, 814.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., II, Doc. No. 250, 815.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., p. 816.
Minister. Britain and the United States were, of course, disturbed by this news. For Beigbeder had been held in high estimation by the democracies. It was known that he believed in Britain's eventual victory, and was responsible for carrying on the negotiations by which Spain hoped to acquire needed supplies of food and fuel, in return for which Britain and the United States hoped Spain would stay out of the Axis camp.60

Serrano Suñer, on the other hand, was known to be friendly to the Axis. His appointment as Foreign Minister seemed to indicate an identification of Spain with the Axis cause. This new development, coupled with reports that Franco would shortly meet with Hitler on the Spanish frontier, caused the American Red Cross shipment to be held up pending further developments.61

When Hitler and Mussolini met at the Brenner Pass on October 4, the Führer assured the Duce that with the defeat of France the war had been won. Britain, he added, was all but conquered; it was only a question of time before her final defeat. However, it was still important to press with the operations in the Mediterranean and Africa. In this connection, the attack on Gibraltar must be planned and executed. Spanish help would be needed, but the Führer made clear to Mussolini that he thought the

60Sir Samuel Hoare, British Ambassador to Spain, met with Beigbeder on several occasions. Beigbeder informed Hoare of his belief that Britain either would win or at least would not lose completely to the Axis. Beigbeder also indicated to Hoare that Spain's economic hopes lay with the Allied Powers. See: Sir Samuel Hoare, Complacent Dictator (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1947), pp. 49-54.

61Ibid., II, Doc. No. 561, 620-22. Also: Hull, I, 876; Langer and Gleason, The Undeclared War, pp. 63-64.
Spanish demands, particularly her territorial claims, were outrageous. Hitler was irritated at Franco's rejection of the German claims both in Morocco and in the Canary Islands. Franco had remarked that in time of peace Germany did not need these bases, and in time of war all of Spain's harbors would be at Germany's disposal anyway.\textsuperscript{62}

Except for the operation against Gibraltar, Hitler considered that the entry of Spain into the war had little or no strategic significance. The Führer remarked that Admiral Canaris had reported that Spain's economy was completely prostrate, Franco's support was weak, and Spain's internal situation was bad; thus, Spain could hardly offer much military support. In addition, Spain had requested 400,000 tons of grain from Germany in the event she entered the war; this would be an almost unbearable burden upon Germany, at the very least amounting to serious sacrifice.\textsuperscript{63}

Hitler also spoke of Spain's large debt to Germany (which at that moment amounted to over 400 million reichsmarks). Spain's requests for grain and gasoline (she wanted 56,000 gallons a month) would add to this debt. The Führer revealed to the Duce that when he (Hitler) brought up the debt subject to Franco, the Caudillo hinted that "this was a matter of confusing idealism and materialism."\textsuperscript{64} Hitler felt as if Franco thought of him as if he were

\textsuperscript{62}DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 88, 153.

\textsuperscript{63}Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 149, 250.

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 88, 155.
"a little Jew who was haggling about the most sacred possessions of mankind."\textsuperscript{65}

The Führer expressed his fear that, should Spanish territorial claims be satisfied, the English might occupy the Spanish bases in the Canaries; moreover, a satisfaction of Spanish claims in North Africa might result in the adhesion of North Africa to the Free French movement. This would be serious and would involve the Axis in the extension of its own operational fronts. It was for this reason that Germany had thus far taken no steps to grant the Spanish claims, particularly since the Spaniards, in return for their claims, had merely expressed their sympathy for the Axis Powers and vaguely indicated their preparedness to enter the war at a time yet to be established.\textsuperscript{66}

Hitler then introduced the idea of forming a continental coalition against England consisting of Germany, France, and Spain. In such an arrangement there might be difficulties between France and Spain. France would have to cede some territory, but Spain would also have to agree to "get along without the cession of Gran and keep their wishes as to Morocco within dimensions acceptable to the French."\textsuperscript{67} The Führer firmly believed that a coalition against England including Spain and France would strengthen the Axis, but the

\begin{center}
\textbf{\ldots question was whether one could find a compromise}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{65}Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 149, 251.

\textsuperscript{66}See Appendix A.

\textsuperscript{67}DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 149, 252.
between the French hopes and the Spanish wishes, and possibly feelers would have to be put out to the French to ascertain whether they were willing to relinquish at least part of Morocco for British Nigeria.\(^{68}\)

The Duce agreed entirely with the proposed continental coalition. He also thought Spain's claims were outrageous. But he was somewhat disturbed about Hitler's inclination to seek an arrangement with France, for Italy herself had designs on French Somaliland, the French possessions of Corsica and Tunis, plus a correction of the Italian-French border at Nice. Since both Spain and Italy wanted chunks of French territory, Hitler realized conciliation might prove difficult.\(^{69}\) The possibility was great, said the Duce, that

\[\ldots\text{ an understanding between that country [Spain] and France would be impossible if Spain's claim to Morocco should be realized.}\] \(^{70}\)

Hitler realized that if this were true Germany might have to attack Gibraltar without Spain's support. Mussolini agreed, indicating that he felt that "Spain demanded much and gave nothing."\(^{71}\) The Duce's attitude toward Spain was one of "wait and see."\(^{72}\) The realization of a continental coalition would depend upon the settlement of the relations of the Axis to France and upon finding a compromise between France and Spain.\(^{73}\)

\(^{68}\)Ibid., p. 253.

\(^{69}\)Ibid., pp. 252-253.

\(^{70}\)Ibid., p. 255.

\(^{71}\)Ibid.

\(^{72}\)Ibid., p. 256.

\(^{73}\)There is some indication that Hitler decided to act against
When Mussolini asked what treatment Spain would be given, the Führer replied that he intended

... to tell Franco plainly, in a letter of reply, that the Spanish claims were too high and that Oran could not be awarded to Spain.\(^74\)

If Franco wished to discuss this in person, Hitler was still willing to meet with the Caudillo on the Spanish-French border.\(^75\)

Thus, the Brenner Pass meeting ended rather inconclusively, with Hitler still faced with the problem of arranging Spanish intervention, at the same time trying to obtain France's membership in a coalition against England and still make concessions to Italy and perhaps Spain.\(^76\)

Gibraltar on its own, that is without Spain's help, for Halder, after conferring with Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, Commander in Chief of the German Army, noted in his journal on October 11: "Spain's domestic situation is so rotten as to make her useless as a political partner. We shall have to achieve the objectives essential to us (Gibraltar) without her active participation." Halder, War Journal . . . , IV, 228. A few days later, on October 15, Halder noted: "Collaboration of Spain is of interest to us because of Gibraltar; we don't want anything else from Spain. Spanish demands: Gibraltar, Morocco, Oran. Spain wanted a protocol that guaranteed satisfaction of her claims. Fuehrer refused to sign such a commitment. The question is to find a suitable compromise between Spain and France." Halder, War Journal . . . , IV, 233.

\(^74\) DGPF, XI, Doc. No. 149, 253. The editor indicates in a footnote that such a letter from Hitler to Franco has not been found. Halder notes in his journal on October 15: "a) Fuehrer will write a letter to Franco. Oran out of question. Afterwards he is going to have a meeting with Franco on the French-Spanish frontier." Halder, War Journal . . . , IV, 235.

\(^75\) Ibid. If Hitler did send such a letter, Franco must have decided the matter merited a personal discussion with the Führer, for the two leaders met later that month at Hendaye.

\(^76\) On October 5, Halder recorded in his journal: "b) Results of Brenner Conference: Il Duce is to undertake to draw Spain into the Axis. (Spain is still pretty cool to the idea at the present time.)" Halder, War Journal . . . , IV, 223.
When Mussolini learned of Serrano Suñer’s appointment as Spanish Foreign Minister, he informed Hitler of his belief that any Spanish tendencies hostile to the Axis would now be eliminated. However, because he was convinced that Spain’s internal situation had not improved, the Duce added:

... Spanish nonbelligerence is more advantageous to us than her intervention. We ought to keep intervention as a reserve; it is a card that we ought to play at the most opportune moment in accordance with the given circumstances, such as prolongation of the war through 1941 or an overt intervention of the United States. Meanwhile Spain will have the time necessary to prepare herself. 77

It is evident, however, that Hitler hoped to secure Spanish intervention, for he traveled to Hendaye, a small French town high in the Pyrenees on the Spanish border near the Bay of Biscay, to meet with Franco on October 25.

77 DGPP, XI, Doc. No. 199, 334. The editor indicates that Hitler did not learn of the contents of this letter until October 25, while on his way back to Berlin following his meeting with Franco.
CHAPTER FOUR
HENDAYE, FLORENCE, BERCHTESGADEN, AND BORDIGHERA

On October 23, 1940, a special train carrying Hitler and his Foreign Minister, Ribbentrop, reached the Franco-Spanish border town of Hendaye, where the German leaders were to meet with Franco and his new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Serrano Suñer. However, the Spanish delegation was late. While he was waiting, Hitler talked with Ribbentrop. Paul Schmidt, Hitler’s interpreter, heard the Führer say:

We cannot at the moment give the Spaniards any written promises about transfers of territory from the French colonial possessions. If they get hold of anything in writing on this ticklish question, with these talkative Latins the French are sure to hear something about it sooner or later.¹

Hitler also indicated that, since he wanted to induce the French to start active hostilities against England, he could not give Spain any French territory. Besides, if an agreement with Spain should become known, the French colonial empire might support de Gaulle. This, Schmidt feels, is why the meeting between the dictators turned out to be a “fiasco.”²

When Franco finally appeared, Hitler ushered him into his special parlor car, where the two leaders then engaged in a lengthy discussion. The Caudillo began by expressing his satisfaction at being able to meet the Führer personally. He then reasserted Spain’s desire to fight at Germany’s side, but emphasized that intervention would require economic, military, and political

²Ibid., p. 194.
preparations that would require both time, the help of the Axis, and the non-interference of the Allies.

Hitler replied with an impressive account of Germany's strength in Europe. Britain's defeat was near, he said. The only hope for England lay in Russia and the United States. If England counted on Russia, it would be a miscalculation, stressed the Führer, for, if anything, Russia would support Germany. Regarding the United States, Hitler believed it would take at least eighteen months before that country could become fully armed and take an active part in the war.³

The real danger lay in the possibility of England and the United States obtaining control of the islands lying off Africa in the Atlantic Ocean. But the most immediate problem to be solved consisted in hindering the de Gaulle movement in French Africa from further expanding itself and thereby establishing in this way bases for England and America on the African coast.⁴

France, said Hitler, must be persuaded to take a definite stand against England. But this would be difficult because there were two trends of thought in France: "a fascist one represented by Pétain and Laval, and an opposition one which wanted to carry on a double-dealing game with England."⁵ France at the moment was undecided about which way to turn. Moreover, France's stand was

³ Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945 (Washington: U. S. Dept. of State, 1949-1962), Series D, XI, Doc. No. 220, 372. (Hereafter this series will be cited as DOPF.)

⁴ Ibid., p. 374.

⁵ Ibid.
essential to Germany, for Germany needed France as a base from which to fight England.

Hitler told Franco that the purpose of their conference at Hendays was to come to a mutual understanding regarding common opposition to England. The Führer said:

If they [Germany, Spain, and France] succeeded in effecting quite a large front against England, then the struggle would be substantially easier for all the participants and could be ended sooner.\(^6\)

But Spanish desires and French hopes barred the path. The danger existed that France's African possessions might desert France, perhaps even with the concurrence of the Vichy Government, if they heard France was to be explicitly to get out of certain African areas. Hitler bluntly informed Franco that he wanted France to help in the fight against England; therefore, he could hardly ask Pétain, the French Chief of State, to make huge territorial sacrifices. If France could be persuaded to cooperate, however, the territorial gains might not be so great, but the risk would be smaller and success much more certain.\(^7\) The Führer wanted Franco to consider this carefully. It seemed to Hitler that it was better in so severe a struggle to aim at quick success.

\(^6\)Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 220, 375.

\(^7\)The previous day, October 22, Hitler had met with Laval, the Vice-President of the French Council of Ministers, at Montoire. Hitler had told Laval that Germany was certain to be victorious, and that French collaboration would ensure French interests. A final settlement would come only at the end of the war, however. The Führer enticed the Frenchman with the possibility that Britain, not France, would have to pay for German, Italian, and Spanish claims in Africa. The Führer would have to talk this over with Pétain, however. (Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 212, 354-61.) After Hitler met with Franco, he stopped again at Montoire where, on October 24, he conferred with Marshal Pétain, the French Chief of State. Hitler implied that France was responsible for the war, but indicated he
in a short time, even if the gain would be smaller, than to wage long drawn-out wars.\(^8\)

Spanish cooperation, said Hitler would help in driving the English from Gibraltar. If England lost Gibraltar, the British could be excluded from the Mediterranean and from Africa. Hitler then proposed the immediate conclusion of a treaty between Spain and the Axis. Spain would have to promise to enter the war when the Germans were ready to take Gibraltar, probably sometime in January, 1941. In return for Spain's efforts in this operation, Hitler offered Franco Gibraltar and certain Moroccan territories.\(^9\)

Franco's response was evasive. Schmidt, who was acting as interpreter, determined from the Caudillo's mannerisms that Franco was a prudent negotiator, one who was not easily pinned down. The Spanish leader raised numerous objections to Hitler's proposals.

---

was ready to conclude a peace of reconciliation with France, provided France agreed to help Germany defeat Britain. Pétain, however, managed to refrain from promising France's full and active participation in the war against Britain, even though he was able to obtain the Führer's promise that France would be compensated from the defeated British Empire any territory she might be forced to cede to others. (Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 227, 365-92.) The Führer pledged in a protocol drafted that same day to make sure that "the Axis Powers undertake to see that at the time of conclusion of peace with England France shall receive territorial compensations and that in the final outcome France shall have a colonial domain in Africa substantially equivalent to her possessions today." See: Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 208, 351. Hitler, somewhat satisfied with the deal, was still disappointed in not getting a promise of France's active support against Britain.

\(^8\)Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 220, 375-76. The record of this discussion between Franco and Hitler is incomplete in DGPP.

\(^9\)Schmidt, pp. 194-95. Hitler reported to Mussolini on October 28 that the Spanish demands had included "frontier rectifications in the Pyrenees and ... French Catalonia; also Oran and all Morocco up to the 20th meridian," but that he (Hitler) could not accept this formula. Count Galeazzo Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, ed. Malcolm Muggeridge, trans. Stuart Hood (London: Odhams Press, 1948), p. 401.
He indicated that Spain needed food (several hundred tons of wheat immediately) and modern armaments (anti-aircraft guns, heavy artillery for operations against Gibraltar, plus guns to protect Spain's coastline from the British Navy). Franco then remarked emphatically that Spain would not allow foreign troops to capture Gibraltar—only Spanish troops. He also disagreed with the Führer's belief that England could be completely conquered. And even if Germany defeated England, added the Caudillo, the British Government and fleet would continue the war from Canada with American support.

The Spanish leader indicated he was ready to conclude a treaty, but only if Spain were promised all of French Morocco and part of Algeria. Spain would enter the war only when she had sufficient food and adequate armament; the Caudillo refused to commit himself to a specific date. Franco assured Hitler that Spain was a friend of Pétain's, but that he did not want to put the Führer in an embarrassing position with respect to France. Hitler was becoming irritated and restless, so the meeting adjourned and the German leader invited Franco to dine with him in his special banquet car.10

After dinner the two leaders conversed for two hours and succeeded only in agreeing verbally to a protocol which promised, in a vague and unprecise manner, that Madrid would adhere to the Tripartite Pact conceived in Berlin the previous month and that Spain would someday enter the war, while Germany recognized, also

10 Ibid., p. 196.
vaguely, the basis for Spain's territorial claims. Failing to reach a definite mutual understanding, Hitler and Franco departed, leaving their Foreign Ministers, Ribbentrop and Serrano Suñer, to try to conclude a precise agreement.

The Reich Foreign Minister conversed with Serrano Suñer for most of the night of October 23 in an effort to work out a draft treaty which would be acceptable to the Spaniards. Ribbentrop tried to get Serrano Suñer to sign an agreement to drive the English from Gibraltar and the Western Mediterranean, but the Spanish Foreign Minister refused. Spanish intervention, said Serrano Suñer, would have to be rewarded with a substantial payment of goods, to be followed later by continuous deliveries of foodstuffs and other commodities; and finally a respectable premium in territory, mainly at the expense of French North-west Africa.

This was impossible to do, said Ribbentrop, especially if French assistance was to be obtained also.

---

11 See Appendix D for a version of this protocol. Actually, neither the original protocol nor any of the preliminary drafts have been found. The text in Appendix D is a slightly altered version of the original protocol. The editor of DGFP, referring to this version of the protocol, indicates: "Although this version of the protocol bears the date 'Hendaye, October 23, 1940,' it contains a change in the wording of Article 5 known to have been made by Ciano at his meeting with Ribbentrop on November 4, and it was filed with Ciano's memorandum of the November 4 meeting." See editor's note in DGFP, XI, 466. This document appears therefore to date from November 4. ... It bears the signature of Ciano, but not of Ribbentrop and Serrano Suñer." See editor's footnote No. 4 in DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 221, 377.


The two Foreign Ministers managed only to discuss the German proposal made earlier that day by Hitler, who suggested that a secret protocol be drawn up. Nothing definite was decided, for Serrano Suñer expressed misgivings about article 5 of the protocol. All of Ribbentrop’s high-pressure tactics to get Serrano Suñer to reach a definite decision were to no avail, for the stubborn Spaniard refused to commit himself. Ribbentrop was furious. He finally sent Serrano Suñer back to San Sebastian, where the Spanish delegation was staying. He demanded that a text suitable to the Spaniards be brought back to Hendaye at 8 o’clock in the morning.

Expecting Serrano Suñer, the German Foreign Minister was somewhat insulted when the Spanish Undersecretary of State and Ambassador to Berlin, Espinosa de los Monteros, showed up instead. A friendly man who spoke German well, Monteros indicated that Spanish attempts to draw up a suitable draft protocol had been unsatisfactory. Ribbentrop and Monteros then decided to revise the draft which Hitler had presented to Franco. A change was made in Article 5 of the protocol and Monteros promised to present the draft to Franco and to report the Caudillo’s decision to Germany.

Somewhat angry at the outcome of the entire Hendaye conference,

---

14 According to a footnote to the memorandum of the discussion between Serrano Suñer and Ribbentrop, the details concerning the German-Spanish exchanges about the wording of article 5 have not been found. However, see footnote number 16.

15 Schmidt, p. 197. Also see: DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 221, 376-79.

16 On October 24, Stohrer sent a memorandum to the German Foreign Minister that the Spanish Government agreed to the proposed new version of article 5. DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 224, 353. In
Ribbentrop set out for Montoire where Hitler, who had left Hendaye during the night, was meeting with Marshal Pétain. 17

At the Hendaye meeting Franco got the reputation of being vacillating, while Serrano Suñer was labeled a "haggler." 18 Hitler was particularly aggravated by Franco's unwillingness to be persuaded. That the encounter with Franco had proved to be exasperating for the Führer was reiterated in a famous statement he made to Mussolini on October 28 at Florence, Italy: "Rather than go through it again, I would prefer to have three or four of my teeth out." 19

On October 28, while on his way to meet Mussolini at

---

A footnote to this document the editor indicates that the agreed new revision of article 5 was signed by Stohrer and Monteros and it read as follows: "5. Apart from the reunion of Gibraltar with Spain, the Axis Powers state that in principle they are ready to provide, in the course of a new general statement in Africa, such as is to be carried out in the peace treaties after the defeat of England, that Spain be ceded certain areas in Africa in precisely the same extent to which France can be compensated by other cessions of territorial possessions in Africa of equal value. The claims to be made on France by Germany shall not be affected thereby."

17 Schmidt, p. 197. Franz Halder summarized the general results of the conference in an entry in his journal dated October 24: "a) Regarding the Spanish operation (Gibraltar). Spain is substantially in accord on cooperation but wants to come out into the open only after military operations have actually started. There has been a verbal promise to join the Axis, but nothing has been signed yet. It is quite evident that Spain is still very much afraid of Britain. . . . b) Spain: No definite promises were made with regard to Morocco. If France can be compensated elsewhere, we shall satisfy Spanish wishes." Franz Halder, War Journal of Franz Halder, IV, 245. Obtained from the Library of Congress. Card Catalogue No. 940, 542 H112. Engineer School Library, Bldg. 270. Fort Belvoir, Va.

18 Weizsäcker, p. 239.

19 Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, p. 402. Ulrich von Hassell, the German Ambassador in Rome, said: "Hitler did not
Florence, Hitler learned that early that morning Italian troops had attacked Greece. The Duce had not consulted the Führer on this; certainly Hitler did not approve of it, for Italian setbacks there would present Hitler with the problem of coming to Italy's aid in the Balkans.\(^{20}\) Hitler was furious over the Duce's move, but when he reached Florence he did not castigate the Italian leader.

The Führer instead reported on his meetings with Franco and Pétain. The Spaniards, he said, had no concept of their limitations of strength, and were setting themselves objectives beyond their powers. The Spanish claims—if fulfilled—would put a great burden on the Axis. While the Spaniards, said Hitler, had requested Germany to assume very specific obligations toward Spain, such as the delivery of gasoline and grain, they were very vague about what Spain would do in return. Franco reserved to himself the decision concerning the date of Spain's entry into the war; he refused to name a specific date. In addition, the Führer told the Duce that Spain's colonial demands were of such a

\(^{20}\) Hitler considered this move by Mussolini to have other consequences as well. General Heinz Guderian, at the time a panzer corps leader, has said: "The first result of Mussolini's arbitrary gesture—according to what Hitler told me—was that Franco immediately withdrew from any sort of collaboration with the Axis powers. He plainly had no intention of becoming involved in a common policy with such unpredictable partners." General Heinz Guderian, _Panzer Leader_, trans. Constantine Fitzgibbon (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., n.d.), p. 401.

get on well with Franco, who was very reticent; he said Franco was probably a pretty good soldier but he had become the head of his state only by accident. Suffer he called the worst kind of 'business politician'." Ulrich von Hassell, _The Von Hassell Diaries, 1938-1944_ (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1948), p. 147.
nature that acceptance by the Axis would surely cause the immediate alignment of the French Colonial Empire with the de Gaullist camp. These demands, said Hitler, were completely unreasonable and unacceptable.\(^{21}\)

The Führer then informed Mussolini that a secret protocol had been agreed to by Spain and Germany, although it had not yet been signed. Hitler submitted a copy for the Duce's approval.\(^{22}\) Hitler remarked that, as far as the Spanish claims were concerned, the protocol was only a very vague formula. Mussolini, after examining it, approved of the protocol representing the secret adhesion of Spain to the Tripartite Pact. The Duce considered that the inclusion of Spain in the pact should be made public "when all the Spanish military measures have been taken and the country [Spain] is ready for intervention."\(^{23}\) Hitler agreed, adding that "a meeting should then take place in Florence between the Führer, the Duce, and Franco."\(^{24}\)

Thus concluded Hitler's meeting with Mussolini. Though he controlled his wrath, Hitler was still furious at the Duce for invading Greece without first consulting him. William L. Shirer says that Mussolini, noting Hitler's disapproval, enjoyed getting revenge on the Führer "for the previous occasions when the

\(^{21}\)DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 246, 411-22. Also: Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, pp. 401-2. Spain's colonial demands included frontier rectifications in the Pyrenees, French Catalonia, Oran, French Morocco, enlargement of the territory of Rio de Oro to the twentieth degree of latitude, and enlargement of Spanish Guinea.

\(^{22}\)See Appendix D.

\(^{23}\)Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, p. 404.

\(^{24}\)DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 246, 421.
Nazi dictator had marched into a country without previously confiding to his Italian ally.25 At any rate, Schmidt, the interpreter who accompanied Hitler on his journeys to Hendaye, Montoire, and Florence, noted several years later:

Hitler went north that afternoon with bitterness in his heart. He had been frustrated three times—at Hendaye, at Montoire, and now in Italy. In the lengthy winter evenings of the next few years these long, exacting journeys were a constantly recurring theme of bitter reproaches against ungrateful and unreliable friends, Axis partners and "deceiving" Frenchmen.26

On October 28, the same day Hitler and Mussolini were conferring in Florence, Friedrich Gaus, Director of the Legal Department of the German Foreign Ministry, sent a top secret telegram to the German Embassy in Spain. It contained procedural plans in connection with the signing of the protocol envisaged at Hendaye. Gaus also urged the strictest secrecy concerning the negotiations of the protocol with Spain.27 On November 9, a special courier arrived with a copy in triplicate of the protocol involving Germany, Italy, and Spain.28 Serrano Suñer signed the three copies, two of which were sent back by the same courier for Italy and Germany.29

---


26Schmidt, p. 200.

27For the text of this telegram see Appendix E.


29See editor's footnote to Ibid., p. 479. The protocol Serrano Suñer signed was like the one in Appendix D.
On November 4, Hitler told his military advisers that he believed Spain would soon enter the war. He presented new military plans, especially on how Gibraltar was to be taken. A directive containing the Führer's new plans in the Mediterranean was laid down over a week later. It stipulated that Operation Felix (the projected occupation of Gibraltar and the Atlantic Islands) would be carried out with German troops providing support for the Spaniards in an attack on Gibraltar. Hitler expected that German forces could occupy the Cape Verde Islands and repel any British counter-attack. Other German forces would help Spain defend the Canaries, as well as the Spanish-Portuguese frontier.

On November 11, Serrano Suñer was invited to meet with the Führer at Berchtesgaden on November 18. Hitler wanted the Spanish Foreign Minister to sign the documents which would admit Spain to the Tripartite Pact (along with Germany, Italy, and Japan) and lead to Spain's intervention, but the Spaniard warily refused to give any definite commitment. Actually, on November 18, Serrano Suñer met with Hitler at Obersalzberg, a few miles from Berchtesgaden. Hitler strongly urged that Spain enter the war without delay. Before he left for this meeting with Hitler, Serrano Suñer was reminded by Franco that Spain was in no condition to go

---

30 A directive containing Hitler's new plans in the Mediterranean was laid down on November 12. For the section of the directive concerned with the proposed action against Gibraltar, see Appendix F. Also: F. H. Hinsley, Hitler's Strategy: The Naval Evidence (Cambridge (Eng.): Cambridge University Press, 1951), pp. 104-106.

to war. Therefore, when Hitler pressed him concerning Spain's entrance into the war, Serrano Suñer replied by pointing to Spain's poor economic condition, plus the low public morale. The Spaniard, in a rather friendly manner, implied that Spain was unable to make any moves because Germany failed to supply Spain with materials necessary both for existence and for warfare.

The next day, in a conversation with Ribbentrop at the Berchtesgadener Hof in Berchtesgaden, Serrano Suñer again resisted efforts to get Spain to promise to enter the war and to adhere to the Tripartite Pact. Ribbentrop pointed out that in the German view the war was already won and that "it was merely a question of forcing England as quickly as possible to admit that she had lost the war." But Serrano Suñer replied that Spain would need more time, particularly since Spain was expecting shipments of food from Britain and the United States. Even though the Spanish

---


33 A few days earlier, on November 14, Stohrer, the German Ambassador to Spain, had indicated to the German Foreign Ministry: "Unless military action leads soon to control of the Straits and the possibility of a supplementary provision of food and other necessary raw materials for Spain from the Mediterranean areas, we would have to take into account that Spain may become a heavy burden to us." DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 335, 576.

34 Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 352, 598-606. Also: Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, p. 409.


Foreign Minister refused to commit Spain to active intervention, the conversation ended in a friendly manner.

But Hitler was disappointed. On November 20, he wrote a letter to Mussolini saying the military and political outlook appeared dark indeed. The Führer proposed a measure to be taken:

Spain must be prevailed upon immediately to enter the war. The earliest date we can assume is in about 6 weeks. For us the purpose of Spain's entry must be to seize Gibraltar and close the Straits and bring at least one or two German divisions to Spanish Morocco in order to secure guarantees against a possible defection of French Morocco or North Africa from France. 37

He added that the Mediterranean question must be settled that winter. 38

Mussolini replied two days later:

I am of the opinion that the Spanish card can be played at the present moment. I do not know the results of your conversations with Suñer, but I am prepared to meet with Franco in order to exert the pressure necessary to make him enter the field on the side of the Axis. 39

Hitler wrote back on December 5, indicating his belief in the necessity for a definitive decision by Franco regarding Spain's entrance into the war. He revealed his opinion that the possibility existed that something might happen which could cause North Africa and West Africa to become insecure and—separating themselves from Vichy—they would offer England dangerous bases of operations. 40

In such an instance, possession of the Strait of Gibraltar would

37 DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 369, 641.
38 Ibid., p. 642.
39 Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 383, 671.
40 Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 452, 791.
be tremendously important. The Führer reiterated his desire that Franco would set a definite date for his participation in the war, in order that military preparations might be started for the Gibraltar operation.\(^{41}\)

At a meeting with his top military leaders on December 5, Hitler decided to request permission of Franco for German troops to cross into Spain on January 10, 1941.\(^{42}\) Since the Duce made no effort to contact Franco and attempt to pressure him into taking active sides with the Axis, Hitler sent Admiral Canaris, Chief of the German Military Intelligence Service, to Spain with Hitler’s request. Canaris reported that he had met with the Caudillo on the evening of December 7 and had explained to Franco the urgent necessity of Spain’s prompt entry into the war. Franco, however, replied that Spain could not possibly enter the war on January 10, because she was not prepared for such an undertaking. Spain was still lacking food supplies and other economic necessities. The Caudillo was certain that upon entry into the war Spain would lose the Canary Islands and her other overseas possessions to the British, who would probably also occupy the Portuguese Islands. Spain, the Caudillo added, was in no position to support a war which lasted more than six months. The Spanish leader emphasized that his refusal took the interests of both sides into account, for, after the conquest of Gibraltar, Spain would probably prove to be a heavy burden for the Axis Powers. But he asked that preparations for an operation against Gibraltar be continued under

\(^{41}\)Ibid.

\(^{42}\)See footnote number 1 in DOFP, XI, Doc. No. 473, 812.
camouflage.

When Canaris asked if Franco were prepared to accept a new deadline for entrance into the war or could suggest an exact time for later, the Caudillo replied he could not. He pointed out the removal of the difficulties which stood in the way of immediate Spanish intervention did not solely depend on the Spaniards, but on other countries—among them Germany, which had undertaken to send arms, fuel, and grain, but had not yet carried out these promises. Since he could not foresee the future extent of Spain's economic growth nor the future development of the war against England, it was impossible to indicate a date for Spanish intervention. Franco made it clear that Spain could enter the war only when England was about ready to collapse. 43

When Hitler received Canaris' report of Franco's refusal to allow German troops to cross the Spanish border on January 10, 1941, and to begin operations against the British, the Führer realized he had failed to persuade the Caudillo. This upset his plans in the Mediterranean. On December 11 Hitler quietly ordered: "Operation Felix will not be carried out as the political conditions no longer obtain." 44 The Führer was disappointed with Franco's attitude.

43 Canaris' report has not been found. However, the editor of DGFP notes that entries by Helmuth Greiner in the War Diary of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff (Dec. 1, 1940–March 24, 1941) contain an account of Canaris' talk with Franco. See editor's footnote number 2 in DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 476, 816-17. This account is in agreement with a telegram sent by Stohrer to the German Foreign Ministry containing a memorandum of General Vigan on the December 7 conversation between Admiral Canaris and the Caudillo. See: DGFP, XI, Doc. No. 500, 852-53. This document is also found in The Spanish Government and the Axis: Official German Documents (Washington: U.S Govt. Printing, 1946), No. 11, 26-28.

It is easy to believe that he [Hitler] never forgave Franco his refusal to assist in the assault on Gibraltar, possession of which, according to Hitler, would have denied Britain and the United States access to the Mediterranean and might thereby have decided the war in Germany's favor.\textsuperscript{45}

It will be remembered that the American Red Cross shipments of wheat to Spain were held up late in October, 1940, pending the outcome of the discussions between Franco and Hitler at Hendaye. On October 31, shortly after the conclusion of the Hendaye Conference, Weddell, the American Ambassador to Spain, met with Serrano Suñer. He asked the Spanish Foreign Minister whether the Hendaye Conference presaged a change in Spanish policy. Serrano Suñer replied that neither Germany nor Italy had put any pressure on Spain to enter the war. He admitted, however, that Spain had a natural sympathy . . . for Germany and Italy and a corresponding lack of cordiality toward England and France in view of the aid which the two latter countries had given to the Republic in the civil war.\textsuperscript{46}

Weddell then remarked that the United States still considered Spain a friend. To this the Spanish Foreign Minister

\textsuperscript{45}Langer and Gleason, \textit{The Undeclared War}, p. 81.

caustically asked why the shipments of wheat had not arrived. The American Ambassador pointed out that the delay was caused by the Spanish Foreign Office and then stated that the American Government naturally wished to be informed fully of the Spanish Government’s policy before becoming more deeply involved in Spain’s needs. Weddell expressed his desire to see Franco again in order to obtain his personal assurances concerning the entire situation.47

In reporting this discussion to Cordell Hull, Weddell advised that

aid to Spain on the part of the United States should be largely based on political rather than humanitarian or commercial considerations.48

The shipment of wheat to Spain, said Weddell,

should be limited to a point where such stocks can be built up leaving the hope always before them however of greater supplies in the future in the event that they remain outside the conflict.49

Hull cabled Weddell on November 5 that, in view of Serrano Suñer’s expression of Spain’s solidarity with Germany and Italy, he (Weddell) should not make any renewed efforts to see Franco. However, should Franco agree to an interview because of Weddell’s earlier efforts, the American Ambassador to Spain was to inform the Caudillo that, due to Serrano Suñer’s remarks, it would be impossible for the United States to lend assistance to Spain if

---


48 Foreign Relations of the United States...1940, II, Doc. No. 606, 826.

49 Ibid.
that country sided with Germany against Great Britain.\textsuperscript{50}

Weddell cabled back that same day that the Spanish Government had accepted the American conditions of distributing wheat through the Red Cross and that Franco had invited him for a personal discussion.\textsuperscript{51} On November 6, Weddell cabled Hull to clarify his earlier telegram concerning his conversation with Serrano Suñer:

I felt then and feel now that there has been no change in Spain's status of non-belligerency and that I received as satisfactory assurances as could be expected under the circumstances that no change in this status was to be anticipated.\textsuperscript{52}

The American Ambassador mentioned that he had been in contact with Sir Samuel Hoare, the British Ambassador to Spain, who assured Weddell that he believed that "the British position in Spain can be most strengthened by assistance particularly in the way of foodstuffs from the United States."\textsuperscript{53} Thus, Weddell repeated his earlier recommendations in support of relief for Spain.

Hull cabled Weddell on November 8 and declared that American public opinion was against giving aid to Spain as long as it appeared probable that country might undertake to give active assistance to Germany and Italy. Hull added:

While the Department fully recognizes the need of the Spanish people, it could not justify alleviating such need were Spain

\textsuperscript{50}\textit{Ibid.}, II, Doc. No. 290, 826-27. Also: Hull, I, 877.

\textsuperscript{51}\textit{Foreign Policy of the United States...}, II, Doc. No. 614, 821-28.

\textsuperscript{52}\textit{Ibid.}, II, Doc. No. 619, 828.

\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Ibid.}. 
to give practical assistance, direct or indirect, to the axis powers. The only remedy for this situation would be a clear cut and public declaration of policy on the part of the present Spanish Government that it not only intends to remain neutral, but that it would not undertake any kind of assistance to Germany and Italy which would aid them in their war against the British Empire.54

Hull demanded that Spain must perform some "act of good faith ... to justify this Government in acting on the assumption that Spain will keep out of the war and not directly assist the axis powers."55

On November 9, the British Government sent an aide-mémoire to the United States Department of State urging that the United States proceed with relief shipments of wheat. The British believed famine was imminent in Spain and refusal by the United States to send wheat might cause active Spanish participation in the Axis.

The aide-mémoire revealed:

His Majesty's Government believe that the delay in the execution of these proposals which would be involved by attempts to obtain further assurances of Spanish non-belligerency over and above those which have already been obtained from General Franco, Serrano Suñer ... would not be worth the extra value of such assurances.56

Weddell talked with Serrano Suñer on November 12, and the Spanish Foreign Minister explained that Spain's relation to the Axis was almost identical to the relation of the United States to Britain, except that Spain had nothing to give to the Axis while the United States could do everything for Great Britain. Weddell, in a telegram to Hull reporting this conversation with Serrano Suñer, revealed:

54Ibid., II, Doc. No. 295, 830.

55Ibid., pp. 830-31.

56Ibid., p. 831.
I interrupted the Minister to ask the bold question whether if German or Italian troops crossed the frontier or otherwise violated Spanish neutrality this would be resisted by force. He answered that Spain would fight to the last man... The impression left on me by the Minister's remarks was that "political solidarity" with the Axis under present circumstances is a matter of sentiment and ideologies and hardly translatable into actual aid.  

Weddell reported on November 29 that he had been granted a long interview by Franco that day. In that conversation Weddell bluntly asked Franco whether Spain had signed the Tripartite Pact. The Caudillo said it had not, adding that it was not a pact which affected Spain. He also mentioned that he considered the Tripartite Pact to be a pact of peace. Weddell also asked Franco whether he (Weddell) might inform the Government of the United States that Spain did not envisage any departure from its present international attitude, and that it did not contemplate any aid to the Axis Powers. Franco assented on both counts, and then immediately added that Spain could not help the Axis Powers even if it wished, but "no one could foresee what the future might bring forth." Weddell further reported:

The impression left on me by Franco's remarks is that he is keenly alive to the difficulties now facing his Government and that his view is shared by Suffer. Equally I feel that while he has weakened in his original belief in German victory as has Suffer that he has a real fear of what might happen to Spain through German action. I further feel that nothing more specific than the foregoing can be obtained from Franco; that it meets the Department's conditions; and I therefore urge that the Department accept it as adequate.

Thus, Weddell thought it would be wise to resume the relief program.

---

57 Ibid., II, Doc. No. 636, 834.
58 Ibid., II, Doc. No. 687, 839-41.
59 Ibid., p. 841.
On December 16, President Roosevelt approved a memorandum prepared by Hull. The memorandum contained a statement that the British had informed the United States Government that they were prepared to send shipments of wheat to Spain from Canada and Argentina. Since it was the purpose of the United States to support the British position, Roosevelt decided to send the relief shipment and to open negotiations for credits with which Spain could purchase American surplus commodities.60

However, due to developments in the International Zone of Tangier, these shipments were held up until January, 1941. Spain, which had moved troops into this zone in June, 1940, took over its administration in November. Britain, because of Spain's moves, had held up its shipments of wheat to Spain, causing the United States to hold up its shipment also. The United States, since its program with regard to Spain followed closely that of Britain, could not feel justified in giving assistance to Spain as long as Britain refused to do so.61

Early in January, 1941, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill concurred that shipments of flour and milk, through the American Red Cross, be sent for the Spanish civilian population. On January 8, 1941, the dispatch of the Red Cross aid from the United States was announced. After that, however, no further relief measures were undertaken.62

60 Hull, I, 879-80.
61 Ibid., pp. 880-81. Also: Foreign Relations of the United States... 1940, II, Doc. No. 737, 850-51.
with Spain," said Hull, continued until almost the end of the war. Our disappointments were many, but they were not so acute as Hitler's disappointment at Franco's refusal to enter the war. German troops were not marched through Spain against Gibraltar and across to North Africa. Franco lent aid to Hitler in many ways, but his aid would have been far greater had it not been for the parallel policy pursued by Britain and the United States. 63

While the Spanish government, late in 1940, continued to show reluctance in the face of increasing German pressure for a speedy entry into the war, it nevertheless did concede some aid to Germany. During the fall of 1940, Spain showed an accommodating attitude with respect to the supplying of German submarines, and, on December 5, the Spanish Government agreed to the disposition of German tankers in remote bays along the Spanish coast for refueling German destroyers—with the stipulation that these refueling operations be carried out as secretly as possible. 64 However, on the point of Spain's entry into the war the Spanish Government resisted. Hitler's disappointment with the failure to bring Spain into the war is reflected in a letter the Führer sent to Mussolini on December 31, 1940:

Spain . . . has for the time being refused to cooperate with the two Axis Powers. I fear that Franco is committing here the greatest mistake of his life. His idea that he can obtain grain and other raw materials from the democracies, in thanks for his aloofness, is in my opinion unrealistic naiveté. They will put him off with promises until the last kilogram of grain in the country has been used up, and then the fight of the democratic powers against him personally will start. I regret this, for we had made all the preparations for crossing

63 Hull, I, 882.
the Spanish border on January 10 and attacking Gibraltar at the beginning of February. In my opinion the attack would have led to success in a relatively short time. The troops for this were excellently selected and trained, and the weapons were especially designated and readied for the purpose. From the moment in which the Strait of Gibraltar was in our hands the danger of any kind of untoward behavior on the part of French North Africa and West Africa would have been eliminated. For this reason I am very sad about this decision of Franco's which does not take account of the help which we—you, Duce, and I—once gave him in his hour of need. I have only a faint hope left that possibly at the last minute he will become aware of the catastrophic nature of his own actions and he will after all—even though late—find his way to the camp of the front whose victory will also decide his own fate.65

Although Hitler had little hope left that Spain would enter the war as an ally of Germany, he decided a little further effort just might result in success. He told some of his top military leaders on January 9: "Spain has become hesitant. Although it seems scarcely promising, we shall try again to induce her to enter the war."66

On January 20, Stohrer reported from Madrid that he had met with Franco and informed the Caudillo that his reply to Admiral Canaris had disappointed the Führer. The German Ambassador told the Generalissimo that Germany was not interested in an entry by Spain into the war when England was already conquered. Such a move would not bring any glory to Spain either. Only a prompt decision by Spain to align herself openly with Germany, said Stohrer to Franco, could save the situation. Only Germany could help Spain economically and militarily, and appropriate promises had already been made toward that end. Stohrer therefore disagreed with Franco


66 Quoted in an editor's note in DGFP, XI, 1057, from Helmuth Greiner's War Diary of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff (December 1, 1940-March 24, 1941).
that Spain was unable to wage war. Stohrer urged Franco to enter the war immediately, within forty-eight hours if possible.67

But the Gaudillo, reasserting his sympathy for the Axis cause, argued that economic difficulties prevented such action. Spain was still lacking grain. Franco remarked that when he had been forced to refuse entry into the war in the beginning of January, the reason was to be found in the deteriorating food situation developing between the meeting at Hendaye and the discussions in Berchtesgaden. The Gaudillo stated that he had no illusions whatever about English and American aid, but with the little that was imported from those countries Spain could perhaps get along, as long as Spain was not engaged in war.68

Franco then corrected Admiral Canaris' report that he (Franco) had said Spain would enter the war only when England had been defeated. As had been determined at Hendaye, it was not a question whether Spain would enter the war, but when. England's defeat would not be a prerequisite to Spanish intervention, but Spain intended to enter the war only when she could intervene effectively and did not have to fear that she would immediately collapse and become a burden to the common cause. This is what he had told Admiral Canaris.69

Franco then indicated his trust in Germany's expressions of willingness to help Spain economically. However, Spain would need this help before Spain entered the war. When Stohrer replied

67Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 677, 1140-41.

68Ibid., pp. 1141-42.

69Ibid., pp. 1142-43.
that Germany would consider aiding Spain before actual Spanish intervention, but with Franco's assurance in advance that Spain would enter the war at a time to be determined by Germany, Franco replied he would need time to study the matter. 70

The next day, January 21, Stohrer received a telegram from the German Foreign Ministry instructing him to read a message to Franco which practically demanded Spain's entrance into the war. 71 This Stohrer did, followed by further efforts of his own to induce Spain to enter the war immediately. But again the Caudillo resisted. Requesting more time to think about such a move, Franco assured Stohrer he would continue to make Spain ready for war. 72

On January 25, Stohrer reported to the German Foreign Ministry the Spanish Government's reply to the excuses, including lack of foodstuffs, bad weather, and damaged roads and airfields, which would explain Spain's inability to enter the war. The Spanish reply indicated that Spain had always hoped its intervention would have real value, and not become a burden on the Axis. Since Spain was not prepared for long war, she could not expect to realize this hope. Thus Spain had not really evaded its obligations, but had kept in mind at all times the best interest of the Axis. 73

The German Foreign Ministry then instructed Stohrer to see Franco again and to read a statement demanding a clear answer in regard to Spain's entrance into the war. A portion of that

70 Ibid., p. 1143.

71 See Appendix G.


73 Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 707, 1188-91.
statement contained the following:

(3) If Spain entrusts to the Axis the determination of the date for Spain's entry into the war, Germany, as a preliminary service, is ready to make available to Spain before entry into the war the 100,000 tons of grain in store down there [in Portugal] and to supply further aid shipments out of German reserve stocks after entry into the war.

(4) If General Franco nevertheless does not enter the war at this time, this can only be ascribed to the fact that he has doubts about the ultimate Axis victory, as revealed also in his remarks to Admiral Canaris.74

Stohrer reported back on January 27 that he had delivered to Franco this new oral message of the German Government. The German Ambassador indicated that he had discussed with Franco the rather unsatisfactory Spanish oral message of January 25, which failed to note any reference to a date for entering the war. Franco, reported Stohrer, again talked at length about Spain's distressing situation and the impossibility so far of having made that country ready for war both economically and militarily. With respect to Germany's offer of advance deliveries of foodstuffs, the Caudillo indicated that Spanish experts would consider the German offer and also gather specific data on Spain's needs and present them to Germany.75

The German Foreign Ministry was becoming impatient with Franco's many reasons and objections against immediate Spanish intervention. It seemed to the Germans that Franco's objections could only be interpreted as a rejection of Spanish alignment with the Axis.

While the German Ambassador to Spain was attempting to

---

74 Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 702, 1184.

75 Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 718, 1208-10.
effect Spanish intervention, Hitler was also trying a new approach
to the problem. On January 19, the Führer and his Foreign Minister
met with Mussolini and Count Ciano at the Berghof above Berchtes-
gaden. Hitler described to the Duce the technical military prepa-
rations that had been made by Germany in expectation of undertaking
an operation against Gibraltar. He expressed his great disappoint-
ment over the fact that Franco had refused to cooperate and that
all of the laborious preparations by Germany had been in vain. The
Führer then proposed that the Duce meet with Franco and try to
persuade him to change his mind and bring Spain into the war immedi-
ately. Mussolini agreed, but reluctantly, expressing his doubt that
such an attempt would be successful.76

On January 22, Count Ciano sent a letter to Serrano Suñer
in Madrid proposing a meeting of the Spanish Foreign Minister,
Franco, and Mussolini on the Ligurian Riviera in the vicinity of
Naples toward the end of January or early February. Serrano Suñer
replied affirmatively. The meeting was set for February 12 at
Bordighera.77

Meanwhile Hitler himself tried once again to persuade
Franco to reconsider and bring Spain into the war. On February
6, he sent a long letter to the Caudillo. The Führer portrayed the
close ties binding Germany, Italy, and Spain:

It is . . . my most sacred conviction that the war which
Germany and Italy are fighting today will decide Spain’s
future destiny as well. Only in the event of our victory

76 Ibid., XI, Doc. No. 672, 1132-33. Also: Ciano, Ciano’s
Diplomatic Papers, p. 418-20.

77 Ciano, Ciano’s Diplomatic Papers, p. 420.
will Spain's present regime survive. If Germany and Italy should lose the war, however, there would be no future whatever for a truly national and independent Spain.

For that reason I have made an effort to convince you, Caudillo, of the necessity of joining forces, in the interest of your own country and the future of the Spanish people, with those states which earlier sent soldiers to help you, and which today, too, are of necessity fighting not only for their own existence but indirectly also for the national future of Spain.78

The Führer also refuted Franco's arguments against entering the war. In particular, Hitler stressed his belief that Britain neither would nor could stave off starvation in Spain. Germany's offers to send grain to Spain would have been made good if only Spain had entered the war. If Spain had listened to Hitler and followed the Führer's plan, Gibraltar would be in Spanish hands.

To assure Franco that Germany's efforts to get Spain into the war were not made selfishly, the Führer said:

Spain's entry into the war, after all, was not considered exclusively in order to benefit the interests of Germany and Italy. Spain herself has put forward large territorial demands and the Duce and I had expressed our willingness to fulfill them to any extent compatible with a reorganization of African colonial possessions that would be acceptable to Europe and its states.79

Hitler also stressed that Spain's future lay with the Axis:

That I, myself, have no other goal in mind than our common success is certainly understandable. Yes, it is my urgency in this instance, Caudillo, which proves the depth of my sense of responsibility also toward my allies. . . . Spain will never have other friends than those represented by present-day Germany and Italy, unless, of course, a different Spain should come about. Such a different Spain, however, would be but a Spain of decay and ultimate collapse. For this reason alone I believe, Caudillo, that we three men,

78DGFP, XII, Doc. No. 22, 38. Also found in The Spanish Government and the Axis, No. 12, 29.

79DGFP, XII, Doc. No. 22, 41. Also found in The Spanish Government and the Axis, No. 12, 32.
the Duce, you, and I, are linked to one another by the most implacable force of history, and that we should therefore, in this historic conflict, obey the supreme commandment to realize that in grave times such as these nations can be saved by stout hearts rather than by seemingly prudent action.  

Franco was in no hurry to answer the Führer's letter. Before replying, he set out for Italy and the meeting with Mussolini. At Bordighera, where Franco and Mussolini met on February 12, the Duce did not have any more luck with the Caudillo than did Hitler. The Italian leader expressed Hitler's great desire that Spain join the Axis and actively participate in the war. The arguments presented by the Duce in an effort to get Franco to agree to enter the war were much the same as those Hitler had repeatedly tried. Franco's refutations were also the stock answers he had been giving the Axis leaders for months, including the plea that this was not the time for Spain to be entering the war, since it would not be to the best advantage of the common cause. Spain could not consider participation in the war until she had received sufficient grain and the Axis accepted her colonial aspirations.  

It was the Duce's general impression, after conferring with the Caudillo, that Spain was not in a position to enter the war. Even if Germany were willing to deliver everything that Spain desired, a period of several months would be necessary merely for the transportation of these things.  

The Duce was of the opinion that  

80 DGFP, XII, Doc. No. 22, 41. Also found in The Spanish Government and the Axis, No. 12, 52.  


82 DGFP, XII, Doc. No. 49, 97.
the German-Italian program with regard to Franco should be restricted to keeping Spain in the political sphere of the Axis Powers. Spain would thereby gain the necessary time to get over her present grave food crisis and also to improve the current entirely inadequate condition of her armaments. 83

Thus, the Bordighera meeting did not accomplish what Hitler had hoped. A definite time for Spain's entry into the war was not fixed. Spain would not be able to enter the war until measures were taken to alleviate the great distress within her borders, if at all. Besides, the prospects of those measures being taken did not appear great. 84

It was more than two weeks after his return to Madrid, when Franco finally got around to answering Hitler's letter of February 6. 85 The Caudillo, perhaps to placate the disappointed Fuhrer, reasserted that Spain's destiny was closely linked with that of Germany and Italy. But Hitler could not get his hopes up, for the Caudillo recounted again Spain's economic difficulties and her need for both time and materials.

Probably because of Germany's failure to invade or even

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid., XII, Doc. No. 61, 112-13 and Doc. No. 73, 131-32.

85 Unfortunately for Hitler, Axis victories in the Mediterranean area were not piling up during the winter of 1940-41. Langer and Gleason indicate: "By December, 1940, the prospects for an early Axis victory in the Mediterranean had grown dim. The Italian advance in Egypt had stalled almost at the outset and Mussolini had turned on Greece only to meet with disaster in his effort to subjugate that country. Worse, the British had suddenly launched a counteroffensive from Egypt, had smashed Graziani's army and had embarked on a drive to the west which, in a matter of weeks, was to sweep the Italians out of all Cyrenaica. As Hitler saw it, there was real likelihood that General Weygand would throw in the lot of French North Africa with that of the British, in which case the Italians might soon be expelled from all of Libya. Such a disaster might well bring on the collapse of the Fascist regime and the
attempt to invade Britain or to cause that country's defeat, the Caudillo introduced a new condition which would have to precede Spanish intervention:

One consideration I must still express: the closing of the Strait of Gibraltar is not only indispensable for the immediate relief of Italy but probably also a prerequisite for the end of the war. In order to give this closing (of Gibraltar) the significance of a destructive blow, however, it is necessary that the Suez Canal be closed at the same time. Should this latter event not take place, we, who would like to offer you the effective commitment of our military strength, have to state in all sincerity that Spain's position in a prolonged war would become extremely difficult.86

Franco closed the letter with his usual expression of belief in the Axis cause: "There is no need to assure you of my faith in the triumph of your cause, of which I shall always be a loyal supporter."87 But Hitler was no longer encouraged by Franco's words. In a letter to Mussolini dated February 28, the Führer indicated his opinion, revealing his disappointment, that

the gist of the long Spanish speeches and written explanations is that Spain does not want to enter the war and will not do so either. This is very regrettable since this eliminates, for the time being, the simplest possibility of striking at England at her Mediterranean position.88

withdrawal of Italy from the war." Langer and Gleason, The Undeclared War, pp. 360-61. It was, in fact, on the very day that Franco received Hitler's letter that Marshal Graziani's last Italian forces in Cyrenaica had been wiped out by the British south of Berighazi. This must have influenced Franco's reply, since it no longer appeared as though Axis victory was a certainty.

86 DGFP, XII, Doc. No. 95, 177. Also found in The Spanish Government and the Axis, No. 13, 34.

87 DGFP, XII, Doc. No. 95, 178. Also found in The Spanish Government and the Axis, No. 13, 35.

88 DGFP, XII, Doc. No. 110, 197.
The time had come when Hitler's efforts definitely appeared to show very little promise of success. The break between Franco and the Axis leaders was almost complete. Because of Franco's intractability, Hitler, for the most part, abandoned his efforts to get Spain to enter the war.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

On June 22, 1941, German troops invaded Russia. This same day, the Spanish Government reported its satisfaction over the German move and requested that volunteer formations of the Falange be permitted "to participate in the fight against the common foe, in memory of Germany's fraternal assistance during the Civil War."1 Stohrer, the German Ambassador to Madrid, in reporting a conversation he had with Serrano Suñer, indicated that the Spanish Foreign Minister had insisted that "this [Spanish] gesture of solidarity was, of course, being made independently of the full and complete entry of Spain into the war beside the Axis, which would take place at the appropriate moment."2

But Spain never entered the war. In fact, the Spanish Government, in October, 1943, reaffirmed "strict neutrality."3 However, between the spring of 1941 and the reaffirmation of neutrality in 1943, Spain provided Germany with aid. As Emmet J. Hughes has said:

The most flagrant military contribution which Falangist Spain made to the cause of Fascism was the notorious Blue Division—the "volunteers" from Iberia who, after September of 1941, were dispatched to Germany and to the eastern front to fight in the "crusade against Bolshevism."4

The Blue Division consisted of volunteers, thus implying that the Spanish Government, as such, was not entering the war.

---

1 Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945 (Washington: U.S. Dept. of State, 1949-1952), Series D, XII. Doc. No. 671, 1080. Hereafter this series will be cited as DGFP.

2 Ibid., pp. 1080-81.


4 Ibid.
Actually, this division was quite small, numbering at most 17,000 or 18,000 men late in 1941 and as low as 3,000 or 4,000 men at the time of its withdrawal late in 1943.\textsuperscript{5}

The Blue Division fought only on the eastern front. The Spanish Government attempted to justify the Blue Division's entrance into the war with the thesis that two wars existed: a European war in which Spain was anti-Russian, and the war in the Pacific in which Spain was anti-Japanese. Franco, says Hoare, assumed that "it was safe and legitimate for Spain to take part in the crusade against Russia without being embroiled in hostilities with the western Allies."\textsuperscript{6} Russia, because of the assistance she gave to the Loyalists during the Civil War, was considered an enemy by Spain. Any actions against Russia, even after Russia had the support of both Britain and the United States, were not to be considered as actions hostile to the Allies.

Except for the Blue Division, Franco managed to keep Spain out of the war. In fact, after the spring of 1941, Spanish-German relations began to cool until, as has been mentioned, Spain declared her neutrality in October, 1943. Moreover, even before this declaration, Franco replaced the pro-Axis Serrano Suñer as Minister of Foreign Affairs. In September, 1942, the Caudillo appointed Count Jordana, who favored the Allies, to the office of Foreign Minister, a position he had formerly held until August, 1939.

That Franco was able to keep Spain out of the war was due not to the lack of intensity of Germany's efforts to effect Spanish

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid.

intervention, but rather to the Caudillo's unyielding stubbornness in resisting those efforts, as well as his diplomatic cleverness. By early 1941, Hitler realized that all of his efforts to bring Spain into the war were in vain and that he had "no alternative but to reconcile himself to Franco's intractability."\(^7\)

In late 1939 and early 1940, when Germany succeeded in overrunning most of Western Europe, it appeared that Spain would most likely join the Axis camp. In fact, it even seemed logical that she might do so voluntarily. After all, the Franco Government owed its victory in the Spanish Civil War in great measure to the help given it by the European Axis partners. Thus, it would be only natural for Franco to side with his recent benefactors.

But Franco was not about to take the natural course. There is little doubt that he was sympathetic to the Axis cause, much more so than toward the democracies.\(^8\) Even more than Franco, Serrano Suñer was outspoken in his impartiality toward the Axis. Weddell, American Ambassador to Spain, had met with Serrano Suñer on October 31, 1940, and reported the conversation to Cordell Hull:

He [Serrano Suñer] then spoke at length of the natural sympathy of his country for Germany and Italy and a corresponding lack of cordiality toward England and France in view of the aid which the two latter countries had given to the Republic in the civil war. He said that Spain for

---


\(^8\)Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1940 (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1957), II, Doc. No. 687, 340. In this document, Weddell, U.S. Ambassador to Spain, reported a conversation he had with Franco, in which the Generalissimo emphasized the gratitude and loyalty which Spain naturally felt to the two countries [Germany and Italy] which had helped it overthrow the Red regime [in Spain during the Civil War]. See also: Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 60.
a long time had occupied a subordinate position in the family of nations in spite of the fact that it was a great country and that it was determined henceforward to have a voice in European affairs.\textsuperscript{9}

The Spaniards were resentful toward the Allies for supposedly relegating Spain to a minor role in world affairs. The Spaniards particularly resented British acquisition of Gibraltar, a move they felt prevented Spain from extending her position into Morocco and thus becoming a major power.\textsuperscript{10}

Nevertheless, as much as the Caudillo may have had reason to align Spain with the Axis, he was too realistic, farsighted, and opportunistic to commit Spain to the Axis before being assured of its success. Franco, though he favored the Axis, was not so much interested in helping the Italo-German cause, as he was in furthering Spain's welfare. Spanish policy, throughout the entire war period, was motivated entirely by calculations of Spain's national interest.

Perhaps better than anyone else, Franco realized the extent of Spain's weakened economic condition resulting from the Civil War. He knew Spain could not possibly engage in active participation without economic support from somewhere—either from the Axis or the Allies. If Spain joined the Axis, the Allies would certainly cut off all aid to Spain. Thus, if Spain actively supported Germany, Germany would have to provide aid—economic and military—for Spain. But Germany was unable to provide help to the extent

\textsuperscript{9}Foreign Relations of the United States . . . 1940, II, Doc. No. 806, 824.

Spain required; that amount of assistance could come only from the Allies or the United States.

Actually, British and American aid in the form of foodstuffs and oil allowed Spain to continue functioning with regard to economic matters without being forced into the Axis camp from the sheer necessity of maintaining her national existence. It was almost a matter of Spanish self-preservation that Franco had to maintain workable, if not friendly, relations with the democracies. Langer and Gleason have stated: "At a minimum the economic power of the western states was an important contributory factor in keeping Spain from closer identification with the Axis."\textsuperscript{11}

Only if Spain could be certain that the war would be a short one, would she consider entering alongside the Axis. Franco knew that Spain could not endure a protracted war. Besides, Franco wanted some indication that the Axis had a reasonable chance of winning the war before he would commit Spain to intervention. It would be pure folly to enter on a side that stood slim chance of success, especially since Spain was already weak as a result of the Civil War. A defeat for Spain would completely destroy her.

Thus, only when it appeared that German victory was imminent did Franco indicate to the Axis his readiness to enter the war. The Caudillo's offer of Spanish intervention in June, 1940,
was an expression of his certainty of an Axis victory in the very
near future. However, Franco's expressions of loyalty, friendship,
and willingness to engage in the war on the side of the Axis was
tempered by his extensive demands for territorial spoils in North
Africa, plus economic and military aid from Germany. Carlton J. H.
Hayes suggests:

He [Franco] surely knew he was asking a much bigger price
than Hitler would pay, and yet by giving fair words to the
Führer he warded off action by the Germans . . . and the
more he was subsequently pressed for aid, the higher he
raised the price.12

Why did Franco make his demands so high? As Hayes indi-
cates, the Caudillo was interested in keeping Hitler from swooping
down into Spain as he had done to France, Belgium, and other Western
European countries. Yet his offer to intervene kept Spain on friend-
ly relations with Germany and set the stage for a possible advan-
tageous position in an Axis-dominated post-war Europe. Moreover,
as long as Spain remained friendly to Germany, the possibility was
slight that Italy would make any moves to occupy Spanish territory,
such as the Balearic Islands. If Spain were to alienate Germany,
she would also come in conflict with Italy, with the result that
Spain would lose many of her existing territorial possessions.
And should Spain antagonize both of the European Axis partners
and then the Axis emerged victorious from the war, Spain would be
in a precarious position on the European continent. Mostly likely,
she would become a satellite of both Germany and Italy.

Germany's attempts to defeat England) was in convincing the United
States of the soundness of this policy. Hoare, passim.

12Carlton J. H. Hayes, The United States and Spain: An
On the other hand, Hitler had no reason, in June, 1940, for accepting Franco's proposal, since he believed Spanish aid at that point would only be superfluous. Germany had thus far done quite well without Spanish help. Franco's offer was therefore rejected.

Hitler actually did not need Spain's assistance until it became apparent that a direct invasion of England was impossible and there appeared the need for an alternative way to strike England—that is, by controlling Gibraltar and by hindering English shipping from the Canary Islands. At this point, however, Franco's confidence in a speedy German victory soured. In addition, Hitler now needed Franco. But Franco resisted, always offering some argument against Spanish intervention, for by then possibility of an Axis victory had lessened.

During the fall of 1940, Hitler had reason to expect Spain might join the Axis, for Serrano Suñer, who was definitely pro-Axis, was appointed Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Führer considered this a good sign. However, Serrano Suñer, closely following Franco's instructions, proved difficult in the negotiations. The Germans had first realized how stubborn Serrano Suñer could be when the Spanish Minister (at that time still Minister of the Interior) had visited Berlin in September, 1940. During these discussions in Berlin, Serrano Suñer and Ribbentrop set the pattern of unfruitful German-Spanish negotiations for the next several months. Ribbentrop would request Serrano Suñer to indicate a definite date by which Spain would enter the war, at the same time declaring Spain's demands for aid excessive. Serrano Suñer would
avoid giving a specific date for Spain's entry, while insisting that Germany must meet Spain's demands before Spain could enter the war.\(^{13}\)

Germany, because of her inability or unwillingness to satisfy Spain's demands, destroyed her own chances of bringing Spain into the war. Yet Germany was in a somewhat difficult position. The very nature of Spain's territorial demands, aiming largely at French holdings in North Africa, placed Germany in an almost impossible situation, since Germany also sought France's assistance. If Hitler granted Spain's demands, he would alienate French sympathies, thus taking the chance that France might conclude agreements with the British.\(^{14}\)

A major reason Hitler was unsuccessful in bringing Spain into the war was his failure to use force to pressure Franco into joining the Axis. But the Führer was prevented from resorting to this tactic by a fear that British forces would invade Spain's Atlantic Islands. Hitler also was afraid Spain might call on the Allies to help resist a forceful German entrance into Spain.\(^{15}\)

During the winter of 1940-41, when Axis victory no longer appeared certain, Franco's resistance to German attempts to effect Spanish intervention increased markedly. It is entirely possible that the Axis difficulties in the Balkan area early in 1941, due to Mussolini's premature and rather foolhardy invasion of Greece the previous October, caused Franco to be more resolute in staying out

\(^{13}\)See text above, p. 51 ff.

\(^{14}\)See text above, pp. 32, 69, 81 ff.

\(^{15}\)See text above, pp. 58, 81, 94.
of the war. Although it is impossible to determine whether the Duce’s precipitate actions actually influenced the Generalissimo, it is probable that they did. At any rate, Hitler believed so.\textsuperscript{16}

When Axis troops suffered setbacks in the Mediterranean early in 1942, Hitler realized for certain that coaxing Franco was almost hopeless, for Spain would not participate actively in the war until the Axis position in the Mediterranean was secure. In November, 1942, the Allies landed in North Africa. During the time when the Allied position there—particularly in Algeria—was still insecure, Hitler requested free passage of German troops through Spain. Franco refused.\textsuperscript{17} Hitler’s hopes regarding Spain were now almost completely gone.

The Allies were not quick to forget this act by the Spanish Government. On May 15, 1944, the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, stated before the House of Commons:

There is no doubt that if Spain had yielded to German blandishments and pressure . . . our burden would have been much heavier. . . . In the dark days of the war the attitude of the Spanish Government in not giving our enemies passage through Spain was extremely helpful to us. . . . I shall always consider a service was rendered . . . by Spain, not only to the United Kingdom and to the British Empire and Commonwealth but to the cause of the United Nations.\textsuperscript{18}

Actually, the fear that Spain would yield, under pressure or duress, did not vanish entirely until the Germans had been

\textsuperscript{16}See text above, footnote 20, page 88.


expelled from North Africa in 1943 and the Allied armies were safely established on French soil the following year. The cessation of diplomatic negotiations between Spain and Germany finally came when France was liberated in 1944. However, for all practical purposes, intense German efforts to get Spain to enter the war ended in February, 1941.

For by this time it had become apparent that Germany would not satisfy Spain's territorial demands. It also appeared likely that the war would be protracted. Primarily because of these factors and because Hitler was unable to match wits with the shrewd Spaniard, Spain was able to withstand Germany's efforts to get her to enter the Second World War.

Perhaps the most important reason for Hitler's lack of success with respect to Spain was Franco himself. In the Caudillo, Hitler was faced with a clever and stubborn negotiator. From the very beginning, Franco had pursued a course of action that would permit Spain to share the fruits of a Fascist victory, yet also escape the hardships of a Fascist defeat. In his policy the astute Spaniard provided for the eventuality of an Allied victory, as well as an Axis victory. Franco, though his sentiments were with the Axis, was a skilled practitioner of realpolitik. He dared play both ends against the middle—and was successful. Of all the European Fascist states, Franco's Spain remained neutral during World War II; Franco's Spain survived the war; Franco's Spain exists today.
APPENDIX A

The State Secretary to the Foreign Minister

St.S. No. 455

BERLIN, June 19, 1940.

As announced, the Spanish Ambassador this afternoon sent me a memorandum concerning Spanish claims in Africa and Spain's possible participation in the war.
In translation the memorandum reads as follows:

"Since the Spanish Government considers the further existence of the French empire in North Africa, which was partly created by the efforts of Spanish workers, to be impossible, it demands the territory of Oran, the unification of Morocco under a Spanish Protectorate, the extension of Spanish territory in the Sahara to the 20th parallel, and the extension of Spain's coastal territories situated in the area on the coast between the mouth of the Niger and Cape Lopez.

------------

"Should England continue the war after France has ceased fighting, Spain would be willing to enter the war after a short period of preparing the public. In this case she would need some support from Germany in the form of war materials, heavy artillery, aircraft for the attack on Gibraltar, and perhaps the cooperation of German submarines in the defense of the Canary Islands. Also supplies of some foodstuffs, ammunition, motor fuels and equipment, which will certainly be available from the French war stocks."

Herewith submitted to the Foreign Minister by teletype.

WEIZSÄCKER

---

APPENDIX B

TOP SECRET

PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF A PROTOCOL

On June . . . of this year through the Spanish Embassy in Berlin, the Spanish Government sent the Reich Government a memorandum in which it offers, on certain conditions, to enter the war against England on the side of the Axis Powers.

In the event that hereafter the Spanish Government of its own desire and accord enters the war against England, the following arrangements shall enter into force between the German and Spanish Governments.

Article I

The Spanish Government shall take full responsibility for the decision to enter the war against England on the side of the Axis Powers. (Comment: May possibly be omitted because of the contents of the preamble.)

The Spanish Government, in accord with the Axis Powers, shall determine the time of entry into the war.

Article II

The conduct of Spain's military operations shall be the responsibility of Spain alone. They shall, however, be carried out in close accord with the German military authorities. The necessary permanent liaison organs shall be created for this. Germany is also prepared to furnish military advisers and specialists should this be desired by Spain or seem to her necessary.

Article III

The Reich Government is prepared to make available to the Spanish Government the necessary war material. The scope and the time of these deliveries, as well as all other details of a military nature shall be regulated by a military agreement which shall enter into force on the same day as this Treaty.

(Remark: Negotiations are in progress between Admiral Canaris and the Spanish General Vigón regarding the military equipment that seems to Spain necessary for the Gibraltar operation and for the prosecution of the war in general. Admiral Canaris has the appropriate data.)

Article IV

The Reich Government is also prepared for the duration of the war, so far as necessary, to assist Spain in an economic respect

1Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945 (Washington: U.S. Dept. of State, 1949-1962), Series D, X, Doc. No. 405, 562-65. This is a protocol draft which was enclosed with a memorandum from Stohrer to Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, dated August 27, 1940.
and to supply the raw materials, foods, and goods which are absolutely necessary and which she cannot obtain at home or abroad. Details on this subject are given in the enclosure (or: in a separate agreement entering into force on the same day as this treaty).

(Remark: Negotiations are to be conducted on this point with Señor Serrano Suñer, who has been asked to take along with him to Germany appropriate supporting data.)

Article V

In return for the deliveries provided for in the two preceding articles (or separate agreements) and for assistance in the conduct of the war, Spain obligates herself to recognize in a definitive way the Spanish war debts arising out of the Spanish Civil War.

(Remark: The sum necessary for the indemnification of the Germans resident in Spain must be added to the actual war debts) and to pay them off in... years through deliveries of raw materials (Remark: possibly also through payments in cash or investments in Spain).

The Spanish Government will further agree to the transfer of... percent of present English and French mining property in Spain and Spanish Morocco which is shown in the enclosure (Remark: also such enterprises, circumstances permitting, in French Morocco and Oran) to Germany after the end of the war.

(Remark: The Secretariat of State Secretary Keppler is compiling the appropriate data.)

Article VI

The Reich Government assures the Spanish Government that it will very energetically and to the extent hereinafter set forth support the realization of the Spanish national claims, as cited in the memorandum mentioned in the preamble. In particular, it guarantees to Spain after the termination of the war with England, possession and free disposition of Gibraltar and the Tangier Zone. The Reich Government further obligates itself to effect in the peace treaty the cession by France of the territory of Oran (the boundaries are shown on the attached map) and the cession of French Morocco (or: the part of French Morocco that appears on the attached map).

Article VII (tentative)

The Spanish Government takes note of the fact that the Reich Government intends to take possession of the portions (or ports with hinterland) of French Morocco that appear on the attached map.

Article VIII

(In this article Spain's claim to expansion of Spanish territories in the Sahara and in Guinea should be dealt with. Possibly an exchange of territory could be provided for, since Spanish Guinea lies to the fore of our former Cameroon colony and for this reason this Spanish demand can probably not be satisfied. Circumstances permitting, an expansion of the Cameroon or the cession of the Spanish island, Fernando Po, could even be requested in return for the large territorial gains that Spain will make in Morocco and Oran.)
Article IX

The Spanish Government agrees to Germany's participation to the broadest extent in the extraction of mineral resources and in other economic enterprises in the territories in Africa newly acquired by Spain, with the same rights as Spain. The Spanish Government therefore guarantees to the German Government not only the restitution of the property, concessions, and other rights, of which owners were divested through the Versailles Treaty, but it agrees also to the transfer of the property (Remark: or to the participation up to ... percent) in the mineral resources in the newly acquired Moroccan territory and the territory of Oran, as set forth in the enclosure.

Article X

The two Governments declare their determination to continue, after the termination of the war against England, to develop friendly relations in all spheres, particularly in the military, economic, and cultural spheres, and to make them as close as possible. They will therefore proceed forthwith to the conclusion of a military convention and the ratification of the Cultural Agreement concluded on January 24, 1939.

Article XI

(Here further demands regarding air transportation and shipping might possibly be dealt with. Also a coordination of German and Spanish propaganda work through a press, news services, etc., abroad and particularly in South America might be provided for.)

Article XII

This Treaty and the special agreement annexed hereto shall not enter into force until the Royal Italian Government has declared to the two Governments that it has no objections to these agreements. (Remark: or: until the Royal Italian Government has concluded an analogous agreement with the Spanish Government and has apprised the German Government thereof.)
APPENDIX C

Unsigned Memorandum

SEPTEMBER 27, 1940.

MEMORANDUM HANDED TO AMBASSADOR VON STOHNER BY THE SPANISH MINISTER OF INTERIOR, SEPTEMBER 27, 1940

The personal contact between the Führer and the German Government on the one hand, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Count Galeazzo Ciano, and the Minister of Interior of Spain, Serrano Suñer on the other, the last two representing respectively the Duce and General Franco, has made possible an exchange of views of the highest value for determining the position of the three countries in their relations to each other and in their coordinated stand before the world.

Spain therewith reiterates her decision, which was already fixed from the first, not to remain aloof in the case of possible intervention of extracontinental powers in Europe and Africa either in the present conflict or in the future.

In accordance with this decision which is based on the principles and sacrifices which enabled Spain, in a hard civil war, to set up the national regime which liberated the country from the democratic capitalistic intrigues, and in accordance with the traditional friendship of the three peoples, the Spanish Government declares its solidarity with the policy of the Axis and its readiness to conclude in the form of a tripartite pact a military alliance for 10 years with Germany and Italy. To such a pact there might be added as annexes bilateral agreements between Spain and the two Powers for regulating economic questions and other matters. This tripartite pact with its annexes give definite expression to Spain's desire to carry through the task, in cooperation with Germany and Italy, of establishing an order of maximum justice.

This secret protocol enters into force when, in accord with the other two Powers and with their aid, Spain has completed her military preparations and provided herself with the necessary raw materials, gasoline, and foodstuffs. The interested Powers are setting to work without delay in order to determine the extent, form, and conditions for the cooperation of the two belligerent Powers in preparing Spain most efficaciously for concluding the pact of alliance.

Spain's declaration of solidarity assumes recognition of the following claims and aspirations:

1. Reincorporation of Gibraltar into Spanish sovereign territory.

2. Annexation by Spain of the province of Oran and of the whole of Morocco, extension of the Spanish frontier to the desert and without restriction other than the granting of preferential treatment with respect to mining and participation in ownership of mines in Morocco, which will be awarded to Germany through the channels of negotiation. This can be laid down in a special treaty or included in an agreement of a general nature regarding the economic relations of the two countries.

APPENDIX D

SECRET PROTOCOL

HENDAYE, October 23, 1940.

The Italian, German, and Spanish Governments have agreed as follows:

1. The exchange of views between the Führer of the German Reich and the Chief of the Spanish State, following conversations between the Duce and the Führer and among the Foreign Ministers of the three countries in Rome and Berlin, has clarified the present position of the three countries toward each other as well as the questions implicit in waging the war and affecting general policy.

2. Spain declares her readiness to accede to the Tripartite Pact concluded September 27, 1940, among Italy, Germany, and Japan [See Appendix C] and for this purpose to sign, on a date to be set by the four Powers jointly, an appropriate protocol regarding the actual accession.

3. By the present Protocol Spain declares her accession to the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between Italy and Germany and the related Secret Supplementary Protocol of May 22, 1939.

4. In fulfillment of her obligations as an ally, Spain will intervene in the present war of the Axis Powers against England after they have provided her with the military support necessary for her preparedness, at a time to be set by common agreement of the three Powers, taking into account military preparations to be decided upon. Germany will grant economic aid to Spain by supplying her with food and raw materials, so as to meet the needs of the Spanish people and the requirements of the war.

5. In addition to the reincorporation of Gibraltar into Spain the Axis Powers state that in principle they are ready to see to it, in accordance with a general settlement which is to be established in Africa and which must be put into effect in the peace treaties after the defeat of England—that Spain receives territories in Africa to the same extent as France can be compensated, by assigning to the latter other territories of equal value in Africa, but with German and Italian claims against France remaining unaffected.

6. The present Protocol shall be strictly secret, and those present undertake to preserve its strict secrecy, unless by common agreement they decide to publish it.

Done in three original texts in the Italian, German, and Spanish languages.

For the Italian Government:
Ciano

For the German Government:

For the Spanish Government:

---

APPENDIX E

The Director of the Legal Department to the Embassy in Spain.\(^1\)

Telegram

IMMEDIATE BERLIN, October 28, 1940.

TOP SECRET

No. 1846

Exclusively for the Ambassador personally.

With reference to your telegram No. 1 of October 25.\(^2\)

Concerning point 1: When the text is in final form, the signing
of the agreement is going to take place via Chancellory channels,
and it is intended that the German, Italian, and Spanish versions
will be signed first by the Reich Foreign Minister and the Italian
Foreign Minister, and then be sent to Madrid for signing by the Span-
ish Foreign Minister. After the signing by the Spanish Foreign Min-
ister the signed original designated for Spain would be retained
there, while the signed originals for Germany and Italy would be re-
turned.

Concerning point 2: There is no reason for the return of the
first Spanish text. If the Spanish should bring up the question,
please report about it.

Concerning point 3: The Foreign Minister urgently requests that
the strictest silence be maintained concerning the negotiations, and
that no one be oriented about them.

GAUS

---

\(^1\) Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945 (Washington:

\(^2\) This telegram from Stohrer reads as follows: "Would be
grateful for instructions: 1) how the signing of the final text of
the Hendaye agreement is going to take place; 2) whether the Span-
iards should retain the first text; 3) to what extent I can orient
the Military Attachés concerning Hendaye." See editor's footnote
in Ibid., p. 410.
APPENDIX F

Führer's Directive

FÜHRER'S HEADQUARTERS, November 12, 1940.

CHEFSACHE
TOP SECRET MILITARY
The Führer and Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht
WFS/Abt. L(I) No. 33 356/40g. K. Chef's
By officer only

DIRECTIVE NO. 18

The measures of the High Commands which are being prepared for the
conduct of the war in the near future are to be in accordance with the
following guiding principles:

1. Relations with France

The aim of my policy toward France is to cooperate with this coun-
try in the most effective way for the future prosecution of the war
against England. For the time being France will have the role of a
"nonbelligerent power" which will have to tolerate German military
measures on her territory, in the African colonies especially, and to
give support, as far as possible, even by using her own means of de-
defense. The most pressing task of the French is the defensive and of-
fensive protection of their African possessions (West and Equatorial
Africa) against England and the de Gaulle movement. From this task
the participation of France in the war against England can develop in
full force.

Except for the current work of the Armistice Commission, the dis-
cussions with France which tie in with my meeting with Marshal Pétain
will initially be conducted exclusively by the Foreign Ministry in
cooperation with the High Command of the Wehrmacht.

More detailed directives will follow after the conclusion of
these discussions.

2. Spain and Portugal

Political measures to induce the prompt entry of Spain into the
war have been initiated. The aim of German intervention in the Iber-
ian Peninsula (code name Felix) will be to drive the English out of
the Western Mediterranean.

For this purpose:

a) Gibraltar should be taken and the Straits closed;
b) The English should be prevented from gaining a foothold at
another point of the Iberian Peninsula or of the Atlantic islands.

For the preparation and execution of the undertaking the follow-
ing is intended:

Section I:

a) Reconnaissance parties (officers in civilian clothes) will
conclude the requisite preparations for the operation against Gibral-
tar and for the taking over of airfields. As regards camouflage and
cooperation with the Spaniards they are bound by the security meas-
ures of the Chief of the Foreign Intelligence Department.

b) Special units of the Foreign Intelligence Department in disguised cooperation with the Spaniards are to take over the protection of the Gibraltar area against English attempts to extend the outpost area or prematurely to discover and disturb the preparations.

c) The units designated for the action will assemble in readiness far back of the Franco-Spanish border and without premature explanation being given to the troops. A preliminary alert for beginning the operation will be issued 3 weeks before the troops cross the Franco-Spanish border (but only after conclusion of the preparations regarding the Atlantic islands).

In view of the limited capacity of the Spanish railroads the Army will mainly designate motorized units for the operation so that the railways remain available for supply.

Section II:

a) Directed by observation near Algeciras, Luftwaffe units at a favorable moment will conduct an aerial attack from French soil against the units of the English fleet lying in the harbor of Gibraltar and after the attack they will land on Spanish airports.

b) Shortly thereafter the units designated for commitment in Spain will cross the Franco-Spanish border by land or by air.

Section III:

a) The attack for the seizure of Gibraltar is to be by German troops.

b) Troops are to be assembled to march into Portugal in case the English should gain a foothold there. The units designated for this will march into Spain immediately after the forces designated for Gibraltar.

Section IV:

Support of the Spaniards in closing the Strait after seizure of the Rock, if necessary, from the Spanish-Moroccan side as well.

The following will apply regarding the strength of the units to be committed for Operation Felix:

Army:

The units designated for Gibraltar must be strong enough to take the Rock even without Spanish help.

Along with this a smaller group must be available to support the Spaniards in the unlikely event of an English attempt at a landing on another part of the coast.

For the possible march into Portugal mobile units are mainly to be designated.

Luftwaffe:

For the aerial attack on the harbor of Gibraltar forces are to be designated which will guarantee abundant success. For the subsequent operations against naval objectives and for support of the attack on the Rock mainly dive bomber units are to be transferred to Spain.

Sufficient antiaircraft artillery is to be allocated to the army units including its use against ground targets.

Navy:

U-boats are to be provided for combating the English Gibraltar squadron, and particularly in its evacuation of the harbor which is to be expected after the aerial attack.

For support of the Spaniards in closing the Strait the transfer of individual coastal batteries is to be prepared in cooperation with the Army.
Italian participation is not envisaged.

The Atlantic islands (particularly the Canaries and the Cape Verde Islands) will, as a result of the Gibraltar operation, gain increased importance for the English conduct of the war at sea as well as for our own naval operations. The Commanders in Chief of the Navy and of the Luftwaffe are to study how the Spanish defense of the Canaries can be supported and how the Cape Verde Islands can be occupied.

I likewise request examination of the question of occupation of Madeira and of the Azores as well as of the question of the advantages and disadvantages which would ensue for the naval and for the aerial conduct of the war. The results of this examination are to be presented to me as soon as possible.

7. Reports of the Commanders in Chief

Will be expected by me regarding the measures envisaged in this directive. I shall then issue orders regarding the methods of execution and the synchronization of the individual actions.

In order to guard secrecy, special measures are to be taken for restricting the numbers of the working staffs. This applies particularly for the operation in Spain and for the plans regarding the Atlantic islands.

ADOLF HITLER
APPENDIX G

The Foreign Minister to the Ambassador in Spain

Telegram

MOST URGENT

SPECIAL TRAIN, January 21, 1941.

No. 36 of January 21, from the Special Train
No. 140 of January 21, from the Foreign Ministry

For the Ambassador personally.

I have read your report. Make an appointment with Franco again as soon as you have received this telegram, stating that you have another message from your Government for Franco personally, and read the following to the Generalissimo verbatim:

1. Without the help of the Führer and the Duce there would not today be any Nationalist Spain or any Caudillo.

2. The English, French, and Americans have one aim: the destruction of Franco and Nationalist Spain. The democracies will couple every aid with political exertion weakening Franco’s regime. It is our conviction, moreover, that for technical reasons alone (lack of tonnage, etc.) the shipment of significant quantities of grain across the ocean is out of the question. England herself is already unable to provide for her own needs and is on the road to hunger.

3. The existence of Nationalist Spain and Franco and the great future of Spain are therefore indissolubly bound up with the fate of the Axis and the Powers allied in the Tripartite Pact. Only Germany is in a position to give Spain any really effective aid in her food situation.

4. The war for the Axis is today already won. The Führer and the Duce are convinced that the victory of the Powers of the Tripartite Pact will be definitively assured this year. The closing of the Mediterranean by the capture of Gibraltar would contribute toward an early end of the war and also open up for Spain the road to Africa with its possibilities. For the Axis, however, this action would be of strategic value only if it can be carried out in the next few weeks. Otherwise it will definitely be too late for it because of other military operations.

5. The Führer and the Reich Government are deeply disturbed by the equivocal and vacillating attitude of Spain. This attitude is completely incomprehensible to them both in view of the help which they gave Franco in the Spanish Civil War and in view of the crystalline clear practical political interest of Spain in an alignment with Germany and her allies.

6. The Reich Government is taking this step in order to prevent Spain at the last minute from taking a road which, if firmly convinced, can end only in a catastrophe for Spain. Unless the Caudillo decides immediately to join the war of the Axis Powers, the Reich Government cannot but foresee the end of Nationalist Spain.

End of the oral message.

RIBBENTROP

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Published Documentary Material:


General Works:


**Secondary Sources**

Books:


Pattee, Richard. *This is Spain*. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1951.


Periodicals:


