

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.



DIVISION OF FOREIGN
SERVICE ADMINISTRATION
AUG 19 1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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WASHINGTON

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August 9, 1940.

DEPARTMENT OF THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH

To

American Diplomatic and Consular Officers.

Sirs:

On account of hostilities now existing in Europe and because of disturbed conditions prevailing in other parts of the world, the Department desires to protect and safeguard to the utmost degree the channels through which it sends mail to American diplomatic missions and American consular offices, and through which it receives mail from the missions and offices. Therefore, in order to make effective as soon as possible modifications of the general procedure hitherto followed with regard to the transmission of mail, you are requested, immediately upon receiving this instruction, to observe strictly the directions set forth herein. So far as the Department is concerned, the procedure outlined below will become effective at as early a date as practicable.

1. Note 6(a), Section VI-3 of the Foreign Service Regulations, provides that the Department will transmit in the diplomatic pouch

"Letters addressed by individuals, firms et cetera, in the United States to officers and American employees abroad or to members of their families, when bearing full United States postage."

In accordance with authorization thus granted, the Department has hitherto accepted for transmission in the pouch private sealed communications addressed by persons and firms in the United States to officers and American employees of the Foreign Service. Until further notice, however, the clause quoted above will be modified to the extent that all such communications shall, with the exception noted below, be presented unsealed to the transmitting officer in the Department or in the mission, as the case may be; and shall be placed in the pouch unsealed.

Communications prepared by a Chief of Mission or addressed to a Chief of Mission are exempt from the foregoing requirement. Those prepared by a Chief of Mission should bear on the outside his signature or initials in his own handwriting. Also, occasions may arise which, in the opinion of a Chief of Mission, would justify a departure from the requirement of leaving envelopes unsealed. In such case, the Chief of Mission shall personally seal the envelope that has been addressed by a subordinate officer or employee, or by an Attaché, and shall identify it as

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Following the date of receipt of this instruction and until instructions to the contrary are issued, all pouches received

prescribed above. This departure from the regular procedure should be resorted to only in the most exceptional circumstances, and only when the Chief of Mission is convinced that attendant conditions entirely justify the action. Full responsibility for the contents of the envelope must, in each such case, be assumed by the Chief of Mission.

Private communications to and from Chiefs of Mission, Foreign Service Officers and Attachés only may be exchanged between missions by courier pouch under the foregoing conditions and restrictions.

2. For some time past, and especially since the outbreak of hostilities in September 1939, private persons, business firms, and private charitable and humanitarian organizations in the United States have appealed to the Department in increasing numbers to send communications for them in the diplomatic pouch, addressed chiefly to American consular officers. These appeals have for the most part, of course, been occasioned by the rapidly developing hazards to which the open mails are exposed. There would appear to be little doubt that by far the greater percentage of such communications received since September 1939, and before, have related to legitimate business or official matters. As the war is prolonged and during the period of uncertainty and disorganization that may follow it, it may logically be anticipated that such requests will be received in ever larger numbers; and, as has been the case hitherto, the Department will continue to give sympathetic consideration to each request. However, it will require that all communications of the nature referred to be received in the Department unsealed, and that they bear sufficient United States postage at the required foreign rate, or other authorized evidence that the full rate of postage has been paid. Also, the decision will rest solely with the Department as to whether the communications may be sent in the diplomatic pouch.

3. Note 5(a) and paragraphs thereunder, Section VI-3 of the Foreign Service Regulations, set forth the several categories of private and unofficial mail that may be accepted abroad for transmission to the Department in the diplomatic pouch. No types of such mail, other than those listed, shall be accepted, and the type classified under paragraph (a)(1) shall of course be modified as indicated in paragraph 1 above. This instruction contemplates no change in the present procedure by which there are forwarded in the pouch newspapers, magazines and other publications, addressed by the publishers to Chiefs of Mission, Foreign Service Officers, Attachés, and American employees, or to members of their families, in care of the Department. However, note 5 and its subheadings do not contemplate the acceptance by American diplomatic and consular officers of similar material, for transmission in the pouch to the United States; nor of photographs or any type of photographic reproductions. Consequently these are prohibited.

Following the date of receipt of this instruction and until instructions to the contrary are issued, all pouches received

4. Note 30(a), Section VI-2 of the Foreign Service Regulations, states that

"The pouch shall be prepared in the presence of the two persons signing the invoice record."

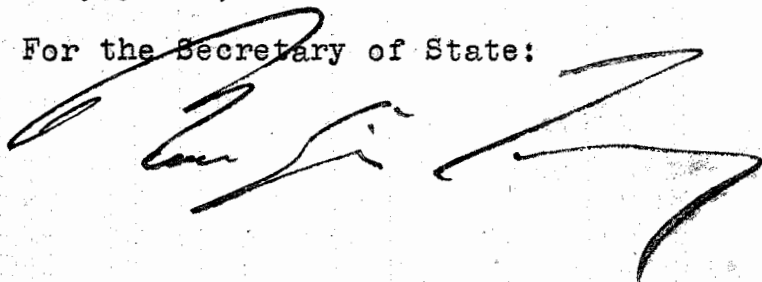
Following the date of receipt of this instruction and until instructions to the contrary are issued, all pouches received at a mission shall be opened either by the Chief of Mission or by a Foreign Service Officer specifically designated for that purpose by the Chief of Mission. Likewise, all pouches shall be closed either by the Chief of Mission or by a Foreign Service Officer specifically designated for that purpose by the Chief of Mission.

5. All private packages received at the Department for transmission abroad in the diplomatic pouch will be subject to examination. This includes packages addressed to Chiefs of Mission, Foreign Service Officers, Attachés, and American employees, or to members of their families. In order to be forwarded in the pouch, a package must meet the requirements set forth in paragraph (c) of Note 6, Section VI-3 of the Foreign Service Regulations. Unofficial merchandise of any character, destined for persons or firms in the United States, shall not, of course, be sent in the diplomatic pouch.

It is realized that in carrying out the directions set forth above, added burdens will be placed on Chiefs of Mission and on others; and that inconvenience will doubtless result in numerous instances. Nevertheless, because of the nature of those directions, strict compliance therewith is absolutely essential at all times. Any question which may present itself to you concerning the proper application of the instructions contained herein, should be referred to the Department. At such time as changes or additions to the procedure set forth above are deemed desirable or necessary, a supplementary instruction will be addressed to you.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:



Embassy, Legation or
Consulate File No. 050.1

Cross Reference File no. 120.2

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Use of.

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