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Enclosure:

1. – Copy of report from the Consul at Zagreb relative to the political situation in Croatia, Slavonia and Slovenia, and the Fiume question.²⁴⁴

File No. 800-D

45. 1923., kolovoz 22., Izvješće poslanika Henryja Percivala Dodgea State Departmentu o stanju u Hrvatskoj i „nestanku Stjepana Radića“.

NARA, M 358, R 3, 860h.00/186

[...]²⁴⁵

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, August 22, 1923.

Despatch No. 1993

The Honorable,

The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

Referring to my Despatch No. 1979 of the 4th instant, relative to the political situation in Croatia and the reported disappearance of the Croatian Peasant leader, Mr. Stjepan Raditch, I have the honor to inform you that, although at present all doubts concerning Mr. Raditch's flight from Yugoslavia and presence in London are at rest, for some days his actual whereabouts appeared to mystify the Government authorities. It is now apparently well-established that he left Croatia in the deepest secrecy without a Yugoslav passport, passing over the Croatian frontier by the aid of some of his peasant adherents and going to Vienna. Here, according to press reports, he had interviews with representatives of the Croatian revolutionary party in which he declared that he expected to have a warm welcome in London since British policy had always been against French policy in Central Europe. The late Bulgarian Coup d'Etat had been aided by England. He further stated that he did not anticipate returning to Croatia until his revolutionary

²⁴⁴ Vidi dokument br. 43.

²⁴⁵ Državni pečat.

mission had been completed by the recognition of the Croatian State. He intended to appear before the League of Nations to support the claim of Croatia to recognition and demand its recognition as a State. To strengthen his action, he proposed to constitute a Provisional Government in London or Switzerland which would enter in diplomatic relations at once with all Governments sympathizing with an independent Croatia.

It appears to be unknown as yet in Government circles here how Mr. Raditch was able to travel from Vienna to England and to enter that country. The press has published various conflicting reports on the subject, some accusing the British Government of connivance at his escape and of having even furnished him with a British passport. Other allege that he obtained a passport from a Hungarian Government. Other reports deny the truth of both of these reports. Mr. Gavrilovitch²⁴⁶, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, in mentioning the matter to me, expressed the belief, in the absence of any trustworthy information, that Mr. Raditch had obtained some false passport in Vienna which he was then able to have viséed by the British and other necessary Consulates without their knowledge of his identity.

After the departure of Mr. Raditch from Zagreb, the parliamentary Deputies of his party held a meeting on the 19th instant at which they passed a resolution which has appeared in all the newspapers and of which the translation is enclosed. It will be observed that this resolution declares that as no Serbian party has shown any desire to recognize the political individuality of Croatia, the National Croatian Representation approved on June 24th last the rupture of relations with Serbia and directed this Representation not to enter into negotiations with any Serbian Representation unless it previously recognized the political individuality and national culture of Croatia and was disposed to remove from Croatia all traces of Serbian hegemony. It goes on to state that as by reason of the compulsion of Belgrade, the Croatian people are rapidly losing their national and private property and witnessing the destruction of their culture and their political and personal liberties, the National Croatian Representation authorizes its President, Mr. Raditch, to undertake special diplomatic action to the end that the right of the Croatian people to auto-determination may be recognized and enforced.

It is probably too early to estimate the effect which Mr. Raditch's sudden change of policy, which has apparently come as a bombshell even to most of his adherents, will produce in Croatia. The usual optimism generally prevails here and it is commonly said that Mr. Raditch's popularity which had begun to wane since the elections on account of his inability to accomplish anything definite, will now suffer a serious eclipse. It is also declared that a movement which started some time ago among the better educated of his followers to break away from his extreme doctrines and form a separate party organization, will now gain greatly at his expense. In this connection I may mention that in conversation yesterday with a Secretary of the Italian Legation here who is well acquainted with Yugoslavia and has lately been stopping for several weeks at Ragusa, he told me that

²⁴⁶ Gavrilović, Panta Stojan. Pomoćnik ministra vanjskih poslova Momčila Ninčića.

he was surprised to observe the large number of ardent supporters that Mr. Raditch had there and in that portion of Dalmatia. Some suspicion of these statements may no doubt arise from the fact that my informant is an Italian but I incline to believe that his statements are true.

As soon as Mr. Raditch's flight became known here, the Belgrade Democratic newspapers, seized upon the event as a political weapon against the Government and published violent articles accusing the Government of having brought new disgrace upon the country by their weak and vacillating policy towards him. Some even hinted that his escape had taken place with the connivance of the authorities. The Radical newspapers have thus far adopted a more moderate tone but to-day they state that the Council of Ministers have now discussed the question and consider, from the reports before them, that Mr. Raditch is guilty of high treason requiring strong legal measures and that it is also necessary to combat by diplomacy and propaganda abroad, Mr. Raditch's subversive activities. They further state that although hitherto the Government has had many opportunities for accusing Mr. Raditch of high treason, it has not done so for political motives but that these considerations no longer exist as his high treason is not known at all.

It is also interesting to observe that the Radical press state that Mr. Raditch had not long ago entirely broken with Mr. Korochetz and his Slovene Popular Clerical Party, believing that they were about to break with him, and that the leaders of this party knew nothing of his intended flight and activity abroad and now entirely disapprove of it. The attitude of the Mahomedan Party of Dr. Mehmed Spaho is stated to be less clear as they are believed to have remained in contact with the Raditch party and lately to have had conversations with Mr. Raditch. The Radical press expresses the belief that while opposed to Mr. Raditch's now attitude the Mohammedan Party will endeavor to avoid committing itself.

Various reasons are expressed for Mr. Raditch's flight. Among these it is stated that he feared that the Government was about to take legal steps against him for which it had lately obtained parliamentary authority (Despatch No. 1979 of August 4, 1923). Although it is pointed out that the extreme punishment for these offenses is only six months or a year imprisonment or a small fine, it is declared that Mr. Raditch believed that once in prison, he would never be allowed to leave it but some day would be reported to have died from influenza or some other disease or accident. It would now appear however more probable that the reason officially stated by his party is the real one.

In closing I desire to state that in conversation to-day with Mr. Panta Gavrilovitch, he expressed the strong opinion that Mr. Raditch, who he did not believe would have much success in England, would soon endeavor to go to the United States, probable making use of similar means to those by which he was able to enter England. Mr. Raditch probable thought that among many Croats in the United States, a large portion of whom were anti-Serb, he would be able to obtain very considerable funds for his movement and moreover, as he was a clever speaker, he would be able to attract the interest of large number of persons who were ignorant of his true character and the merits of his

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cause. I accordingly sent you my telegram No. 17 of August 22, 1 P.M. in which I embodied the substance of Mr. Gavrilovitch's remarks. I also mailed the copies of this telegram to our Embassies at London, Paris, Berlin, Rome and Brussels and to our Legations at The Hague, Bern and Vienna.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
H. Percival Dodge²⁴⁷
H. Percival Dodge,
American Minister.

Enclosure:

1.- Translation from Article from Belgrade "Politika" of August 21st 1923 containing the text of the Resolution of the "National Croatian Representation".²⁴⁸

File No. 800-Quintuplicate

Copies to Bucharest, Prague and Sofia.

46. 1923., rujan 6., Izvješće poslanika Henryja Percivala Dodgea State Departmentu o Radićevom odlasku u inozemstvo u kojem u se prenose informacije iz Ministarskog savjeta da se čine „ozbiljni napori u prikupljanju dokaza protiv gosp[odina]. Radića i njegovih najbližih suradnika, te da će brojna uhićenja uskoro uslijediti“.

NARA, M 358, R 3, 860H.00/188

[...]²⁴⁹

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade, September 6, 1923.

Despatch No. 2008.

CONFIDENTIAL

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington.

²⁴⁷ Vlastoručno.

²⁴⁸ „Nova akcija Radićevaca“, *Politika* (Beograd), 21. kolovoza 1923., 4.

²⁴⁹ Državni pečat.