

Brigadier General Sherman Miles,  
Acting Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2,  
United States Army,  
War Department,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear General Miles:

The receipt is acknowledged with thanks of your letter of January 29, 1941 (G-2/2801-432) with which you forwarded a copy of a letter and port chart received from the Port Manager, Port Everglades, Florida.

The situation presented by the case of the ARAUCA is a general one, and in this connection there is transmitted herewith a list of German and Italian merchant vessels which have been immobilized in ports of the United States apparently for the duration of the European war. The total number of such vessels is twenty-nine; two German and twenty-seven Italian. In addition, the Italian passenger liner, CONTE BIANCA-CAMANO, has been at Colon, Canal Zone since June 27, 1940.

In the treatment of these vessels this Department has taken into consideration the fact that the United States is nominally on friendly relations with the governments of Germany and Italy, and for this reason has carefully avoided any action which would precipitate a disturbance of such relations. The Coast Guard maintains a special boat patrol over the activities of German and Italian vessels. The placing of guards aboard to prevent scuttling or sabotage by the crews of such vessels would in the opinion of this Department be ineffectual in preventing the commission of such acts. Actual seizure of these vessels would be a safeguard against destructive acts, but short of seizure by the United States there is nothing that can legally be done at this time.

By direction of the Secretary.

Very truly yours, *f*

*Copy for Intelligence*

Herbert E. Gaston,  
Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

Enclosure

REP:abc 2/4/41