

Believes

Reports of Political Activity by Fascist Consuls Probed *Ston 6/16/40* Von Spiegel Interview Also Being Studied, Hull Discloses

By the Associated Press.

An investigation is under way, Secretary of State Hull disclosed yesterday, of reports that Italian consular representatives have engaged in political activities in this country.

Mr. Hull also said attention was being given to a statement attributed to Baron Edgar von Spiegel, Reich consul general at New Orleans, that Germany would not forget that the United States was giving aid to her enemies.

(Baron von Spiegel denied yesterday that he had made this statement, declaring it was a "free invention" of a New Orleans States reporter who interviewed him Friday. In reply, James E. Crown, editor of the States, said "we have absolute confidence in our reporter and the veracity of his report.")

Statements Conflict.

Secretary Hull commented that there had been conflicting statements in both cases, and said this country was endeavoring to assemble facts which would show what the truth was.

He discussed the cases after inquiry at his press conference as to a statement handed him Friday by Don Ascanio Colonna, Italian Ambassador, in which complaint was made that "some newspapers" had published reports of political activity on the part of Italian consuls.

No Details Revealed.

Ambassador Colonna said in the statement that Italian consular officials "have always strictly limited their activities to their legal consular functions."

Mr. Hull declined to say what Federal agencies were conducting the investigation, adding that he would not go so far as to say how systematic and far-reaching the inquiry would be.

Asked whether consular representatives of other countries, such as Germany, were included in this Government's inquiry, he declined a direct answer.