

Summer Welles Papers
Box 150 Folder 16
Major Correspondents
Roosevelt, Franklin Oct, 1946

COPY

October 4, 1940

My dear Mr. President:

I am enclosing herewith a telegram just received from Ambassador Weddell regarding the message you sent to General Franco with regard to Mr. Paderewski.

The nature of this message seems to me to indicate that the decision we reached this morning with regard to Red Cross relief for civilians in Spain might be productive of good results.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure:
No. 530, October 3,
9 p.m., from Madrid.

The President,
The White House.

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[TRANSLATION]

MARSHAL PÉTAÏN

Chief of State

Vichy, August 27, 1940

The Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States of America,
Washington.

Mr. President:

France knows today the most tragic hour in her long history. Three-fifths of her soil are occupied. Rare are the households which are not waiting anxiously for the return of one among the two millions of prisoners held by Germany. Millions of refugees who have come from the most fertile regions of France, bringing with them nothing but the train of their weariness and wretchedness, await the hour of deliverance when they can return to their abandoned homes. Today they share with Belgian, Czech, Austrian, Spanish and Polish refugees settled on our territory, the sorrows and privations of the French people of free France. The war has ravaged within a few weeks half of our soil, bringing about the destruction of our bridges, our roads, our railway stations and a great part of our factories, - a case without precedent in the annals of our history.

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Our land, the cradle of a civilization which astonished the world, is today crushed and in mourning.

To the echo of the voices of those who, only yesterday sustained the French with illusory and optimistic words, succeeds the sad voice of one who cannot speak except of his misfortunes and of his privations without, however, despairing of the future.

The principal preoccupation of my Government, its daily anxiety, is to aid all French people to bear the load of their afflictions. I know that our task will be a heavy one, but we shall not consider that we have succeeded within a modest measure until we can give to each man, to each woman, to each child, whether rich or poor, a régime less hard than that of the day before.

In this work of relief and assistance to the people of France your generous country, which is bound to mine by century-old friendship, and which has already accomplished an immense effort, would perhaps be desirous of taking its share tomorrow.

Problems of purchase of provisions, of supervision over the final destination of such provisions, of relief, of efficiency, of transportation and of coordination of individual charitable efforts will arise in France and in America.

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I have thought that a disinterested person might collaborate in this work of succor and assistance in complete accord with our Embassy at Washington and the organizations of the American Red Cross and of the French Red Cross.

I have just asked Mr. René de Chambrun, a citizen of our two countries, kindly to devote his time to this task, in case you and the American charitable organizations should think that his collaboration might be of some use.

I ask you to accept, Mr. President, the assurance of my high consideration and my cordial friendship.

PH. PÉTAIN

Tr: HSF