

Sumner Welles Papers  
Box 161 Folder 3  
Europe Files  
Belgium, 1933-1943

June 4, 1940

A-L - Mr. Long:

The Belgian Ambassador came in to see me this morning in great distress with regard to his daughter. It appears that through the Argentine Ambassador in Paris he has learned that his daughter, Countess Marie Louise van der Burch, is a refugee in a small town in southern France, Agen, which is about an hour and a half by automobile from Bordeaux. The Countess' child, a little girl of two or three years, is apparently also a refugee with French friends at St. Malo in Brittany, in the northern part of France. He can get no reply directly from his daughter and apparently the Argentine Ambassador in Paris is unable to communicate with her directly, and he is also unable to communicate with the friends with whom the child is.

As a matter of friendship and consideration, I think we should send a telegram to our Consul in Bordeaux asking him to see if he can get in touch with the Ambassador's daughter and, furthermore, if by any chance the Countess can get hold of her child and be prepared to sail on the Washington from Bordeaux - and should there

BELGIAN AMBASSADOR'S DAUGHTER.

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be any room left - I believe we should authorize the Embassy in Paris to permit her to sail on that vessel.

I shall be grateful if you will let me know any replies that you may receive so that I may tell the Ambassador.

U:SW:IJ

*Countess*  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
—  
THE UNDER SECRETARY  
Marie Louise  
Van der Burch

—  
Agen  
(venue?)  
—

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

DATE: October 5, 1942

SUBJECT: Transfer of children to the United States

PARTICIPANTS: Belgian Ambassador, Count Robert van der Straten-Ponthoz;  
Acting Secretary, Mr. Welles

COPIES TO: 10-6  
S, A-L, PA/D, Eu

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10-5-42

The Ambassador of Belgium called to see me today at his request. The Ambassador handed me the memorandum attached herewith.

I told the Ambassador that I feared he was laboring under some misapprehension. I said that this Government was not making arrangements to bring children from Belgium to the United States but was deeply concerned with the plight of children in unoccupied France whose parents have been deported, by order of the French Government, to Germany, inasmuch as these children were now left without means of support and completely destitute. I said that, of course, if any children of this category in unoccupied France were Belgian nationals, this Government would be glad to receive the assurances contained in the note attached herewith, but that I wished to make it quite clear to the Ambassador that the Government of the United States had no intention of seeking to find children in Belgium or other occupied countries in order to bring them to the United States.

U:SW:GES

D. 8406  
No. 5955

Sir:

I understand that Your Excellency has submitted to President Roosevelt a plan concerning the transfer to the United States of four or five thousand children of different nationalities, such as Belgians, Dutch, Czechoslovakiens and etc., who would remain in this country until the end of hostilities.

However, according to my information, the American Government wishes to obtain, beforehand, from the interested governments, the assurance that these children will be permitted to return to their respective countries after the war.

As far as children sent from Belgium are concerned, I can give Your Excellency assurances that Belgian authorities will authorize

The Honorable  
Cordell HULL  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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the children of Belgian nationality to reenter  
Belgium at the termination of their sojourn in  
the United States.

I avail myself of this opportunity to  
renew to Your Excellency the assurances of my  
highest consideration.