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France, 1935-1940

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DATE:  
November 18, 1938

SUBJECT: Proposed further note with regard to navigation on the  
Yangtze;  
German refugee situation.

PARTICIPANTS: The French Ambassador, Count de Saint Quentin;  
The Under Secretary.

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The French Ambassador called to see me this afternoon to inform me that his Government had authorized him to state that it approved the general lines suggested by the British Ambassador in Tokyo for the reply to be made to the Japanese Government in response to its recent communication concerning the navigation of the Yangtze River. (I requested Mr. Hamilton to notify the French Ambassador as soon as the Department was informed by Mr. Grew of the course which he had pursued in this regard.)

I took occasion to speak with the Ambassador regarding the decision of the President last night to request Mr. Myron Taylor to proceed immediately to London in order to attend an early meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. I said to the Ambassador that it was the very earnest hope of this Government that all of the governments participating in the work of the Committee should take that opportunity to indicate precisely and concretely, so far as might be possible, the places of refuge which they might be able to offer and the number of refugees which they might be prepared to take. I said I realized that it was difficult for governments to make commitments for the taking of large numbers of refugees who were without funds and without property, but that I was sure the Ambassador would understand that it was very

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difficult to obtain large sums from private individuals or organizations and even more so from governments unless some practical plan had been worked out which would encourage contributions on a large scale.

I reminded the Ambassador that I had told him of my very encouraging conversation with the French Prime Minister and with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, in the course of which the former had assured me that the French Government would immediately study the question with a view to making public what it could do in the regard indicated. I said that at this particular time I knew public opinion in the United States would be deeply gratified if the French Government were to indicate in this specific manner such an effective offer of cooperation and of assistance.

The Ambassador told me that he would immediately cable his Government and would at the same time, as I suggested, urge that Senator Berenger, the representative of the French government on the Intergovernmental Committee, attend the next meeting without fail and cooperate closely with Mr. Taylor.

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