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**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**  
**The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945**

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**Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension**

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**File No. 216**

**1920 October 19 - 20?**

**Cleveland or Lima, OH - Campaign Speech**

Ent. 1930 7-1910

If Senator Harding is correctly quoted in dispatches from St. Louis, he lays himself open to the severest criticism. He is quoted as saying that "France has sent her spokesman to me, informally asking America in its new realization of the situation to lead the way for an association of Nations". As he always does, Senator Harding clothes this statement in language that leaves loopholes for escape. It is generally interpreted by ~~some newspaper accounts~~ <sup>Replies made it appear that</sup> he has received official approval from the French Government of his nebulous scheme of a new association of nations which he proposes to offer as a substitute after he has "scrapped" the present League, to which forty-one of the world's great powers already belong. It would be expecting too much of Senator Harding, of course, to expect him to make his statement unequivocally and in plain English, for he does not seem to have the formula for doing that.

On the face of it, there seems to be but two interpretations that can be placed upon this statement which is accredited to Senator Harding. The first of these is that some accredited representative of the French Government has made representations to Senator Harding. If this be true, and I for one have no hesitancy in saying that I do not believe it is, Senator Harding has been guilty as a private citizen of an autocratic usurpation of the powers that belong only to accredited officials of the United States Government. Furthermore, this <sup>alleged</sup> ~~representative~~ of the French Government places himself in a position which would automatically make him personally non grata with the United States Government. It is a hard and fast rule of diplomacy in this

country that no diplomatic representative of another country shall interest himself in the internal political affairs of the United States, and there is at least one notable instance I recall of an Ambassador of a friendly power being summarily withdrawn from his post in Washington for taking part in a political campaign.

The second interpretation that can be put upon this statement is that some person, a private individual without credentials and without any right to speak for France or the French Government, has been communicating with Senator Harding.

Where it not possible that some easily disturbed soul might accuse me of indulging in personalities, I would go ~~even~~ *ever* farther and suggest the possibility that the amiable Senator had been victimized by some adventurer.

Of course, there is still another possible explanation, but it is inconceivable that Senator Harding, even in the days of threatened defeat, would stoop to an actual deliberate deception. It is not so inconceivable, however, in view of the campaign that has been waged to date by the Republican leaders, that certain of them have not done this very thing and arranged, may I call it "frame-up" on their own standard bearer.

Whatever the explanation, there is one outstanding fact that I am sure all fair-minded people, Democrats and Republicans alike, will agree upon - that is that Senator Harding owes it to the American people, of any political faith, to elaborate on the St. Louis statement.

Who is the *alleged* spokesman for *and what is his authority*, France ~~said to you~~, Senator Harding?

This is a question, the answer to which the American

public will demand. There can be no evading it - no cloaking a reply in phrases capable of any interpretation. Our people are in no temper for any deception or further sidestepping in this campaign. The "wiggle-wobble" policy will not serve.

In the same speech Senator Harding is also quoted as saying that England has said through Premier Lloyd George and Viscount Grey that America should revise and amend so as to make the League of Nations possible?

Of course, this is a preposterous statement, as all of us who have been keeping track of current events know. It is one of those apparently carelessly thrown in bits of deception evidently used in an attempt to bolster up the other more direct statement regarding France's attitude.

With the Republican leaders confronted by the gigantic swing of sentiment toward Governor Cox and the League of Nations and in dire straits, unable to do anything to check this swing but realizing that it means defeat, desperate measures seem their only hope. Full well has the Democratic campaign of information about the League of Nations done its work. The public is no longer being fooled by the bugaboos with which the political opponents of the League have tried to frighten them. The Country is realizing that instead of being a menace and a breeder of wars, as the Republicans would have them believe, that it is the only hope of the world for a speedy restoration of peace to the world and a guarantee against wars in the future.

It will take something more than a vague statement by Senator Harding that other countries favor his plan to stem the tide

of desertion from the Republican ranks by voters disgusted with the flip-flops of their Leader and the unsavory tactics of the Republican campaign. There are probably not a hundred people in the United States who believe what apparently Senator Harding would have them believe - that he has received assurances of support from the French Government for his imaginary association of nations.

He has done too much saying one thing one day and retracting it the next to have people take any statement from him seriously.

[ Oct 19, 1918 ?? 1918 ]

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The second interpretation that can be put upon this statement is that some person, a private individual without credentials and without any right to speak for France or the French Government, has been communicating with Senator Harding.

Were it not possible that some easily disturbed soul might accuse me of indulging in personalities, I would go this farther and suggest the possibility that the amiable Senator had been victimized by some adventurer.

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After breakfast started up water main bridge - and went upstream to  
see to possible violation of law there. Went to reporter and  
introduced him to Mr. V. L. Adams our agent. Adams informed  
that there was no violation of law.  
To expressman Novosel and set traps - evaded many even though  
possessions contained old set traps. Don't set more traps  
until we get to

the last one just one traps now set such and all  
will move immediately you will sleep over at some of the stations  
or villages.

Thurs. 21<sup>st</sup>

Dunkirk, Jamestown,  
Niagara Falls and  
Tonawanda. Late  
2 places in evening  
or night.

Fri - Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>

→ CS & W →  
→ W →  
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[Oct 19, 20? 1920]

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*alleged for and what is his authority  
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