Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945
Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 216

1920 October 19 - 20?

Cleveland or Lima, OH - Campaign Speech
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 as that 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 alleged representative of the French Government places himself in a position which would automatically make him persona 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United States, and there is at least one notable instance I recall of an Ambassador of a friendly power being summarily withdrawn from his post in Washington for taking part in a political campaign.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 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 spokesman for 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 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.
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 his statement in language that leaves loopholes for escape.

Some newspaper headlines make it appear that 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 "scraped" 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 is 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 alleged representative of the French Government places himself in a position which would automatically make him personally unacceptable 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 this 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 "spokesman" for Senator Harding?

This is a question, the answer to which the American
public will demand. There can be no evading it — no sleaking 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 Gray 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 is 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.
of generation from the application now of active assistance with
the termination of relief cases and the immediate action of the
application committee. There are a large number of persons under
the United States war relief, which is a measure necessary to
many who were overseas - and go and receive assistance of
support from the amount government for the immediate association
of motion.

If you have the opportunity and time one can only
restrictive to the next so have people take any statement from this
secretary.

Thoro - 21st
Dunkirk, February
Niagara, Falls

11th in evening.
2d night of 22nd
improvement. Lake
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 cloths his statement in language that leaves loopholes for escape.

Some newspaper headlines make it appear that 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 is 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 alleged 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 this
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 Republi-
cans 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 "spokesman" France sent to you, Senator Harding?

This is a question, the answer to which the American
public will demand. There can be no evading it - no sneaking aeply 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 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
is 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 Re-
publicans 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 unseavy tactic 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.