

● PSF

Benjamin V. Cohen

Subject File

Box 140

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE SECRETARY

*file
personal*

Memo -

*Return to the
President -*

CH

PSF: Cohen

NATIONAL POWER POLICY COMMITTEE
INTERIOR BUILDING
WASHINGTON

October 13, 1938.

Dear Miss LeHand:

Last night Felix spoke to the President over the telephone about the Palestine situation. The President suggested that Felix dictate to me a draft of a note which the President might send to Mr. Neville Chamberlain. The following is the draft which Felix dictated to me:

"With increased pressure on the Jews in Central Europe the tasks of sheer humanity we set for ourselves at Evian have become even more difficult of fulfilment. Apart from mere numbers Palestine is a significant symbol of hope to Jewry. Therefore I earnestly urge that no decision may be made which would close the gates of Palestine to the Jews. Shutting the gates of Palestine to Jews would greatly embarrass efforts towards genuine appeasement because it would be interpreted as a disturbing symbol of anti-Semitism."

Sincerely yours,

Ben V. C.
Benjamin V. Cohen.

Miss Marguerite LeHand,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Please convey the following personal note from the President to Neville Chamberlain:

With increased pressure against the Jews in Central Europe almost inevitable as a result of recent events, the great humanitarian tasks we set for ourselves at Evian will become increasingly difficult of decent fulfillment.

[For the alleviation of the terrible refugee problem in Europe, no civilized nation can wholly shirk responsibility.]

I trust that no decision will be made which would close even the gates of Palestine to the Jewish settlement. Apart from mere numbers, Palestine is a significant symbol of

hope to Jews. Shutting the gates of
Palestine to Jews would be
interpreted as a sinister symbol
of anti-semiticism.

PSF: Cohen

*file
normal*

NATIONAL POWER POLICY COMMITTEE
INTERIOR BUILDING
WASHINGTON

October 24, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

I thought you would be interested to know that your talk with Isaiah seems to have had unexpected repercussions upon our jurisprudence.

The Morgan case - the Kansas City Stockyards case which caused Secretary Wallace to lose his temper with the Chief Justice last summer - came up for argument on its third appeal to the Supreme Court. The Government argued that the commission men were not entitled to the rate monies impounded in the Court merely because the Court had held that the hearing before the Secretary was defective, but that they were entitled only to a rehearing before the Secretary. If the Government were to be successful in this appeal, Fred Wood's victories in the first and second appeals would be little more than pyrrhic victories. In view of the past history of the case we feared that the Court would not be particularly sympathetic to the Government's arguments.

But Isaiah surprised all of us by his vigorous and zealous defense of the Government's position. He scarcely permitted a single sentence in Wood's argument to go unchallenged. We cannot be certain of the final decision as that will depend on the Chief Justice's or Roberts' vote, and both of them were discreetly silent during the argument. But we are hopeful.

Yours,

Ben V. C.
Ben V. Cohen

The President
The White House

PSF: Cohen

NATIONAL POWER POLICY COMMITTEE
INTERIOR BUILDING
WASHINGTON

March 20, 1939.

*File
Phonol*

Dear Missy:

I thought the President might wish to make some remarks in response to an appropriate question which would indicate that the Douglas nomination was not uninfluenced by Douglas' western origin. As the press and radio announcements have generally alluded to the nomination as that of a westerner, I should think that it might help to give the President greater freedom in the event of future appointments if he said something along the lines of the enclosed statement. I have tried to make the purpose of the statement not too obvious.

Yours,

Ben V. C.
Ben V. Cohen.

Miss Marguerite Le Hand,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Have you anything to tell us Mr. President about your recent nomination of Mr. Douglas for the Supreme Court?

It was not an easy task to select a successor to Mr. Justice Brandeis. It was not an easy task to find a man with Brandeis' great knowledge of the intricacies of corporate law and practice and with Brandeis' passion to use his knowledge and skill to improve the lot of the common man. Mr. Douglas' training, experience, and outlook are such I believe as to give every assurance that he will creditably uphold the great Brandeis' tradition.

Although Mr. Douglas' voting residence is in Connecticut, none who knows him has ever considered him a "Connecticut Yankee". He was brought up in the West, and in spirit as well as appearance he is unmistakably western. But I don't think that ought to be held against him.

NATIONAL POWER POLICY COMMITTEE
INTERIOR BUILDING
WASHINGTON

June 29, 1939.

PSF: Cohen
2

File

Dear Mr. President:

Mr. Groesbeck of Bond and Share is quite proud of his ability to sell an issue of long-term bonds on very favorable terms for the Washington Power Company. This Company is located round-about the City of Spokane right in the range of Grand Coulee and Bonneville.

Mr. Groesbeck feels that he was able to carry through this financing, which had been troubling him for some time, largely because, in transmitting the report of the New York Power Authority to the Congress, you made favorable reference to his recent annual report which urged that both private and public facilities be used to bring the benefits of the federal power projects to the people.

Mr. Groesbeck feels that we, and incidentally himself, should take a little credit for this first piece of private utility financing within the range of a large federal power project.

In view of the utility situation in general and Mr. Groesbeck's present cooperative attitude, I should think some remarks by you at your press conference along the lines of the attached memorandum, would be very helpful.

Yours,

Ben V. Cohen

The President,

The White House.

Question

Mr. President, have you anything to say about the pending TVA legislation?

Answer

I am leaving that in the hands of Senator Norris. I stand four-square behind him.

But speaking of utilities, I wonder whether you noticed that the Washington Water Power Company, a subsidiary of Electric Bond and Share, has sold at 105 a \$22,000,000 issue of long-term bonds bearing an interest coupon of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Those are pretty good terms. And those were the terms which a utility right in the maw of the great federal power projects in the Northwest, was able to obtain.

It has frequently been said that it was impossible for utility operating companies in the range of federal power developments to do any financing. I have always contended that the difficulties these companies encountered in selling their securities were due either to their poor capital structures or to the misleading calamity-howling of propagandists trying to make investors believe that public power developments would ruin even sound private investment.

The Washington Water Power Company, a subsidiary of Electric Bond and Share, is within close range of both Bonneville and Grand Coulee. The sale of its bonds is pretty convincing proof that the federal power projects do not obstruct the sale of operating company securities if the managers of those companies make up their mind that they want to cooperate in bringing the benefits of these great public power developments to the consuming public and set about convincing the investing public that they intend to cooperate with and not fight the government.

PSF: Cohen

NATIONAL POWER POLICY COMMITTEE
INTERIOR BUILDING
WASHINGTON

June 29, 1940

File
Carded under Willkie
Filed under Cohen
See copy - 2

Dear Missy:

I thought that the President might be interested in the attached minute of an off-the-record talk I had with Willkie last December when he invited me to lunch with him. The President might be particularly interested in some of the remarks on pp. 2 and 3.

Yours,

Ben V. C.
Ben V. Cohen

Miss Marguerite LeHand,
The White House.

CABLE FROM ENGLAND RECEIVED JUNE 23rd, 1940

Terms of French capitulation present no surprises and we have reasonable grounds for believing ultimate victory possible. Grain and potato crops in Europe and Russia record failure: no food in Europe for livestock next winter; no fertilizer for next year's crops; German grain reserves rotting for lack of adequate storage. Confusion and illwill in Poland and other captured agricultural districts; famine 1941 if we can maintain blockade; and with splendid material aid from America already beginning to arrive in useful quantity hope to retain control of sea, and bomb and starve enemy into submission. Britain, headed by trade unions, united as never before; determined to take any punishment and fight to absolute finish under Churchill's magnificent leadership. Temper of country at highest pitch of resolution and activity; no time being lost; no slackness in administration now; women and men completely undismayed; no faint hearts here. Britain has risen to occasion and, with America's material assistance, she intends to win.

*Confidential and off the
Record*

Conversation at luncheon with Mr. Wendell Willkie, President
of Commonwealth & Southern Corporation on December 11, 1939.

After a pleasant greeting, Mr. Willkie asked me whether I
had read Justice Frankfurter's new book. He had been asked to review it
for the Harvard Law Review. I said I had read most of the articles in
it some years past, but I had not reread them in book form. He expressed
~~general~~ ^{great} admiration for Frankfurter's style. I complimented him on his
review of David Cecil's Life of Lord Milbourne. He explained how he
had come to review that book after he had refused to review Jerome Frank's
and other books where he would have had to intrude his own political
views which might be considered propaganda.

The conversation veered to Paul McNutt. He pooh-poohed the idea
that they were close friends. He had not seen much of Paul since college
days. Paul had sought his advice in 1936. He suggested that he ought to
take some of the private offers he had had so as to take care of his
family and not to be dependent on the vicissitudes of politics. He had
no objection to his becoming President of Indiana University, but he had
objected to his holding the office vacant while he made up his mind. In
a speech out in Indiana, he had pleasantly referred to Paul's aspiration to
be President of the United States, but that was only a pleasantry. Ewing
and McHale had approached him to support McNutt for President, but he had
refused because of a difference in principle and he had so told Paul. Paul
was, he thought, a New Dealer and he was not. After that some disparaging
remarks about his corporate dealings appeared in a number of Indiana papers
and he had traced these to the Democratic State Committee.

I remarked that a number of politicians seemed to think issues did not count. "Yes", Willkie said, "Farley thought he had made Roosevelt President by garnering the delegates, but that would not have been possible if the President's ideas had not appealed to the country at the time." I agreed, but said there were times when issues did not count, as back in 1920.

I told Willkie a number of us had been embarrassed by reports circulated, probably by Paul's lieutenants, that the President had put his hand upon Paul. We thought that was premature. Many things might happen before the convention. He might then put his hand on Paul and then again he might put his hand on someone else.

Willkie agreed that one could not make premature decisions. He had talked with Arthur Vandenburg, an old friend, over the weekend. He preferred him to Taft or Dewey, and yet he told him he thought he was all wrong on neutrality. We could not be isolated in the modern world. He also told him he profoundly disagreed with him on the tariff. He felt deeply that lower tariff and freer trade were of vital importance. He was frank to say that he might favor Hull over the prospective Republican candidates.

I twitted Willkie about his talk on life beginning at forty. He said the first he heard of his candidacy was from Arthur Krock's column a few weeks ago and Arthur had said he got it from a New Deal source. I told him that reports of his candidacy had come from New York over six months ago, had been brought to us by newspaper men.

Willkie could not imagine himself a candidate. People had come and offered to put up money (several hundred thousand) to finance

him and get him delegates. He said nothing doing. He could not imagine himself making the equivocating statements which a candidate for office usually must make. Of course if he got a telegram informing him that he had been nominated for President on a platform that embodied principles with which he agreed, he would not refuse. Under those circumstances, you wouldn't refuse. Few people would.

But generally speaking he thought he was much too outspoken to run for office. People told him that he was too outspoken in business affairs. Other people said the way to handle government was by favors, or by kidding government officials along, saying nice words at Washington, giving them nice words to their face and the stiletto to their back.

But he could not really understand why Washington did not try to work with the more progressive elements in industry, those in the utility industry like himself who had tried to simplify their corporate structures, to integrate their properties and reduce their rates.

I remarked that we did want to, but it was difficult at times. Take, for example, the unprovocative statement of the President that we were studying the possibilities of a super-grid was countered with a blast from him ^(Wilkie) that such a grid was wholly unnecessary.

Well, he reported, Dave Lilienthal and Lister Hill had made an unprovoked attack on him in connection with rural electrification - Hill's statement had come right after a White House conference. These were followed up by Norris' attack on Consumer's financing. It looked like concerted action to him.

I assured him that I knew nothing of Lilienthal's speech before reading it in the newspapers. It was ridiculous to talk of a high command

As he knew from the columns, Lillienthal and Norris, perhaps with some reason, had objected to even a loose association of TVA with the Interior Department.

There was no justification for his brutal attack on Norris. Norris may have misunderstood the Consumers' financing, that was readily explainable owing to the complications of holding company finance. The average man could not understand why it made no difference whether the holding company paid \$30 or \$60 a share. Certainly it was difficult to judge the reasonableness of the deal by comparison with outside bids under such circumstances.

But Norris' confusion should have been proof enough that there was no concerted action. Certainly he ought to give me credit for being able to avoid that confusion, had I been advising on general strategy. He smiled.

I then pointed out that the Chamber of Commerce had made an attack on the grid in almost the same terms that he had used. Their release said that they had issued a report. But when I tried to get the report they said that ~~it~~ was available or would be available for several days.

Willkie said that I was quite mistaken in my surmise that he had anything to do with the Chamber of Commerce. He thought it was a stupid and ineffective organization and he had never had anything to do with it. You will probably find that back of their report are some of those who come down here professing to be your firends.

I told him that Scattergood had been brought East for the very purpose of trying to work out the grid proposition amicably with the utilities and Scattergood apparently had the best of relations with the private utilities.

He said that may be - but Bauer of Southern California Edison who professes to be a friend of Scattergood had been a trouble-maker for his own ends. Willkie, a few years ago, had a long and friendly conversation with

the President. McNinch who was then advising the President gave out reports that the conversation had been acrimonious and that he, Willkie, had been offensive. Then McNinch was using Bauer as his stooge and as a foil to Willkie. Willkie spoke to Bauer, Bauer said he was in a tough spot over Boulder Dam, and he had to play McNinch's game. Then he promised to leave town. But McNinch got hold of him and got him to send a telegram that he loved competition.

"Just for fun and off the record, let me try to find out for you who is back of the Chamber's report. I shouldn't be surprised if Ned and Floyd had a hand in it."

Willkie first phoned to Merle Thorpe, but he was playing golf. Then he phoned the Edison Institute in New York, asking first for a Mr. Bowinger (?) who was not in and then for Charlie Kellogg. I could hear only one side of the conversation but its tenor was obvious. Willkie asked if Kellogg knew anything about the report, It seemed that the Institute did and had helped somewhat on the report which was written by Millendorf - an official of Southern California Edison, and John F. Owen, a Vice President of Standard Gas & Electric. I believe Willkie said that one or the other of these was the head of Oklahoma Gas and Electric. Willkie asked Kellogg who he thought was back of this grid idea, was it Cohen and Corcoran - Kellogg apparently replied, ~~Oh~~ yes! and they want to feed government hydro and steam into their grid so as to compete with the private utilities. Willkie asked whether Ned and Floyd had helped on the report and the answer apparently was they had to a limited extent, but the main work was done by Millendorf, Willkie remarking that Owen was a stuffed shirt.

Willkie spoke about his dislike of administrative and commission

government which encouraged favoritism and chicanery and penalized those who were outspoken and truthful. I said that we wished to make our standards as definite as possible, but to deal with the complexities of modern business you had to have flexible standards. The utilities had even complained that section 11 was too inflexible. I said I thought that we would have to resort to the administrative process as a means of making certain the inevitable area of uncertainty embraced in the Sherman Anti-Trust laws. I expounded some of my own ideas on this subject, which are not relevant to the present discussion of the utility industry, and Willkie was inclined to agree with me.

I then told Willkie that I thought that he ought to try to conform with section 11 and free himself from attack on that score. He said he had put his integration plans before the Commission. He was willing to swap or sell for a fair price his southern properties if he could acquire an equivalent amount of properties in Michigan and Indiana. I said although there may be some difference of opinion on the Commission and I could speak only for myself, I did not think section 11 obliged the Commission to integrate to preserve the top-holding company. I thought that unless the top holding company was itself able promptly to comply with the Act, the thing for the Commission to do, was to compel the top company to give up its control of its operating systems, so that integration instead of being directed from above for the benefit of the top companies should proceed from the bottom as dictated by operating economies. Too much attention was being given to preserving the slender equities of the top companies which ought to become passive investment companies. Willkie pretended that he had never heard of these ideas before and obviously he did not like them.

Willkie again interjected the thought that we were not willing to play with the most progressive elements, and scoffed at the idea that he was tied with the Morgans, whom he had not met until after the Holding Company Act, when he went to them to see whether they would not help work out and furnish money for integration developments. And he left me with the impression that he was mistaken in thinking that the Morgans had either ideas or money.

Throughout our talk Willkie sought to give the impression that he had been punished for his outspoken candor. He also expressed hurt at remarks in some columns about his mother giving him intellectual food but not caring much about her housekeeping, and that he was told the columnist got his information for a New Deal source. I told him I had not seen the particular column, but what I heard of his mother from Lowell Mellett and others was, I thought, highly complimentary, and I thought he probably had missed the compliment intended by the columnist.

In leaving I asked Willkie to be sure to have a talk with Scattergood, who had already spoken with his colleague, Yates, about the value of a super grid. He said that he would. We left on most amicable terms, Willkie promising to come over and have lunch with me soon. He suggested and I agreed, that our talk was completely off the record.

*file
personal*

PSF: Cohen

NATIONAL POWER POLICY COMMITTEE
INTERIOR BUILDING
WASHINGTON

August 16, 1940

Dear Missy:

I neglected to tell you when I sent you, for the President, the Burlingham-Thacher-Rublee-Acheson letter on the destroyers that the letter had also been approved by Frank L. Polk and Allen Dulles. Polk did not sign because he feared his signature would do more harm than good. Allen Dulles did not sign because he had on a few occasions advised the British Purchasing Agency.

I should think today (Friday) or Saturday would be the best possible time for the President to announce the arrangements for the transfer of the destroyers. It is absurd to think, as Hugh Johnson suggested in the News on Wednesday, that the announcement of the destroyer deal would blot out interest in Willkie's acceptance speech. Each has its own and distinct significance and the Battle of England cannot be stayed. But it is true that with Congress away for a few days and the political scene momentarily shifted to Elwood, it would be difficult for the isolationists to stage an exhibition against the destroyer deal. When Congress reconvenes the transaction would be regarded as settled policy, and no matter which way the war turns, the wisdom of that policy will become increasingly evident.

Yours,

Ben V. C
Ben V. Cohen

Miss Marguerite Le Hand

The White House.

PSF: Cohen C-2-40

**NATIONAL POWER POLICY COMMITTEE
INTERIOR BUILDING
WASHINGTON**

August 16, 1940

Dear Missy:

I think the President might be interested to know about a telephone call I had today from Senator Wheeler in regard to re-appointment of Brown to the FCC.

Wheeler said that while the evidence had not directly linked Brown with the Hastings-Moses disclosures, the situation was "smelly". He and others had kept Tobey from introducing evidence about Brown's private morals, but there was a lot of nasty talk.

Both White of Maine and Reed of Kansas had come to him (Wheeler) and asked whether Brown's name could not be withdrawn. Wheeler said that he thought the withdrawal would be for the good of the industry as well as of the Commission and that the disclosures and talk had impaired Brown's usefulness.

But Wheeler stated that he was only reporting the situation and was not personally requesting the withdrawal. Although Tobey would make a disagreeable fight on the floor he thought that Brown probably could be confirmed.

Yours,

Ben V. C.
Ben V. Cohen

Miss Marguerite Le Hand

The White House

PSF: Cohen

OFFICE OF
THE ASSISTANT TO THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL



file personal
see below
3-42

October 8, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR GRACE TULLY.

Ben Cohen

You will remember we talked about Ben last night. If the President can find a second, maybe he would send the attached note. I know he has sent at least six before to no effect but everything seems all right now. As P. F. said, "Ben is like a boy who hasn't seen his best girl for seven months".

JHR

James Howe, Jr.

PSF; Cohen ~~Ben Cohen "C"~~

3-44

*file
personal*

March 13, 1944.

Dear Ben:-

That is a tremendously interesting analysis -- and I think a very just one.

You have only left out one matter -- and that is the matter of my own feelings! I am feeling plaintive.

As ever yours,

Ben V. Cohen, Esq.,
Office of War Mobilization,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

OFFICE OF WAR MOBILIZATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.



JAMES F. BYRNES
DIRECTOR

March 8, 1944.

Dear Mr. President:

I thought you might be interested to read the attached memorandum of mine concerning the fourth term. It considers soberly, and possibly too gloomily, some of the difficulties which would confront the Administration during a fourth term, and it stirs the question whether there is any practical alternative.

As ever,

Yours,

Ben V. C.

Ben V. Cohen

The President,

The White House.

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM CONCERNING THE FOURTH TERM:

This memorandum seeks to analyze briefly the situation with reference to the fourth term from the point of view of those generally sympathetic with the President's program on both the home and foreign front. It may be taken for granted that those sharing this point of view would, because of their beliefs, loyally and actively support the President if he concluded, in light of all the facts available to him at the time of the Democratic Convention, that it was his duty to stand for another term. It is assumed, moreover, that notwithstanding the difficulties and disadvantages of a fourth term, the President would and should consider it his duty to stand for another term unless he felt reasonably assured at the time he must make his decision that the succeeding Administration would carry out the major aspects of his foreign policy in the prosecution of the war and the organization of the peace.

In considering the advisability of the President's standing for another term, it is believed reasonable to assume that if he did stand he would be reelected. It is also believed reasonable to assume, despite the prevalence of less favorable prognostications, that if the President stood for reelection, both the Senate and the House would probably retain nominally Democratic majorities.

The real difficulty concerning the fourth term lies in the probability that the President will not be able to command working majorities sympathetic with his general policies and programs in either House, particularly with reference to important domestic issues, and that these differences on domestic issues would in various ways, logically and illogically,

be carried into the foreign field.

The significance of the recent Barkley incident cannot be ignored. It revealed a lack of cohesion and teamwork on the part of men upon whom the President must rely that cannot be lightly passed over. Obviously the President's message which was used as the occasion for the attack on the President offers no real explanation of the majority leader's resignation without oral or written communication of his intention to the President. The majority leader could have urged the overriding of the veto without going out of his way to give comfort to the President's enemies.

Every administration is in a sense a coalition of diverse political forces. No administration can govern for long without giving a feeling of grievance to some of the forces upon which it must rely for support. The long continuance in power of the same Administration has resulted in a situation in which nearly all the forces supporting the Administration nurse real or imagined grievances against the President and his Administration for a variety and contrariety of reasons. Barkley's remark, "my cup runneth over" is all too symptomatic of the feeling of many of the oldest and most devoted of the President's teammates. Every little incident or appointment that is displeasing to any of them is viewed not as an isolated event but is projected back on a whole pattern of past grievances. The conservative friends of the President are ever fearful of a revival of radicalism, while his liberal and labor supporters are ever suspicious of being let-down. Jealousies and enmities within the Administration even in the higher echelons are faintly concealed.

The war still brings the necessary support back of the President to carry through the most urgent parts of the war program. But the Administration lacks even a sufficiently solid basis as a coalition government to command the unified support of its own members in the executive branch, and energetic and articulate support of working majorities within the Congress for any program sponsored by the Administration is sadly wanting.

There is no ground to justify the expectation of an improved political situation during a fourth term. The problems of reconstruction will be as difficult and intricate as, possibly more difficult and intricate than, the problems which had to be met during the depression and during the war. Management, labor and agricultural groups have tended during the war to become less conscious of their common interests. It will not be easy to revive the driving faith which mass opinion had in and gave to the New Deal. The soldiers are likely to return, feeling that they got the shorter end of the stick. They are likely to be biased against whatever party is in power.

There is danger which cannot be wholly ignored that a fourth term would be an anti-climax. There is danger that Rooseveltian ideas, like Wilsonian ideas, may be discredited for a considerable period, not because they are basically unsound but because political conditions will not permit them to be accepted or even fairly understood. There is a question whether the influence of Roosevelt and his ideas may not be greater in the period following the war if there is no fourth term. If there is no fourth term, the people will always remember that in no crisis or emergency did Roosevelt ever let them down. Whoever succeeds the President,

the common people will always be asking whether the new President is fighting for and watching out for their interests as did Roosevelt. (In a sense the enduring value of Roosevelt's ideas lies in their power to survive a change in administration, and the prospect of their survival may depend upon his ceasing to be President before he enters upon a period of anti-climax.) Whatever temporary reaction there may be against the President and his ideas, such reaction may be much shorter-lived and much less injurious to the best interests of the country if he himself does not try to fight through an anti-climactic term.

Against all these circumstances which argue against a fourth term, particularly from the point of view of the President and his supporters, must be weighed the danger--to some extent to the war but to a much greater extent to the peace--of a change in administration during the very climax of the most momentous war in all history. There is little question that the American people do not want a change now, and that a change in administration now would create great uncertainties, doubts and misgivings throughout the world in regard to American foreign policy in the prosecution of the war and the organization of the peace. It is not a question whether these uncertainties, doubts and misgivings should exist. They do exist. The President's refusal to run again, particularly in view of the likelihood of a Republican being elected as his successor, would undoubtedly have a tendency to aggravate these uncertainties, doubts and fears, and it would not be easy to counteract the impression that the election in some way involved a repudiation of the President's foreign policy.

Unless, therefore, some way can be found to dispel or reduce greatly these uncertainties, doubts and misgivings about our foreign policy in the prosecution of the war and the organization of the peace, a fourth term whatever its hazards will probably be inevitable and unavoidable.

The problem that confronts the President and those most sympathetic to the President is not to find justification for another term. That is very easy. The real problem is to discover whether there is any practical alternative to a fourth term. And that problem urgently requires the best thought that the friends of the President can give to it.

Possible alternatives to a fourth term are suggested here to stir thought on the subject and to question the widespread assumption that no possible alternative can be found.

Any alternative, of course, must be discarded unless it can command bi-partisan support. Fortunately there are conditions which make it advantageous for both the Democratic and Republican parties to approve a reasonable alternative, and from the President's own point of view and from the point of view of getting acceptance of a reasonable alternative, it is even helpful that the advantages to the Republican party somewhat outweigh the advantages to the Democratic party. If a way can be found to relieve the President from running for a fourth term, it is obvious that the chances of a Republican victory at the next election will be immeasurably increased. On the other hand, if the President is relieved from running for another term, though the Democrats may lose the next election, they would have an excellent chance for a quick comeback. They would escape

an anti-climactic term which would be likely to be characterized by deadly internal party strife and which would be likely to drive them from power for years. Moreover it is not wholly impossible that deprived of the opportunity of riding into office on the popularity of the President, they would yield to intelligent party leadership and discipline which might even gain for them the next election over an excessively confident Republican party.

But regardless of partisan advantage or disadvantage, no alternative to the fourth term can be regarded as practical unless it helps to unify the country behind the war and the organization of world peace. If the issues of the war and of the nature of the peace must be fought out in the next election, a fourth term would probably have to be regarded as unavoidable.

The most realistic alternative therefore to a fourth term would seem to be an agreement between the Republicans and Democrats to adopt a common foreign policy platform sufficiently clear and comprehensive to remove from the election of any controversy about America's position in the war and at the peace table. It is a little doubtful, however, whether the spirit of such an agreement would carry through the campaign unless the agreement was accompanied by some tangible act demonstrating to the country and to the world that the agreement was more than a formula of words. The best means of giving vitality to the agreement and safeguarding its performance would be to have both parties pledge themselves and their nominees to the support of the suggestion that President Roosevelt accept an invitation to become the Chief Executive Officer of the new international

organization to maintain the peace. This would, it is true, deprive America of having President Roosevelt as its own responsible leader during the critical period of peace negotiations. But it would demonstrate to the world, possibly as effectively as a victorious but bitterly contested fourth term election, the confidence of the country in President Roosevelt and his foreign policy.

Another alternative which has been suggested in a constitutional amendment postponing all federal elections for one year. This suggestion has been favorably considered by some prominent Republicans on the assumption, of course, that the President would not stand for a fourth term in 1945. If the high command of both parties vigorously supported the proposal, it might not be wholly impossible to get it through the Congress and have it ratified by the requisite number of states by the convention method. But the time for getting such an amendment is short and the difficulties in the way very great. Although the amendment, if ratified, would go far to establish the unity of the country behind the war and the peace, it does not seem to be nearly as realistic and as practicable as the first alternative suggested.

There are undoubtedly disadvantages and difficulties connected with both of these proposals. But the proposals do come sufficiently near the realm of possibility to suggest that the quest for a practical alternative to a fourth term should not be abandoned. Even though the search for a practical alternative is unsuccessful, the knowledge that a search is being made may have a salutary and sobering effect on public opinion. It would help to emphasize that if the President does stand for

another term, it will not be to preserve his own power or personal position or the power or position of his party, but to secure the acceptance and faithful execution of the policies and principles for which he has fought.

PSF: Cohen *See memo 10-11-44* 3-44

OFFICE OF WAR MOBILIZATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.



JAMES F. BYRNES
DIRECTOR

October 11, 1944

file

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

I

I was in New York Tuesday for Willkie's funeral. That evening I spent considerable time with Senator Ball, Ulrich Bell, and Arthur Goldsmith. Bell and Goldsmith have been working with Russell Davenport to get a group of nationally known Republicans to come out and work for you. While they have made considerable progress, they feel that more decisive speaking on the foreign issues is necessary to enable them to get some of the most important Republicans on their list to become affirmatively active in your support.

Senator Ball himself indicated that if you came out clearly and definitely on the foreign issues, which most concern him, he would publicly support you. The issues which most concern him are: (1) the earliest possible formation of the United Nations Security Organization and our entry therein before final peace settlements are made; (2) the commitment, by virtue of the vote of our representative on the Council without further Congressional approval, of the use of an agreed upon quota of our military forces for action to maintain peace ordered by the Council; (3) Opposition to ~~the~~ preservation on our entry into the Organization which would weaken its power to act to maintain peace and stop aggression.

When questioned whether he would talk to you along these lines if the opportunity was presented, he indicated that he would be glad to if there was no publicity as he did not wish his purposes misunderstood.

Other Republicans mentioned as being in a similar position included Dr. Ernest W. Hopkins, Nicolas Murray Butler, Arthur Sulzberger, Mrs. Henry Breckinridge, Mrs. William Henry Hayes, Tom Lamont, Spyros Skowras, Mrs. Samuel Barlow, Mrs. Kenneth Simpson, J. A. Migel, and Hugh Moore.

I should think a talk with Senator Ball would be particularly helpful both in regard to the election and the situation after election. While I hope Senator LaFollette is not completely lost to us, I think he can occupy much the same position in relation to the Administration as Senator LaFollette did in the early days.

II.

I also talked with C. C. Burlingham and urged him to use his influence to get Secretary Stimson to speak out. C.C.B. did not believe

- 2 -

Stimson would, but said he would probably spend the weekend with
Stimson. I thought that you might wish to get some word to C.C.B.
to encourage him to press strongly.

Ben V. C.
Ben V. Cohen
General Counsel

hms

PSF: Cohen ~~Handwritten "C"~~

3-45-

PERSONAL AND

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

January 13, 1945

Dear Ben:

I have been giving a good deal of thought to our talk the other day about the State Department. There seem to be a good many difficulties about the particular designation of "Counsellor", due to lack of appropriations - the fact that Mr. Hull agreed not to fill the job without the approval of the Appropriations Committee - and that departmental regulations put the Counsellor over all Assistant Secretaries in rank.

What I wish you would do, Ben, is to get into the Department and give your talents and convictions to making the kind of a peace to which you and I are devoted. The Department needs you and both Ed and I want you to work with us - on this, the most important task - short of winning the war - that faces this country. I am sure you can do this, even tho it be as an Assistant to Ed.

No one knows better than you all my own immediate problems in relation to foreign affairs and I would be relieved and greatly pleased if I knew you were in the Department. If you will accept my judgment in this I will be ever so grateful.

F.D.R.

OR

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

For The President.

Here is a draft of a letter to Ben:

"Dear Ben:

I have been giving a good deal of thought to our talk the other day about the State Department. There seem to be a good many difficulties about the particular designation of 'counsellor', due to lack of appropriations - - the fact that Mr. Hull agreed not to fill the job without the approval of the Appropriations Committee - - and that departmental regulations put the counsellor over all assistant secretaries in rank.

"What I wish you would do, Ben, is to get into the department and give your talents and convictions to making the kind of a peace to which you and I are devoted. The department needs you and both Ed and I want you to work with us - - on this, the most important task - - short of winning the war - - that faces this country. I am sure you can do this, even though it be as an assistant to Ed.

"No one knows better than you all my own immediate problems in relation to foreign affairs and I would be relieved and greatly pleased if I knew you were in the department. If you will accept my judgment in this I will be ever so grateful.

"F.D.R."

Copy follows in pouch.

Harry.

11:18am-mc
Jan. 13, 1945.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 13, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Dear Mr. President:

Here is a draft of a
letter to Ben, copy of which
was sent you over the wire this
morning.

H.L.H.
H.L.H.

encl.

PSF: Cohen

file
Confidential

See memo "C"
3-45

January 20, 1945

Dear Ben,

Your note of January 16th was a severe blow to me.

I can only say how deeply I regret that you felt unable to accept the position in the Department of State which I hoped you would take, and that you have at the same time requested Justice Byrnes to accept your resignation.

Your decision means that the Administration is losing one of its most able and conscientious servants and that I am losing one of my most trusted advisors. The services that you have rendered to the government and to the country during the past twelve years have been outstanding.

I wish that your decision had been a different one. Knowing you, however, I know that you will continue to serve the country with great distinction and that I shall be able to call upon you as a friend in the future as in the past.

Very sincerely yours,

Mr. Ben V. Cohen,
The White House

**THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON**

January 17, 1945.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. HARRY L. HOPKINS

Will you and Ed Stettinius
prepare reply for my signature?

F. D. R.

1

2

OFFICE OF WAR MOBILIZATION AND RECONVERSION
WASHINGTON, D. C.



PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

January 16, 1945.

Dear Mr. President:

Your note of January 13th, has just reached me.

When we talked together I tried to explain to you why I did not feel that I could be effective working in a subordinate position in the State Department. You told me that you wanted me to go in as Counsellor and only technical obstacles which you thought could be removed stood in the way. I expressed grave doubts as to the wisdom of my becoming counsellor after it had become widely known that I had been offered and refused a subordinate position as it would appear that I had brought pressure to bear to secure the appointment. But you were then unwilling to heed my doubts.

It is now abundantly clear to me that I am not really wanted in the State Department unless I wish to accept some undefined, subordinate position and unless I understand that my services do not rank with those holding Presidential appointment. Accepting that judgment on my services, I must respectfully ask you to accept my judgment that I cannot effectively serve in the State Department under such conditions.

I hope that you will believe me that I have come to this conclusion not without a heavy heart. You know of my work and deep interest in the peace both before and at Dumbarton Oaks. And my interest has not abated, although I have not been invited in any capacity to a single conference on the work growing out of Dumbarton Oaks since the State Department has been reorganized.

As I explained to you in our talk, I have always worked without rank or position, but I have found my work and effectiveness increasingly handicapped by those who put rank and position ahead of merit and service. In these circumstances I feel, as I have told you, that I can work more effectively out of office than in office for the things for which you stand. I have accordingly submitted my resignation to Justice Byrnes and at my request he has accepted it.

Of course in a private capacity I shall continue to do whatever I can to help in winning the war and the peace. At Justice Byrnes insistence I have agreed to continue to help him with the understanding I can do so without title or compensation.

Sincerely yours,

Ben V. Cohen
Ben V. Cohen

The President,
The White House.

FOR THE PRESIDENT
FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE
DATE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

PSF: Cohen *Washington "C"*

3-43-

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 17, 1945.

MEMORANDUM FOR
HON. HARRY L. HOPKINS

Will you and Ed Stettinius
prepare reply for my signature?

F. D. R.

Personal and Confidential letter from Hon. Ben V. Cohen, 1/16/45, to the President, in reply to the President's note of 1/13, and explaining why he feels that he cannot accept a position in the State Dept. He says he has tendered his resignation to Justice Byrnes and it has been accepted. He states he will continue to do whatever he can to help in winning the war and the peace.