

● PSF FRANCE: Wm. C. Bullitt 1936

*File
France*

September 24, 1 936.

Memo sent to McIntyre
From Henry Morgenthau

Ultra-Conf. Memo from
Chancellor of the Exchequer in England.
In re- France going off the Gold Standard and her
oral explanations and outline of proposals.

SEE--Treasury Folder-Drawer 1--1936

October 6 , 1936.

*File
Bullitt
France*

Telegram to Sec. of Treasury
Through Cochran
From Bullitt

In re-French Monetary law--three power agreement

SEE--Morgenthau-(S) Drawer 1--1936

France: Bullitt

October 20, 1936.

Dear Bill:-

This is a very hasty note to tell you how nice it was to hear from you yesterday on the telephone, and to thank you for the stamps which you sent. Incidentally, I do know where Touva is and what it is!

I did not see Jesse Straus before he died. The day I was to go there Mrs. Straus telephoned me to say that he was in a coma and two days later he died. I am happy that he did not know how sick he was.

The Western trip was almost too successful. Everything went well although we missed you on the speeches.

Good luck to you!

Affectionately,

Honorable William C. Bullitt,
American Embassy,
Paris,
France.

Paris, October 5, 1936.

Personal.

Dear Mr. President:

The morning of my departure I telephoned you as I had promised. I telephoned from poor Jesse Straus' bedroom because after seeing him I felt certain that you would not have a chance to see him before the end, and he was eager to talk with you. But every time I called, the operator said that you were not available. I was sorry.

I didn't have anything to say except - good luck. I have nothing more to say now except that my reception was extraordinarily friendly, and that a series of conversations with old friends inclines me to believe that in Washington we have been much too pessimistic about the situation in France.

Our own stock is very high just now. The French
are

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House.

are delighted by the cooperation you gave them in the matter of devaluation and the members of the government seem to be greatly pleased by my appointment. Leger, for example, said: "The best indication of the President's special friendliness for France is that he sent you here at this time."

Up to date there has been no unpleasant incident. Offie pretends that it is unsafe to walk on the Champs-Elysées; but he hasn't learned yet how sweetly and gently Frenchmen can riot.

Good luck for the remainder of the campaign and after.

Yours affectionately and always,

Bill.

William C. Bullitt.

PSF. France
Bullitt folder

PROPERTY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Personal and
Confidential.

Paris, October 24, 1936.

Dear Mr. President:

It was bully to hear your voice on the phone although the connection was so bad that it made you croak like a bull frog.

I was immensely distressed to hear that you might lose Vermont; but in compensation, I can inform you that you carried the American Club of Paris by one vote! As the American Club is composed largely of representatives of the biggest banks, oil companies, etc., who don't love you, I thought that showed a very healthy state of mind. Good luck and God bless you for the next four years.

Before I get on to general gossip, I want to tell you that I dined last night with your Aunt, Mrs. Forbes, who is an angel.

Do you remember "Aunt Bill" Hooper? - the great

Mrs.

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States,

The White House.

Mrs. William Hooper Hooper, the hopeless invalid who from her bed and drawing room queened it over the North Shore for thirty years. Two days ago a Mrs. Hooper phoned to the Embassy twice and insisted on speaking to me. Inasmuch as there are about fifty strange creatures per diem who do this, Offie never connects anyone without finding out from me in advance if I really know the people. I told him that I knew no Mrs. Hooper except the bed-ridden lady of the North Shore who had not left her house for years, and he carefully protected me from the lady on the phone. Last night at Mrs. Forbes' house, there was "Aunt Bill" herself aged seventy and looking fifty, having lost at least 250 of her 500 pounds! The death of her husband apparently cured her of her incurable malady! Don't you rather enjoy the spectacle of myself being carefully protected by Offie from the wiles of a seventy-year-old Hooper Hooper? I hope you won't think it scandalous if from time to time I invite her to serve as Embassy hostess.

There is so much political news to write that it is almost hopeless to begin. I got away to a good start with Blum. We lunched together at the house of

If you were in for a four-year an-

an old friend of mine who is also an old friend of his, and I had a most intimate conversation with him. He looks exactly like the caricatures of him, and has the sort of quicksilver intelligence and the little fluttery gestures of the hyper-intellectual queer ones. He seemed to be deeply grateful for your collaboration in the monetary arrangements and was honestly delighted when I said to him, as you had told me to say, that you felt his task in France was very like the task that had faced you in America. He has taken the position that if the Communists refuse to support him he will not attempt to make a deal with the Right but will ask the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies and new elections. The Communists know at the present time that new elections would mean an immense reduction in their vote and unless they get orders from Moscow to raise hell (Orders based on Russian interests, not on French) they will, I think continue to support him and the government will continue in power for some time.

The aristocracy and upper bourgeoisie are just as dumb here as their opposite numbers in the United States. They show no sign of appreciating the fact that Blum is as conservative as anyone who can hold the situation together. If Blum were in for a four-year term as you

were

were in 1933, I have no doubt that he could do a highly constructive job and that the internal situation in France would right itself rapidly. But as he has to maneuver daily to maintain his position and as no one in the country has any fundamental respect for his character - since there is no one who does not know why he was fired from the École Normale - he is not exactly a Rock of Gibraltar. The man the French need is a man who has both intelligence and a character that people can respect. But such a leader is utterly invisible at the present time. There is no one on the Right. People respect de la Rocque but believe that there isn't a sign of a brain in his head. Tardieu is utterly discredited. Mandel is regarded as an intensely clever fellow with no character whatsoever. Chautemps is considered a jelly fish with lots of common sense. Herriot's health has been failing and his position with it. Daladier is completely distrusted by everyone except Daladier. If there were a leader to the Right of Blum, even like old Poincaré, a coherent opposition on the Right might be developed. As it is, Blum is strong because of the weakness of his opponents.

I do not see any sign of the street fighting and general revolutionary activity that has been predicted

so frequently in our press. The whole of France has been shocked by the civil war in Spain. The lower middle class, which in the last election in considerable measure voted Communist, doesn't want that sort of thing in France. There is, moreover, an extremely interesting movement developing of which you will hear more in the next couple of years among the Catholics. A really serious attempt is being made to organize a Catholic Liberal or Radical Party in the hope that it may be possible within the next year to form a majority consisting of Radical Socialists, Socialists and Catholic Radicals with the Communists excluded. That is a hopeful line.

I have talked with lots of men on the Right like Paul Reynaud and Mandel. They believe that they will be able to upset Blum and make a series of political deals which will produce the sort of government that France has suffered under for the past ten years. They might conceivably be able to form such a government but it could not last. The country is just as definitely on the Left as the United States was on the Left in 1933.

You have doubtless been reading reports of the so-called riots on the Champs-Elysées and elsewhere.

They

They are very French riots, carried out in the most pleasant and almost theatrical spirit and are not to be taken seriously - at least not yet. People forget how politely Frenchmen can riot.

On the whole, I am optimistic as to the internal situation. But the position in foreign affairs is definitely bad. You may have seen the long telegram I sent referring to my conversation with Blum. From him and from a number of other conversations at the Quai d'Orsay, I gather that he intends to try through diplomatic channels to make a genuine effort to reach an understanding with Germany, in the first instance on economic matters and in the second on political matters. He will, I think, be badly represented in Berlin by Francois-Poncet, who said to me one of the last times I passed through Berlin that he was convinced there was no basis whatever for understanding between Germany and France and that in his proposals to the German Government he was merely building up material to be published in a white book to be issued when war broke out. Blum wants really to reach an understanding with Germany and the obvious line is through the French Ambassador in Berlin and Neurath, since Neurath

has

has worked for years in the direction of Franco-German understanding. I don't believe Francois-Poncet will play ball in the way ball has to be played if results are to be produced.

Delbos, who is now Minister of Foreign Affairs, is a nice chap but no heavyweight. He follows the line of Leger and the old guard in the Quai d'Orsay. They are completely unconstructive at the moment, shocked by the action of Belgium, fearful that Rumania will slip into a position similar to that of Belgium and just plain frightened.

Beck's visit to Paris did not produce the increase in French confidence in him that he hoped it would produce. The French can not forget that when he was Polish Military Attaché in Paris, they threw him out for communicating official secrets of the French General Staff to Germany. I spent three hours with him when he was here and to my great surprise he said that he hoped he could visit the United States this summer. I am sure that you would be really interested in a talk with him. He has a subtle, if somewhat devious, mind and is unusually well informed with regard to political conditions in every country in Europe. I like him but I am about the only person alive

Sokolnikov, Pyatakov, and the rest. This who

said

who does.

Now that a new Locarno agreement looks hopeless, Beck and the Poles are hoping that some sort of a five Power pact may be devised to include England, France, Italy, Germany and Poland, excluding the Soviet Union. Blum told me some days ago that he had no confidence in the possibility of working out peace by that line, that he felt France would retain her Russian Treaty of Mutual Assistance and should approach Germany directly. Yesterday, however, he told me that the German reply to the Locarno invitation was so evasive and so full of ill will that he felt it was almost hopeless to get anywhere with Germany now. I think, nevertheless, that he will try to go ahead with economic negotiations.

I have just seen the HAVAS correspondent in Moscow, a chap named Gilles, who is perhaps the ablest of the correspondents there. He said that the harvest is definitely unsatisfactory and that the Stakhanovite movement is not producing one half the results expected. He asserted that there was so much discontent in the country that Stalin had decided to eliminate any possible distinguished leaders around whom such opposition could gather. Hence the fate of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Sokolnikov, Pyatakov, and the rest. This does not

sound

sound unreasonable to me as I have heard the same thing from the Polish Ambassador here who was in Moscow when I was there and who still has intimate connections there. I have heard the same thing also from our Embassy in Moscow.

I have not yet started any reorganization of the Embassy. All the representatives of the Departments in that magnificent building, except Offie and myself, will be in such a state of dejection and fear on November 4th that we should be able to push them around with much less resistance than before your re-election has been celebrated. I have at least discovered that every clerk in the Embassy without exception is married to a foreign wife! This includes all the confidential code clerks.

Please don't forget that before you and Cordell leave Washington you must give Judge Moore the authority which he can have only if he is Under Secretary of State. A temporary position as Acting Secretary of State is no good.

Incidentally, I wish you would also, before you go away, get Ray Atherton moved out of London and John Wiley placed in his boots. It is a handicap in every way to be able to get nothing from the London Embassy and to be able also to send nothing to the London Embassy in confidence. Wiley is much the best man for that job and it

would

- 10 -

would help me in Paris a lot to have him there. I can, of course, keep in close touch with Bill Phillips, with Hugh Wilson in Switzerland and with Dodd, but there is no one in the London Embassy today who will play ball.

Best wishes and may the Lord be with you.

Yours affectionately,

Bill.

William C. Bullitt.

*file
private*

Personal and
Confidential.

Paris, October 28, 1936.

Dear Mr. President:

Max Van Horn, the Belgian industrialist who, as you know, is an intimate friend of Van Zeeland and Neville Chamberlain, and as nearly as we could discover was sent to America recently by the British and Belgian Governments to feel out the question of war debts, came to Paris yesterday from Brussels and gave me an ear full on that subject.

I listened. He said that he had said to Neville Chamberlain that he felt there might be a chance that Great Britain could make a settlement with the United States on the basis of 25% of the present debt, the great reduction to be concealed by spreading out the payments over a long period of years. He alleged that Neville Chamberlain had indicated that Great Britain might possibly be ready to settle on a 20% basis.

He said that Chamberlain had stated to him once
again

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America.

again that he positively would never agree to an absolutely definite stabilization until the matter of war debts had been settled and that Chamberlain had said further that Great Britain was soon going to begin a campaign in the United States to try to bring the United States to a greater "appreciation of the British point of view".

Van Horn stated that this campaign would be begun by a series of articles by a professor whose name, I think, was Robinson.

He went on to say that he had given Van Zeeland all the details of his conversation with Chamberlain and that Van Zeeland had felt that settlement on the basis of 20% would be "somewhat too high for Belgium." He asked me for my views.

I replied that the Government of the United States had been and would be prepared to consider any offer made officially through official channels but that in view of unfortunate past experience we, I believed, would not discuss any hypothetical or unofficial proposals.

Van Horn seemed somewhat disappointed that I did not show any more interest than this in his remarks and I derived the impression that you would receive soon

from

Yours affectionately,

Bill
William C. Sullivan.

from various quarters, feelers and semi-official proposals.

I think we should flatly refuse to discuss anything but a straight out-and-out offer.

The French and the Italians are both exceedingly anxious to borrow money in the United States now and will wish to make some sort of settlement in order to escape from the Johnson Act and open the American money market with the underlying thought that war is on the horizon; that the loans will never have to be paid because of war and that they can get a great deal of money for one or two comparatively small payments. We can not, of course, refuse a reasonable offer but I believe we should not accept anything less than a thoroughly reasonable offer. I believe that it is definitely in the national interest for us to have the capital which has now accumulated in the United States invested in the United States rather than loaned abroad to be lost in a new war. In other words, thanks to the Johnson Act, the debts unpaid are proving to be of considerable value to us.

You should receive this letter on Election Day and I will say now

CONGRATULATIONS AND THE LORD BE WITH YOU.

Yours affectionately,

Bill.
William C. Bullitt.

PSF
F. Hoover

[11-9-36]
Bullitt

Translation of an Article by
M. Edouard Herriot
published in the PARIS-SOIR
of November 5, 1936.

Mr. Roosevelt's victory is the
triumph of courage - His re-
election is a benefit not only
to the United States but for
the whole world.

* * *

You will not be surprised to hear that Mr. Roosevelt's victory rejoices me more than anyone else. In fact I never doubted it, in spite of the qualities of his adversary. It was certain that he would win the confidence of the great majority of the people of the United States. Those who have real cause for rejoicing today are those who, from the very beginning of the so-called Roosevelt experiment, when it was still unknown and jeered at, rendered due homage to that marvelous effort inspired not by mediocre political combinations but by a deep love of "high policy" (politique).

He who did not despair

The victory of Mr. Roosevelt is the triumph of courage. When so many people

around

around him despaired he applied to the terrific problems which faced him, not the remedies of medical empiricism, but the rugged methods of major surgery. He founded the bases of his program on equity. Recovering from her surprise this great nation, which has already and will still accomplish great things, placed herself behind a chief endowed with clear and serene intelligence.

One of the most vivid impressions of my life was to have seen Mr. Roosevelt at work at the White House. He never conveys the impression of a man overwhelmed by facts. His eyes reflect a clear conscience. The sincerity of his devotion to public welfare has expressed itself in a series of acts, the essential trait of which was to oppose the complexity of facts with the simplicity of logic. And his disinterestedness, the greatness of his soul are such that he wins your confidence before he convinces you by his reasoning.

At the Service of Peace

This man radiates loyalty and kindness; he has thrown aside all the characteristics of

the ...

the astute politician. His policy should be that of every country in the world: a moral doctrine.

Also he is one of the truest defenders of world peace today. His reelection is a benefit not only to the United States but for the whole world. It is regrettable, for the sake of security, that a collaboration established on this basis could not only have continued but have developed itself ! Scorning all ideas of self-interest, or desire for territorial expansion, or the will to seek revenge, Mr. Roosevelt stands for devotion to human peace and I wish with all my heart that we could have collaborated with him.

A Friend of France

Furthermore, if I hold the President of the United States in deep and respectful affection it is because he sincerely loves France. The tone of his voice when he speaks of our country cannot be misinterpreted. He came to our country in its most tragic moments, he witnessed the sufferings of our nation. He remembers them.

I ...

I do not wish to revive those polemics which brought about one of the events in my political life of which I am most proud: my political defeat in 1932. If I had had the means, if I had known how to impress upon my countrymen what I saw and what I learned in Washington in 1933, I know that they would have adopted my views. And I firmly believe that the international situation would have improved, that peace would have been nearer had we answered the appeal from President Roosevelt for a formula of conciliation, both in the interest of ourselves and of our country.

Certain indications, the broadmindedness with which the head of the present French Government has approached certain problems, lead me to believe that a closer understanding between France and the United States is possible. The remarkable personality of Mr. Roosevelt is the essential condition to such an understanding. I hope for it with all my heart. This hope inspires my present joy.

The life of Mr. Roosevelt, an inspiration!

I greet the Chief of State chosen once

more ...

more by the confidence of a great people. He embodies all the youth and activity of the American nation. One may rest assured that he will continue his work in the same spirit in which he started it. I wish to associate in this homage Mrs. Roosevelt, whose constant endeavor has supported and strengthened that of the President.

This action, in spite of skeptics and cynics who still believe in wiles and deceit or in the effectiveness of brutal methods, can be summed up in two great words: intelligence and kindness. The life of Mr. Roosevelt is an inspiration!

of all illusion, without which nothing deep or lasting can be accomplished. There is nothing forced, violent, theoretical or oratorical in either one. No bombast or gesticulation. The same certainty that the truth has been found; that one has to do with people of goodwill who, in reality, ask nothing better than to share your views, provided things can be explained to them clearly; and that they can be made to share that supreme confidence

wish ...

which Translation of an Article by
M. Paul Claudel,
former French Ambassador at
Washington, published in the
PARIS-SOIR of November 5, 1936.

Roosevelt.

The American Nation has proven
that it was not ungrateful.-

* * *

I have met two great figures during my
diplomatic career, two men radiating strength,
intelligence, authority and, to use the word
in its truest and strongest sense, virtue.
They are both remarkable for the same qualities
of simplicity, fair judgement, quiet decision
and that gift of sympathy for humanity, devoid
of all illusion, without which nothing deep or
lasting can be accomplished. There is nothing
forced, violent, theatrical or oratorical in
either one. No bombast or gesticulation. The
same certainty that the truth has been found;
that one has to do with people of goodwill
who, in reality, ask nothing better than to
share your views, provided things can be
explained to them clearly; and that they
can be made to share that supreme confidence

which ...

which is the heritage of all magnanimous hearts. One of these great men was King Albert I of Belgium, the other is President Roosevelt.

Justice and Liberty

I only enjoyed for a few weeks, as French Ambassador to Washington, the privilege of collaborating with the President and of explaining to him France's point of view as to that dreadful question of war debts which lost us so many friends on the other side of the Atlantic. I was impressed from the very beginning by the generosity and broadmindedness with which the President came forward, so to speak, with open heart and outstretched hand to greet us, and I shall never cease regretting that for trivial considerations we did not know how to take advantage of his attitude. Despite this the feelings of the host of the White House have not changed towards us in any way.

His inspiring speeches, of which the agencies only transmit poor résumés, prove that in the tragic battle which opposes the

last ...

last democratic European states to the powers of tyranny and violence, the conscience and sentiment of a great nation, represented by her Chief Executive, continue to be on the side of liberty and justice. No one ignores that the tripartite monetary agreement, the importance of which will become better known every day, is due to the personal initiative of Franklin Roosevelt.

His first word: Courage!

If I were to try and analyze the qualities by which the President wins all hearts, not only those of his countrymen, but of foreigners and transients, I should say that they can be summed up in two words: courage and optimism. **Courage!** was the first word he uttered when he assumed the leadership of the Republic at perhaps the darkest hour of its history, when all the banks were closed and when the entire economic fabric of that great country seemed paralysed. A truly heroic word from the mouth of a man half crippled by a pitiless illness, and whose heart and mind alone remain intact and alive.

Despite ...

Despite opposition, treason, ingratitude; despite the lack of understanding from the very people he had saved from ruin; despite the cowardly insults directed against him and his private life; despite the judgements of the Supreme Court, and the unprecedented scourges of Nature, such as drought and floods, his courage prevailed and America has regained today a prosperity and a confidence in her destiny equal to the most brilliant periods of her History.

Optimism, daring, knowledge of mankind

His second masterly quality is optimism. Like Washington, like Lincoln, Roosevelt believes in humanity at large and principally in his countrymen. He believes that men will listen to reason and will voluntarily adopt the best method if only one has the patience to direct them to it. Among the chief reasons for Mr. Roosevelt's success were the radio "heart to heart talks" at which he spoke to each of his countless hearers as if he were sitting by the fireside, addressing a friend and explaining to him his plans.

To ...

To these high moral qualities may be added two of a practical character. One of them is daring, a natural boldness which no obstacle, no opposition can defeat once the necessity for action has been realized. The second is an extraordinary knowledge of mankind; the intuition of a politician and of an ill man; the skill of a navigator accustomed to the sea and the wind, a never failing inventive spirit, an extraordinary adaptability which enables him to reach a fixed goal by a thousand different ways and with auxiliary help which he abandons as soon as it no longer serves its purpose; the gift of pleasing, of being interesting, of advancing an ideal which relegates to the background a disastrous present.

The gratitude of a nation

America has not proven ungrateful and she has rewarded the incomparable services rendered by her President with the widest majority ever obtained at a Presidential election. Thus he enters the peaceful waters of a second term with an increased authority

which ...

which the entire world, I feel certain, will live to benefit by.

At all events, even for a foreigner, it is a comforting sight to witness the triumph of common sense, of courage and honesty, and a thing rare and marvelous in this era of mediocrity and shady impostors: a great man at the head of a great nation.

And that is why I say with full heart and with all the strength of my conviction:
F. D. R. for ever!

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PST: France

*File Personal
Confidential*

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bullitt

Personal and
Confidential.

Paris, November 8, 1936.

Dear Mr. President:

I am as happy as a proud father about the election! But you know that already, and I will not burden you any more with my emotions but will tell you about the reactions of the French.

The wave of enthusiasm in France which greeted your election was really phenomenal. No American President ever received such a tornado of praise. I enclose herewith the translations of articles which Herriot and Claudel wrote.

Blum came personally to express his congratulations. That is unheard of. If you could have seen the manner of his coming, it would have done you good. At least you would have laughed. He entered the front door, flung his broad-brimmed black hat to the butler, his coat to a footman, leaped the three steps to the point where I was standing, seized me and kissed me violently! I staggered slightly; but having been kissed

by

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America.

by Stalin, I am now immune to any form of osculation, and I listened without batting an eye to as genuine an outpouring of enthusiasm as I have ever heard.

You have, of course, received from de Laboulaye the resolution adopted by the Chamber of Deputies and the resolution of the town of Lannoy which claims to be the home of your ancestors. How many cities was it that claimed Homer?

The cause of this outburst is that the French regard you as a national leader who has succeeded in giving the lower classes a greater proportion of the national income without disturbing any of the ancient liberties. The French are all praying for such a man. Blum, himself, said to me that he felt his position had been greatly strengthened because he is attempting in his way to do what you have done in America. In addition, the French all feel that you have a genuine understanding of French civilization and a genuine liking for France, and that you will somehow manage to keep Europe from plunging again into war.

In every conversation that I have had, either with members of the French Government or the opposition, or ambassadors and ministers, or French statesmen who happen to be outside the government, like Herriot, I have attempted to elicit some statement of some constructive project

project for the prevention of war. I have never encountered such complete hopelessness. There is no feeling of crisis because no one believes that war is imminent; but there is a universal belief that Europe is drifting toward war and that no man on the continent has imagination enough to devise any method of reconciliation.

Every minister of a small European state who has yet called on me has expressed the hope that you might intervene, saying that if you did not, his country would certainly be destroyed by the inevitable conflict. I have asked how you could intervene, what you could do to prevent war, how you could be certain that anything you did would not produce a fiasco similar to the London Economic Conference. The reply invariably has been that no one in Europe can think of any way in which you can intervene effectively - but you might be able to think of some way yourself. You are, in other words, beginning to occupy the miracle man position. And I am strongly reminded of the sort of hope that for a time was reposed in Woodrow Wilson. I wish I could talk out with you some evening in the White House the possibilities and impossibilities. You would, I am sure, get nothing whatever from

an unprepared conference of chiefs of state or prime ministers or foreign secretaries. The mess would be greater, because the conflict of interests would be greater, than at the London Economic Conference. On the other hand, I am not at all sure that you may not be able to do something which may have at least a fair chance of success.

You will remember in 1932, after your election but before your Inauguration, I had conversations with Schleicher and Neurath in Berlin and with Herriot and Boncour in Paris. It looked at that time as if something could be done to draw France and Germany together. You will remember also that all four of the gentlemen mentioned above felt that the essential thing would be quiet pressure and assistance from the United States acting through the American Ambassadors in Berlin and Paris.

In spite of the explosions of Mussolini, the nub of the problem of European peace is still - as it has been for so long - reconciliation between France and Germany. Ever since Hitler came into power everyone in France has assumed that reconciliation is impossible, and when I passed through Berlin last May, Neurath said to me that he felt there were fewer chances of reconciliation than ever before.

I don't believe that this is true. The essential thing the Germans must have, is the development of their economic relations with Central Europe and the Balkans. The French (or at least Blum and Delbos) have no objection to this. Indeed, it is perfectly obvious that whether the French want it or not, it will come to pass. It is in the logic of economic facts, for example, that Rumania should exchange her wheat and oil for German machines and construction material. Similarly, the Germans need the products of Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey, and those countries need German products. No one can invent any legitimate reason for trying to prevent this German economic development. The reason why so many people are afraid of it is because they fear that economic domination will lead to political domination and the realization of the old Berlin-to-Bagdad bloc.

I do not believe that political domination must necessarily follow economic domination and I believe that it may be possible to get together the French and the Germans on the basis of an economic agreement which would give the Germans a chance to develop Central Europe and the Balkans economically: provided such an agreement should be accompanied by an agreement with regard to
limitation

limitation of armaments and a general revival of a feeling of European unity.

That sounds like a large order. It is a large order; but the events in Spain have made most people in most European countries realize that there is such a thing as European civilization which reposes on certain very old civilized principles that may be destroyed by war or Bolshevism. I do not mean that people are anxious to start a crusade against Bolshevism or that anyone (even Germany) intends to invade the Soviet Union, but I do mean that there is beginning to be a feeling that if the nations of Western Europe do not hang together, they will all hang separately.

If we can assist diplomatically in laying the basis for a reconciliation between France and Germany, I think we should help. If we get anywhere diplomatically and see a fair chance of success, you could then come forward with some tremendous public announcement. But I feel emphatically that you should not let yourself be persuaded to make some great gesture until you have prepared the ground with great care.

How can we prepare the ground? You can, of course, do much in any conversations you may have with the French and German Ambassadors in Washington and I shall be, I

think,

think, in a position to do whatever you want me to do here; at least so long as the present government remains in office. I have been astonished by the frankness with which Blum and Delbos have treated me and I have, of course, had a very confidential relationship with Leger for many years.

When Dodd leaves Berlin I think you should select your man for that post with extreme care. As Hitler does not speak anything but German any Ambassador of ours there who does not speak German perfectly will be useless. That qualification rules out most of the men who have been mentioned for the post. (Incidentally, Joe Davies' German is, I understand, lousy.) I wish I had someone better to suggest, but I can think of no one better than Hugh Wilson, who has been for many years our Minister in Berne. His German is perfect and in spite of the fact that his connections are largely Republican and that his wife especially is no lover of the Democratic Party or you or myself, I can not think of anyone else who could begin to establish the really intimate and confidential relationship we need with the bosses in Berlin, which will be essential if we are to accomplish anything.

At the same time, I think you should signalize the arrival

arrival of Wilson or whoever replaces Dodd, by beginning at once to rebuild the Blücher Palace as the center of our activities in Berlin. As you know, we have owned the Blücher Palace for years and expected to house in it not only the Ambassador but also all the offices of the Embassy and Consulate General. As Dodd wanted to save money, he didn't want to take on any such establishment and held up the matter. Our Berlin establishment at the present moment would be an excellent one for Honduras. It is not a good stage setting for dealings with gentlemen who conceive of themselves as Parsifal and young Siegfried. And whether we like it or not, the Pure Fool and Goering are the bosses of Germany.

It is perhaps silly for me even to attempt to make suggestions of this sort in a letter. A discussion of all the whys and wherefores is so necessary that I may simply succeed in making you believe that I have lost whatever mind I ever possessed. However, it won't be useless if I can make you realize how intensely many people in Europe want you to do something about the European situation; and how inordinately difficult it is to do anything constructive, and how necessary to prepare the way. After all, it wouldn't have happened without John the Baptist.

government of France which were, to say the least, dis-

loyal. He said - 9 - he did not wish to go into personal

details which were most unpleasant, but did wish to tell

I have lots of news to write you; but this letter is already so long that I shall only put in a few lines of it.

You probably saw the telegram in which I said that Blum had told me that he intended to replace de Laboulaye.

What actually happened was this: Blum said that he would like to see me at once and asked me to come to his own apartment on the Isle St. Louis. I did and he said he had a highly indiscreet question to ask me. He said he had wished to withdraw de Laboulaye last Spring and his predecessors had wished to replace de Laboulaye for more than a year, and de Laboulaye had wished to be replaced. But Jesse Straus had informed him, as well as his predecessors, that it was absolutely essential to the interests of France that de Laboulaye should be kept in Washington so long as you were President, because he was such an intimate friend of yours that you would regard his removal as a personal affront. He wished to know if this was really the case because, while he would leave de Laboulaye in Washington if it were the case, he had received in the past week letters from three different men, all of whom he regarded as entirely reliable, informing him that both de Laboulaye and Madame de Laboulaye had made statements about him and the present government

government of France which were, to say the least, disloyal. He said that he did not wish to go into personal details which were most unpleasant, but did wish to tell me that he had been informed that de Laboulaye had said that he, Blum, was incompetent, that the present government could last only a short time, and that it was really not worth while to take up serious matters with the present government.

I replied that de Laboulaye had never made any such statements to me and that I thought he had conducted himself very satisfactorily as a career ambassador; that he was a very good friend of yours and that Madame de Laboulaye was a very good friend of Mrs. Roosevelt; but that I felt you would not consider it a personal affront if de Laboulaye should be replaced. (Incidentally, de Laboulaye said to me the day I left Washington that he was sure I would be asked this question and asked me please to reply as I did. He said that he was most anxious to bring out his daughter in Paris and would welcome being placed en disponibilité in Paris for a certain period.)

Putsi Haenfstengel blew into Paris a couple of days ago and I had a talk with him night before last. He said that Goering will be made Reichskanzeler with Hitler retaining the superior position of Fuehrer. He prophesied that Rosenberg (the fellow who runs the

anti-Russian

anti-Russian propaganda and the plans for expansion to the East) will disappear from circulation during the next twelve months. He predicted that the rise of Goering would bring a very strong movement in Germany for rapprochement with the Soviet Union which would be opposed only by Hitler because of his religious conviction that the Bolsheviks are the children of Hell. Goering will be supported by the Reichswehr, the industrialists and Schacht.

Wiley and his wife came down to visit me for election night. Wiley is thoroughly pleased with Antwerp and doesn't want to go as Counselor of Embassy to London.

I have, thank God, now completed all the obligatory speeches that I have to make. The last one was at the American Students and Artists Center, which is under the aegis of Dean Beekman of our noble church. The Latin Quarter religious audience has a somewhat peculiar odor of sanctity. While I was speaking, Offie was seated next to a very strange looking lady who kept pulling out of her pocket a quart bottle of Pernod and taking enormous swigs, while announcing to the lady on her right that when I had finished speaking, she intended to brain me with the bottle. The lady on her right, in whispers, argued with her that this would not be seemly. Finally,

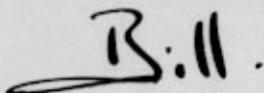
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the absinthe drinking lady screeched out, "Can't you understand I'm in love with him?"!

Anne is firmly and happily established in an American school. I can not tell you what a difference it makes to me to be able to have her with me. She is growing to be a really lovely person.

Good luck to you for your trip to South America and for all the years to come.

Yours affectionately,



William C. Bullitt.

PSIF
France
[11-8-36]
Faulkner

LE PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT ET LES DETTES DE GUERRE

Le Président Roosevelt vient d'être réélu à une triomphale majorité. Ce n'est pas seulement son mandat qui lui a été renouvelé: c'est la confiance entière de tout un peuple, auquel, sans toucher à ses libertés, il a rendu la prospérité et la foi dans ses destinées.

Cet événement dépasse les frontières des Etats-Unis. L'immense prestige du Président Roosevelt auprès des masses de tous les pays est un fait avec lequel maintenant les dictateurs vont devoir compter. Déjà, dans les angoisses de l'heure présente, nombreux sont ceux qui espèrent que Franklin Roosevelt pourra peut-être sauver la paix du monde. Déjà des nations se tournent vers lui, et lui font savoir que tout est perdu, s'il n'intervient pas.

Le Président Roosevelt répondra-t-il à cet appel?

LE PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT ET LA PAIX

Ceux qui ne voient pas au-delà des faits, des lds, et de ce qu'ils appellent "la réalité", répondent que le Président est trop conscient des nécessités de la politique américaine pour rien faire qui soit opposé à l'instinct profond de son peuple. Or, qui donc oserait douter que la volonté des Etats-Unis soit tout entière tournée vers l'isolement?

Aux yeux des Américains - il faut le reconnaître - l'Europe apparaît comme un mélange confus de petites nations usant leurs dernières forces à se déchirer entre elles, incapables d'oublier leurs querelles pour s'assurer un sort meilleur. Les atteintes récemment portées au prestige de la Société des Nations, n'ont fait que renforcer encore

la volonté d'alignement des Etats-Unis à l'égard de l'Europe. Les lois de neutralité votées au Congrès de Washington en portent la marque. Elles s'efforcent de tenir les Etats-Unis à l'écart de tout belligérant, quel qu'il soit, comme d'un foyer de contamination dont le continent américain doit entre à tout prix préservé. Enfin, il n'est pas jusqu'au refus, si brutal dans sa forme, de payer les Dettes de Guerre, par des nations qui avaient pourtant une telle dette de reconnaissance vis-à-vis des Etats-Unis, qui n'ait fini de donner en Amérique comme un gout d'amertume à tout ce qui est européen.

Voilà ce que disent les "réalistes".

Et tout cela est vrai. Cependant ce n'est pas tout la vérité. On croit que tous les liens sont coupés entre l'Europe et les Etats-Unis. On oublie que les racines sont toujours étroitement emmelées.

Sachons dans un problème aussi grave dégager l'essentiel.

Les Américains proclament leur souci, leur volonté de n'être entraînés, sous aucun prétexte, dans une guerre européenne. En réalité, ils ne sont pas surs au fond d'eux-mêmes de pouvoir s'en tenir à l'écart. Il n'y aurait pas une telle passion pour la paix aux Etats-Unis si les Américains ne sentaient pas que leur paix même est menacée par un conflit entre les grandes puissances. D'ailleurs, qui leur garantit qu'il s'agira d'un conflit uniquement européen? Voilà que le Japon - le véritable voisin de l'Amérique - paraît vouloir prendre parti à son tour.

La vérité est que les Etats-Unis savent - et c'est le coeur même du problème - que la prochaine guerre menacera la civilisation, bien plus, cette forme même de civilisation dont ils se considèrent comme responsables. Voilà le mot prononcé. Ceux qui connaissent vraiment les Américains, ceux qui savent leur attachement invinciblement à leur idéal de liberté, de démocratie et de dignité humaine, n'ignorent pas que les Etats-Unis dans une pareille guerre sentiront leur responsabilité engagée. Le vrai dilemme pour l'Amérique, le voici: elle ne veut pas intervenir dans la prochaine guerre et cependant elle sait qu'elle ne pourra s'en désintéresser qu'en renonçant à ce qui est l'âme même des Etats-Unis, à sa fierté morale, à son idéal.

D'ailleurs qu'a donc écrit le Président Roosevelt pendant toute sa campagne électorale: "Les Etats-Unis ne sont pas 'isolationnistes'... Aussi longtemps que la guerre existera sur terre le peuple le plus pacifiste peut y être entraîné... Je hais la guerre, je voudrais pouvoir l'écarter de toutes les nations... Nous avons foi dans la liberté, nous avons foi dans la démocratie, nous avons foi dans la paix... A ceux qui veulent notre amitié de saisir la main que nous leur tendons... Cette génération d'Américains a un rendez-vous avec la destinée... Ici en Amérique nous poursuivons une grande guerre, une guerre pour la survivance de la démocratie. Notre combat aujourd'hui est un combat pour sauver une grande et précieuse forme de Gouvernement pour nous-mêmes et pour le monde."

Et qu'ont répondu les Américains? Ont-ils trouvé leur Président trop audacieux? Ils ont plébiscité celui qui connaît mieux qu'eux-mêmes le plus intime et le meilleur de leur être.

Ce serait donc déjà une faute de psychologie de désespérer de l'opinion publique américaine. Mais il y a plus. A côté de l'Amérique, il y a l'homme qui la gouverne. Pour celui-là est-il permis de douter? Quiconque le connaît a le devoir de dire qu'il ne pourra pas ne pas agir.

D'ailleurs tout le montre déjà: ces cris en faveur de la paix sont-ils autre chose qu'une voix qui s'essaye aux Etats-Unis avant de s'adresser dans quelques jours aux deux Amériques, et bientôt au monde entier? On n'a pas non plus assez remarqué en France l'idée que le Président Roosevelt a caressée au cours de cet été. Il pensait convoquer après sa réélection une réunion des principaux hommes d'état à Washington. Il souhaitait obtenir d'eux, sous son influence personnelle, une déclaration commune suivant laquelle ils s'engageraient à mettre toute leur puissance au service du maintien de la paix. Le dynamisme d'une telle déclaration créerait, pensait-il, un choc psychologique d'où il attendait une détente de la situation politique internationale. Une telle idée n'est-elle pas le signe d'un homme tourmenté par "la montée des périls" et qui se sent une responsabilité?

Davantage encore. Le Président sent monter vers lui l'appel des masses populaires dans tous les pays. Celles-ci devinent en Roosevelt l'homme, qui sait mépriser les doctrines, va droit aux faits, aux hommes, et apporte des résultats substantiels. Le Président des Etats-Unis - sachons-le - a conscience de son rôle et de sa responsabilité. Il ne faudrait pas le connaître pour croire qu'il hésitera à aller jusqu'au bout de sa tâche.

Enfin

Enfin le Président a cet optimisme invincible des Américains. Il est de ceux qui ne pensent pas que la guerre soit jamais fatale. Croire qu'il se jugera trop faible pour arrêter la pression des évènements et pour hésiter à se dresser contre la force des choses, c'est méconnaître l'homme et la confiance qu'il a en lui.

Dès lors, devant le rythme croissant des dangers de guerre, tout indique que le Président Roosevelt prendra à un moment donné, dans l'ordre économique et financier, une initiative pour montrer que les Etats-Unis ont tenté tout ce qui était en leur pouvoir pour préserver la civilisation occidentale, et pour "sauver au moins l'honneur" de son peuple.

Quelle initiative le Président prendra-t-il? Celle-ci aura-t-elle forcément des résultats heureux? Ne nous trouverons-nous pas au contraire devant une de ces propositions insuffisamment étudiées comme celles qui sont trop souvent venues de l'Amérique, devant un de ces plans trop simplistes, qui méconnaissent l'Europe, déclenchent la catastrophe qu'ils voulaient éviter, et dont les propositions Hoover restent le type à jamais accompli?

Si nous savons nous rapprocher du Président Roosevelt, lui faire comprendre en toute objectivité la véritable situation de la France, celle aussi de l'Europe, n'en doutons pas, la proposition américaine pourra avoir une influence décisive pour la paix. Tous ceux qui connaissent le Président savent que son esprit a quelque chose de français. Ces idées larges, généreuses, humaines, qui ont été, si longtemps, pour ainsi dire le monopole de notre pays, ces idées trouvent chez lui un écho immédiat, naturel.

Mais

Mais dès lors une question se pose: est-il de notre dignité, est-il même possible de tenter auprès de lui un effort de cette sorte, en paraissant ignorer le problème des Dettes de Guerre?

Pour répondre à une pareille question, faisons une fois de plus le point.

II

La question des Dettes.

(a) L'opinion publique américaine. - Si l'on croit en France que la grande masse du public aux Etats-Unis souhaite vivement le règlement des Dettes, il faut le dire tout net, on fait erreur.

Les Etats-Unis n'ont plus besoin d'argent. En 1933, un règlement des Dettes aurait présenté un réel intérêt pécuniaire pour les Américains. Le Nouveau Monde était en pleine crise. Un système de versements européens, que le Gouvernement de Washington aurait pris lui-même la peine de capitaliser aurait permis d'assainir d'un seul coup toute une partie de l'économie américaine: les Banques ou les Chemins de Fer.

Aujourd'hui, où les Etats-Unis ont retrouvé leur prospérité, les versements britanniques et français, pour être supportables par les Budgets européens, seront fatalement infimes comparés à la masse du Budget américain. N'ayons

donc

donc pas d'illusion. Les plénipotentiaires chargés de négocier la reprise des paiements sur les Dettes, ne seront plus jamais accueillis - de ce point de vue - comme ils l'auraient été en 1933.

Bien au contraire, tout indique que l'annonce de la reprise des négociations n'irait pas sans éveiller certaines réactions hostiles dans la grande masse de l'opinion américaine. Pour peu que l'on connaisse l'état d'esprit aux Etats-Unis on devine déjà quelle serait la campagne de la Presse Hearst: "Lorsque l'Amérique était pauvre, l'Europe ne pouvant plus lui emprunter, a cessé le paiement de ses dettes. Aujourd'hui que l'Amérique est de nouveau riche, et que la guerre menace en Europe, la France offre des acomptes pour emprunter de nouveau à New York."

Enfin une partie de l'opinion aux Etats-Unis sera sur ses gardes dès que l'on parlera de reprendre le paiement des Dettes. Pour certains en effet, le "défaut" de l'Europe, aussi longtemps qu'il demeure, constitue une puissante sauvegarde. Il est à la fois la preuve que les Etats-Unis sont séparés moralement de l'Europe, et l'assurance que leur Président s'abstiendra en faveur des démocraties européennes, de toute initiative qui pourrait entraîner l'Amérique dans une nouvelle guerre aux côtés de l'Angleterre et de la France.

(b) Le Congrès américain. - Si on envisage la question des Dettes sous l'angle du Congrès une nouvelle menace apparaît.

On ne sait pas assez en France que dans toute l'affaire des Dettes de guerre le Congrès prétend avoir le premier et le dernier mot. La question des Dettes est matière de Finances: de ce fait, elle relève, d'après les traditions américaines

américaines, de l'initiative parlementaire. Telle est l'interprétation qui a prévalu lors du premier règlement des Dettes. La négociation à cette époque s'est faite non pas avec l'exécutif - qui s'est prudemment tenu au second plan - mais avec une Commission spéciale des Dettes issue du Sénat et de la Chambre des Représentants. Sans doute, le Président Roosevelt a bien accepté de son propre chef les "token payments" de l'Angleterre et de l'Italie. Mais il a eu soin de ne parler qu'en son nom personnel et il a réservé formellement à cette occasion tous les droits du Congrès. Dès lors, tout indique que si une "négociation officielle" des Dettes était à nouveau engagée, le Congrès exigerait de la prendre entièrement entre ses mains. On retrouverait là tous les inconvénients de la susceptibilité et de la méfiance de l'opinion américaine, aggravés des méfaits d'une publicité tapageuse.

(c) Notre dette vis-a-vis de l'Angleterre. - Enfin - comme si toutes ces difficultés du côté de l'Amérique ne suffisaient déjà pas - la France a encore, pour reprendre la question des Dettes, un obstacle particulier du côté de l'Angleterre.

On l'oublie trop souvent: nous avons une dette vis-à-vis de la Grande-Bretagne. Que nous le voulions ou non, la thèse anglaise est toujours que les accords de Lausanne n'ont pas mis fin à nos obligations envers la Trésorerie britannique. Mr. Neville Chamberlain a rappelé à Mr. Georges

Bonnet

Bonnet, pendant la Conférence de Londres de 1933, "qu'au cas où la France envisagerait la reprise des paiements aux Etats-Unis, l'Angleterre comptait bénéficier d'un traitement "pari passu." Bien que cette thèse n'ait jamais été reprise par la suite, elle n'a jamais été non plus abandonnée.

Dès lors, ouvrir la conversation des Dettes avec les Etats-Unis et chercher à traiter isolément avec Washington c'est risquer, il faut bien le voir, de soulever l'opposition de l'Angleterre. C'est l'inciter à réclamer aussitôt ses droits - ne serait-ce que pour les protéger - alors que le but principal d'une large négociation des dettes devrait être de l'amener à y renoncer d'elle-même.

Est-il possible, par ailleurs, d'étudier d'abord avec la Grande-Bretagne si une conversation commune anglo-française pourrait être reprise avec les Etats-Unis? N'ayons aucune illusion sur ce point. Poser une telle question à Londres - dans l'état actuel des choses - c'est aller au-devant d'une réponse connue. L'Angleterre, suivant la pente la plus naturelle de sa politique, pense qu'elle a intérêt à attendre encore. Il lui semble que plus le temps passera, plus léger sera le fardeau définitif.

Tel est l'exposé objectif que l'on peut faire actuellement de la question des Dettes de Guerre. Que peut-on en retirer, sinon ces deux idées:

(1) Beaucoup croient que la question des Dettes est une plaie cicatrisée, et que l'on peut maintenant tailler et recoudre. La vérité est que la plaie, plus profonde que nous n'avons daigné le croire, est prête à saigner de nouveau, si elle n'est pas traitée avec des prodiges de délicatesse.

(2) Il faut éviter tout ce qui peut alerter l'opinion américaine. Dès lors toute mission de négociateurs envoyée par la France, toute campagne spéciale de presse risqueraient de ne réveiller la question des dettes que pour la laisser dans un état pire que la léthargie actuelle.

Seule une négociation diplomatique, secrète, présente une chance de succès.

Qui ne voit, alors, que la question des dettes, doit être prise de telle façon qu'elle écarte l'obstacle à un rapprochement avec le Président Roosevelt? Ce qu'il faut: c'est faire notre paix avec les Etats-Unis pour que les Etats-Unis à leur tour puissent aider la France et le monde à conserver la paix.

Explorons davantage la voie qui nous est ainsi ouverte.

Essai sur la méthode d'une négociation
diplomatique des Dettes.

A - Convierait-il d'établir un plan de règlement des dettes et de faire une proposition ferme au Président Roosevelt? Il est possible que ce soit la procédure qu'il attende lui-même de notre part. Cependant nulle méthode ne pourrait être plus sûre de rebuter le Président et de manquer à apaiser chez lui cette soif des vues grandes et larges qui est la véritable marque de son esprit. On verserait aussitôt dans des discussions de détail, sûr moyen de conduire à l'échec une négociation de cette sorte. Par ailleurs une

telle

telle proposition mettrait le Président dans l'embarras car elle poserait immédiatement la question constitutionnelle de l'initiative parlementaire du Congrès. Enfin elle soulèverait la susceptibilité de l'Angleterre et poserait également - dans les plus mauvaises conditions - la question de notre dette vis-à-vis de la Grande-Bretagne.

B - Dès lors, on en vient à dégager une formule de négociation qui s'inspirerait des principes suivants:

(a) Notre démarche auprès du Président Roosevelt devrait porter d'abord sur la nécessité d'une étroite union entre les trois grandes démocraties occidentales, si la paix et les principes de la civilisation doivent être sauvés. Les vraies démocraties ne retrouveront leur puissance d'action, et leur force d'exemple, que si les relations les plus confiantes sont rétablies entre elles.

(b) Cette collaboration nécessaire des trois grandes démocraties oblige-t-elle à effacer le différend né des dettes de guerre? Il n'y a pas de meilleure façon de répondre à cette question que de la poser au Président Roosevelt lui-même et d'en remettre en quelque sorte la solution entre ses mains. Il mettra alors en balance les nécessités de la politique intérieure américaine, et les dangers de la situation internationale. Pour notre part, même si le Président souhaitait ajourner la négociation, nous aurions déjà fait la preuve de notre bonne volonté. Nous aurions rétabli d'un seul coup notre situation auprès de lui.

(c)

(c) Au cas où le Président Roosevelt estimerait qu'une négociation sur les dettes de guerre est corollaire indispensable d'un rapprochement entre les trois grandes démocraties, nous pourrions alors faire un nouveau pas dans la voie qui conduirait à une véritable négociation.

Il conviendrait à ce moment d'étudier d'accord avec le Président les principes qui devraient présider à un règlement équitable des dettes. Il semble que ces principes devraient être les suivants:

(1) La négociation ne saurait souffrir d'être portée devant le Congrès des Etats-Unis avant que le Président ne jugeât qu'une solution acceptable de son point de vue a enfin été dégagée. Mr. Roosevelt appuierait alors de toute son autorité au Congrès les formules ainsi trouvées.

(2) Le règlement des dettes devrait être tel, qu'il ne pût porter atteinte:

ni à l'accord des changes tel qu'il a été précisé par la déclaration monétaire tripartite.

ni à la politique de reprise du commerce extérieur telle qu'elle a été indiquée dans cet accord et telle que Mr. Cordell Hull n'a cessé de la promouvoir comme une partie essentielle de la politique américaine.

(d) Si le Président acceptait ces principes, il nous appartiendrait aussitôt de saisir l'Angleterre et de commencer entre les Etats-Unis, la Grande-Bretagne et la France, une négociation tripartite comme celle qui a permis d'aboutir si heureusement au récent accord monétaire.

L'Angleterre

L'Angleterre à ce moment serait-elle tentée de participer à la conversation? Il semble qu'il y ait toutes les raisons de le penser. La garantie de la négociation nouée dans la sphère diplomatique serait déjà considérée comme très sérieuse par la Grande-Bretagne. Mais il y a plus. Les principes suivant lesquels le règlement des dettes devrait respecter l'accord monétaire et ne pas entraver le développement du commerce extérieur, indiquent déjà dans quel sens on pourrait rechercher la solution définitive du problème. Suivant toute vraisemblance, on se dirigerait vers la création d'une Caisse d'Amortissement, capitalisant ses actifs, gérée dans des conditions qui retireraient tout aspect politique au problème des dettes et qui permettraient, malgré des versements modiques à la charge des budgets européens, d'effectuer au bout d'un certain nombre d'années un amortissement notable de la dette américaine.

Ainsi serait écarté par une solution satisfaisante pour tous, un problème auquel on n'aurait jamais dû permettre de troubler l'amitié des trois grandes démocraties occidentales.

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III

Quand conviendrait-il d'ouvrir une pareille négociation?

Si la négociation sur les dettes doit être réellement pour nous une négociation en vue d'affermir la paix pour la
France

France et pour le monde, la situation internationale nous permet-elle d'attendre?

Sachons voir en effet que ce n'est pas le succès de la négociation des dettes qui rapprochera la France de Mr. Roosevelt. C'est notre geste de bonne volonté et de confiance qui rétablira notre situation auprès de lui dès le premier jour.

Parallèlement aux conversations sur les dettes nous pourrons nous ouvrir à lui de nos plus lourdes angoisses dans la nouvelle atmosphère de cordialité ainsi créée entre Paris et Washington.

Nous aurons acquis le droit de lui parler en toute franchise. Qui sait le retentissement que peuvent avoir auprès des masses populaires de tous les pays sans exception, dans un moment où partout elles sont aussi frémissantes, les appels en faveur de la paix du Président Roosevelt?

Nous aurons acquis le droit également de lui fournir en toute objectivité nos vues sur la possibilité de son action en Europe. Alors nous pouvons être sûrs, si nous savons gagner loyalement sa confiance que lui-même, avant d'agir, tiendra à prendre nos avis et ceux de la Grande-Bretagne.

Enfin, si la tension internationale s'accroît subitement le Président Roosevelt pourra révéler à son peuple que la France avait déjà ouvert de sa propre initiative la négociation sur les dettes de guerre. Il est homme, si nous

savons

savons le laisser agir auprès de son opinion publique, à nous regagner d'un seul coup l'affection des Etats-Unis.

Qui peut dire, en des heures se chargées d'angoisse, que nous n'en aurons pas bientôt besoin?

(a) Nécessité très prochaine d'une initiative dans l'ordre économique et financier si l'on veut sauver la paix (Réorganisation économique et financière de l'Allemagne et de l'Italie et de la Chine?).

(b) Nécessité d'une conversation préalable des Etats-Unis, de la France et de l'Angleterre si l'on veut que cette initiative n'échoue pas et ne soit même peut-être l'occasion de la guerre.

(c) Nécessité de concevoir cette initiative, non comme une proposition à jeter au monde en se désintéressant de son sort, mais comme une proposition suivie immédiatement, sinon immédiatement précédée de négociations avec l'une ou l'autre des parties intéressées. Une telle initiative ne peut pas échouer totalement - sinon c'est la guerre. Il faut donc qu'avant de la faire on soit décidé à la pousser jusqu'au bout, avec au moins l'un des partenaires. Dans ce cas, d'ailleurs, réussissant même partiellement, ceux qui l'auront refusée seront isolés - et ce sera, malgré eux, la paix.

PSF
From: Bullitt

November 9, 1936.

Dear Bill:-

It was good to get yours of October twenty-fourth on Election day and later to talk with you on the phone. I was delighted that you got into the American Club just in time to break the tie vote. Their vote was typical of thousands of representatives and employees of the big companies. They did not dare say out loud that they were going to vote for me for fear of offending the policy makers at the top. That was why the straw ballots were so deceptive.

In the New York Subway all through October people played a delightful game -- Roosevelt buttons all the way downtown and then as the Wall Street station was approached a quick shift to Landon buttons to please the Boss.

Do I remember Elsie Hooper! A cousin of mine, by Jove. In fact, several cousins of mine! When I last saw her she looked like Buddha and I think had a sneaking suspicion that she was a reincarnation of said fat man!

The reports of the way the French received the election results were most interesting.

The Stuttgart Liberty exercises went off well, as did the unveiling of the Jusseland memorial seat in Rook Creek Park Saturday.

I am proceeding as fast as I can on certain matters in the Department but there is mighty little time between now and the time I sail on the seventeenth.

All well except that I need a week of sleep.

As ever yours,

Honorable William C. Bullitt,
American Embassy,
Paris,
France.

file

PSE France
Bullitt 1936



Personal and
Confidential

Paris, November 24, 1936.

Dear Judge Moore:

Robert P. Skinner, who was our Ambassador to Turkey, has asked me to forward to you the enclosed letter to the President, and a copy for your own attention.

Very sincerely yours,

William C. Bullitt

William C. Bullitt.

Enclosures:
Two.

The Honorable

R. Walton Moore,

Acting Secretary of State,

Washington.

142 rue de Grenelle
Paris, France, November 17, 1936.

Dear Mr. President:

At various times since the conclusion of the Great War I have attempted to draw attention to certain commercial arrangements which we succeeded in making with Great Britain early in 1916, arrangements which, had they been made two years earlier, would have saved our people millions of dollars and, at the same time, greatly reduced the friction between the two Governments, with which you are familiar. Unfortunately, I have thus far made no practical headway in obtaining consideration of this important matter in influential circles, and I, therefore, address myself to you in the hope that my present observations, based upon personal experience, may be of some assistance to you in dealing with a subject likely to figure conspicuously in the work of your next administration.

As you are aware, nearly all discussion of neutrality legislation nowadays revolves around the idea ...
The President,

The White House,
Washington, D.C.

idea of preventing shipments of goods as a means of keeping us out of the war. This may be necessary, as respects shipments to actual belligerents, but does not take into consideration the rights and necessities of neutral powers. We may be sure that, in any future war, as in every past war, our exporters of cotton, manufactured goods and what not, will clamor for the right to forward their wares at least to neutral destinations, and we may be equally sure that, unless we take anticipatory action now, this right will be denied as it was during the Great War.

I am proposing, therefore, that we endeavor now to obtain from Great Britain a convention based upon what was actually arranged unilaterally in 1916, but going somewhat farther in certain directions, as a reasonably sure means of protecting our trade with neutral powers within those limitations that every reasonable person must agree are proper. There is this probability to be considered: Legislation in Congress is likely to be obtainable with difficulty and perhaps not at all and when enacted will doubtless be an ordinance of self-denial only. Such a treaty as I now have in mind would be worked out through diplomatic channels and should not arouse opposition

convention runs as follows:

either ...

Draft ...

either in business circles or in the Senate. It is unlikely, also, that Great Britain would hesitate long before accepting an arrangement which actually took effect in 1916 and proved to be most helpful in practice.

The plan I had⁴ in mind I urged upon our Ambassador in London during the last war. As you are aware, Mr. Page was not very useful in dealing with our practical troubles but, eventually, I obtained the approval of Mr. Lansing and managed to place the idea before Lord Robert Cecil, then Minister of Blockade. Lord Robert Cecil was so impressed with the suggestion that he caused it to be embodied in an Order in Council. I attach copies of correspondence with him showing what was actually done, correspondence which proves conclusively that the British Government of the day was willing to adopt any plan that was feasible and likely to reduce friction.

With these rather tiresome explanations out of the way, I submit herewith a rough draft of a possible convention, to which other powers could subscribe if disposed to do so. Naturally, I am always at your disposition to discuss any points of detail which may require elucidation. The language of the suggested convention runs as follows:

measures of the belligerent power.

Draft ...

DRAFT CONVENTION

Being desirous of lightening as far as possible the burdens falling upon trade and commerce in the event of war, and of facilitating the free movement of goods to neutral countries within the limits of their normal requirements, the two contracting powers have agreed as follows:

- 1 - Should either contracting party become involved in war, the other being a neutral, the belligerent power undertakes to set up at the capital of the neutral power or in such commercial centers as may be expedient, an office or offices equipped to consider and pass upon the history of all proposed exportations to neutral destinations, and if such exportations are found to be in fact intended for a neutral destination and no other, and in quantities within the normal requirements of the contemplated destination, the office or offices will thereupon issue a certificate to accompany the goods; and when goods are thus covered by a certificate declaratory of the facts above indicated, they shall be assured free passage to destination and shall not be detained or interfered with by any naval or military measures of the belligerent power.

2 - It is likewise agreed that should one of the contracting parties being a belligerent set up in the territory of the other, being a neutral, an office as provided in the preceding paragraph, the neutral power shall likewise establish an organization for the reception and examination of the papers relating to proposed exports of goods to neutral destinations and when convinced of their trustworthiness shall issue a certificate to this effect which, on being submitted to the control office of the belligerent power, shall be accepted as conclusive as to the facts alleged.

3 - It is further agreed that neither party, being a belligerent, shall apply to the goods of the other party any prohibition or restrictive measure not in effect on the date of shipment by sea of such goods.

4 - It is further agreed that if ships of the one contracting party are detained by the other contracting party, being a belligerent, and are subsequently released, having been found ...

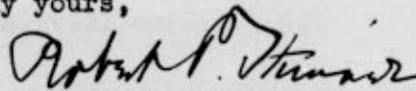
found innocent of any contravention of international law, compensation shall be paid to the owner of the detained ship equal to losses sustained.

- 5 - It is further agreed that either party, being a belligerent, will seek to enforce no prohibitive or restrictive action against the goods of the other which does not apply equally to the goods of the party seeking to impose the prohibition or restriction.

I am persuaded, Mr. President, that if the foregoing suggestions can be embodied in a convention with Great Britain, we shall have done ^{something} ~~much~~ to mitigate the rigors of any future war and shall have succeeded in preventing much of the irritation and dangerous controversy which characterized our relations with Great Britain during the first part of the last war.

Believe me, dear Mr. President,

Sincerely yours,



Robert P. Skinner.

Enclosures

C O P Y

FOREIGN OFFICE

February 5th, 1916.

Dear Mr. Skinner,

Lord Robert Cecil asks me to say that he would be very glad to have a talk with you one of these days. Would it be convenient for you to call at the Foreign Office at 12, o'clock on Monday or Tuesday, or at 5, o'clock on Tuesday ?

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Guy Loeck.

C O P Y

CONFIDENTIAL

February 9th, 1916.

Dear Mr. Skinner,

In accordance with my promise, I enclose a memorandum embodying a practical proposal for carrying out your suggestion. Of course it would have to be made clear if any public announcement that American shippers were perfectly free either to avail themselves of the facilities offered, or not to do so.

I have sent a copy of the memorandum with an explanatory letter to the Ambassador, and I shall also send it to our Embassy in America, but Sir Edward Grey does not propose to do anything public on the subject until he is satisfied that a scheme of that kind would be acceptable to American opinion.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Robert Cecil

Robert P. Skinner, Esq.,
American Consulate General.

C O P Y

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM

Feb. 9th, 1916.

1. In a conversation some weeks ago between Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Skinner, the American Consul General in London, the latter pointed out that British exporters obtained a Privy Council licence which gave protection to their goods, whereas an American exporter could only ascertain whether his goods would be allowed to pass by shipping them and waiting to observe their fate. To obviate this difficulty Mr. Skinner proposed that the British authorities in the U.S.A. should be granted power analogous to that of the W.T.D. in London and authorised to assure shippers on the submission of satisfactory proofs that their goods would not be interfered with.

2. The proposal has been carefully considered, and it is recognised that a system on the lines of that proposed by Mr. Skinner would be very useful in obviating friction between American shippers and H.M. Government with regard to the detention of goods on board vessels calling at or brought into ports in the United Kingdom. Authority cannot, however, be granted in all cases to the British authorities in the U.S.A. to give an assurance to shippers that their goods would be allowed to pass. Information which must be taken into account in authorising shipments cannot be made available in its entirety to the British authorities in the U.S.A. The scheme can, however, be adopted in a way and to an extent which will place intending exporters in the U.S.A. in practically the same position

/as

as intending exporters in the United Kingdom.

3. In order to bring it into operation, it would be necessary to establish an office in the U.S.A. which could give authoritative information to intending exporters, whatever the port of export or the nature of the goods. This office would be under the general control of the British Embassy, but the details of its organisation must be left to the British authorities in the U.S.A.

4. Applications for information received at the Office in the U.S.A. would be divided there into those relating to goods which in the U.K. were on the lists of prohibited or restricted exports, and the export of which therefore entailed a licence, and those which were not on such list and which therefore require no licence.

5. In all cases where a similar export from the U.K. would not require a licence, the British authorities in the U.S.A. would be able to give information without reference to London. They would for this purpose be provided with the latest edition of the Black List and would base their information on the fact that the consignee did or did not appear on the list, subject to any special directions received from London. This would place the American exporter on precisely the same footing as the exporter from the U.K.

6. Where it was proposed to ship goods which on export from the U.K. require a licence, the Foreign Office would be consulted by telegraph, and the British authorities ~~would~~ in the U.S.A. would be informed by telegraph what information

/could ...

could safely be given.

The information in both cases would be in writing and would take the form of a letter or certificate either to the effect that "as far as is at present known there would appear to be no objection on the part of H.M.G. to this shipment", or to the effect - "That this shipment is likely to lead to difficulties if persisted in".

7. In dealing with the advanced bookings of various steamship lines, considerable difficulty has been found in distinguishing particular shipments when the vessel comes forward, and much time is wasted on this account. In order to obviate this, it should be made clear to American shippers that no general letters will be given, but that all applications for information must state exactly the quantity and description of the goods to be shipped, and, where possible, the lines and dates of shipping. All the goods covered by the letter must be shipped on the same vessel. Where the amount shipped is less than the amount to which the letter refers, the unexhausted balance cannot be shipped at a later date; a new letter must be obtained.

8. It is quite realised that should this system be adopted, there will be a transition period during which some difficulties may occur, as there is no doubt that the first few ships would carry goods, in respect of part of which letters had been issued and in respect of part not, and the goods of the shipper who has obtained such letters would run the risk of being delayed, while the goods of some suspicious shipper were being removed; but difficulties of this kind would speedily right themselves

/ and ...

and goods for which letters had or had not been issued would sort themselves into different ships.

9. The reason which has led to the conclusion that all applications for information should be dealt with by one office in the United States of America is that practically all the vessels carrying mixed cargoes, which would entail very large numbers of letters, sail from New York or ports in that vicinity. Shipments from Southern ports are generally in bulk, and one letter would cover the whole cargo. As the shipments are usually arranged some time beforehand, the shipper would have plenty of time to make the necessary arrangements for getting the necessary letter of information. The shipments from San Francisco present more difficulty, as cargoes from that port are usually made up of different items, in addition to which the vessels frequently call at Central and South American ports to embark more cargo; but it is thought that the difficulties in regard to this port would not be insuperable.

10. The advantage to the American exporter of ascertaining whether his goods will be allowed to pass is so great that in cases where his application for information necessitates telegraphic communication with London, the cost of so much of the telegrams as refers to his application should be paid by him. No fee will be charged on the letter. Only the actual cost of the telegram~~s~~ will be recovered.

11. It is not proposed to introduce the system except for shipment to Scandinavia.

T.S.F.: France



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Personal and
Confidential

Paris, December 7, 1936.

Dear Mr. President:

Jim Farley has just passed through Paris. I took him to the dog races but did not lead him any further into the paths of iniquity so that, if he returns to you a changed man, you must blame the result on Ralph Strassburger and not on me. It was a delight to see him.

In talking with Jim, I tried to convince him (and I believe I did) that the situation in Europe today is too serious for him to suggest the planting of dubs in diplomatic posts in order to repay them for contributions to the campaign fund. Jim said that he agreed with me, and we went on to discuss how it might be possible for you to get rid of some of the men who are not fit to hold their present jobs as chiefs of mission in the present world crisis.

In

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House.

In the course of our discussion, it occurred to me and I suggested to Jim and now suggest to you, and shall suggest to Judge Moore, that it might be advisable for you to order him (Judge Moore) as soon as you get back from South America, to issue at once a circular instruction to all chiefs of mission reading as follows:

"Chiefs of mission are reminded that owing to the change in the date of Inauguration, their resignations should be in the hands of the President not later than January 15, 1937."

(Offie suggests that, as a result of this letter, I am likely to receive the only one of such instructions issued. Anyhow, I hereby submit my resignation.)

I suggest an instruction of this kind from Judge Moore to the chiefs of mission because I have no doubt that there are a number of men whom you wish to replace, but that you will find it highly unpleasant to ask for their resignations. If the reminder is sent out as a circular instruction by the Department of State, no one can resent receiving it because it would be addressed to all chiefs of mission without distinction. Then you would be able to get rid of misfits by a polite and hearty letter of thanks and praise.

I should like to pour into your ear a vast number of
ideas

ideas with respect to men that are not fitted for their present jobs; but it looks as if I should not have an opportunity to see you. I shall restrain myself, therefore, and make merely one suggestion.

If there is a chance to maintain peace in Europe during your next Administration, that chance lies in the small possibility that it may be possible to draw the French Government and the German Government closer together.

Blum, lunching with me alone a few days ago, said that he hoped to be able to inaugurate soon a movement for reconciliation with Germany based on the reduction of economic barriers, financial and economic collaboration and reduction of armaments. He said that he felt the active support and collaboration of the United States would be essential in any attempt to bring France and Germany together.

Another conversation on the same lines was one in which Delbos, the Papal Nuncio, and others participated. They said that Hitler two weeks ago had sent to Paris his "super-Ribbentrop", von Lersner, to say to the French Government, and to the leading French politicians outside the Government, that Hitler still desired most ardently to reach agreement with France.

Von

Von Lersner stated that Hitler felt the two countries were so far apart that they could not be brought together without the friendly assistance of the United States. He added that Hitler felt that Luther was not in close touch with our Government and that he should be replaced by someone closer to his intimate circle.

I have managed to establish entirely confidential relations with Blum and Delbos and can see them privately whenever I wish. (I am having lunch with Blum privately twice this week.) It should be possible for our ambassador in Berlin to establish the same sort of relationship with the heads of the Nazi Government in Berlin. It would be difficult but it could be done. If we had an Ambassador who could do that in Berlin, he and I could at least be of some assistance in bringing France and Germany together - nothing much is needed except some verbal assistance in erasing the lies each believes about the other - and in any event, we should be able to keep you fully informed with regard to the most intimate inner details of the European situation.

Dodd has many admirable and likeable qualities, but he is almost ideally ill-equipped for his present job. He hates the Nazis too much to be able to do

anything

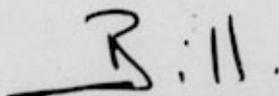
anything with them or get anything out of them. We need in Berlin someone who can at least be civil to the Nazis and speaks German perfectly. The latter qualification is an absolute necessity as Hitler speaks only German and, unless I am mistaken, Goering speaks only German.

As I wrote you before, I can not think of any American so well qualified as Hugh Wilson for the Berlin job. He speaks perfect German and is on good terms with the Germans without being in the faintest degree pro-German or pro-Nazi. Unless you have someone up your sleeve, I think that you ought to send Wilson to Berlin.

I spare you the dozen other suggestions which I should make if I were with you tonight.

Good luck and every good wish.

Yours affectionately,

Bill.

William C. Bullitt.

PF
J. J. J.
PSF: Bulletin



Paris, December 8, 1936.

Personal and
Confidential.

Dear Mr. President:

So many rumors are flying around about the imminence of revolution in France that it occurs to me you might like to have my guesses on the subject.

In my opinion, the only thing which could lead to a general revolutionary movement would be a general strike. I do not expect a general strike for the simple reason that I think the Communists know it would not be successful. The country would support a general strike in one circumstance only - as a final means to prevent a fascist coup d'etat. The fascist movement in France has diminished almost to invisibility. If the Communists should attempt to pull off a general strike now, the country would react violently against them and the Army would intervene against them instantly.

Daladier, who is now Minister of War, has taken
pains

The Honorable
Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States of America,
The White House.

If Blum should resign because of Communist attacks, there are many possible complications which might follow. Blum might remain as President of the pains to send all members of Communist cells in the Army first to jail for sixty days and then to the eastern garrisons. He said to me a few days ago that he is now absolutely confident that he can rely on every division in the army to assist in breaking a general strike, and that he will not hesitate to act instantly. It seems to me, therefore, that any real revolutionary movement in this country for the present is most unlikely.

The stability of the present government is another matter. The Communists are attacking the government, which in theory they support, more violently even than the parties of the extreme Right. Blum very nearly resigned yesterday because of a violent attack on his foreign policy by the Communist leaders in the Chamber of Deputies. Daladier told me that he had urged Blum twenty times to cut loose from his Communist supporters and base himself on the Socialists, Radical Socialists and some of the Center Parties. Blum, however, has said to me that, if he does this, he knows his government will be pushed into taking a more and more conservative position until he will find himself opposing the factory workmen for whom and with whom he has worked all his life.

If

If Blum should resign because of Communist attacks, there are many possible combinations which might follow. Blum might remain as President of the Council with a new cabinet, but I think he would refuse that solution. Chautemps might become President of the Council with Blum as Minister of Foreign Affairs - again I think Blum would refuse. Herriot has told me that he is afraid to take the Presidency of the Council as he is too much hated by too many different people. He would be glad to become Minister of Foreign Affairs in a Chautemps cabinet. In any such cabinet Paul Reynaud probably would replace Auriol as Minister of Finance. The most likely combination to my mind, however, is Daladier, President of the Council and Chautemps, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The burning issue is, of course, that of occupation of factories by striking workmen. Blum recently got through the Chamber of Deputies a bill providing for compulsory arbitration to prevent strikes. The bill has not yet passed the Senate and there is much opposition to it, but it seems likely that it will pass. I asked Blum the other day if he felt it really would stop the occupation of the factories. He said that he did not know, but that there was a chance that it might. In any case, it was a good gamble.

In this connection, it may interest you to know that both Blum and Delbos have promised me that if the charwomen, furnace men, orderlies, etc. of the American

Hospital in Paris strike and occupy the Hospital again, as they did last June, they will be ejected at once.

(Incidentally, I have noticed that the strikers in the United States have begun to occupy factories. I suppose the matter is one which falls outside your authority, but it seems to me that you ought to use whatever influence you have to stop this practice. We ought to try as hard as we can to turn an increased portion of the national income into the hands of the factory workers, miners and farmers, but we ought not to allow dissatisfied workers to seize the properties of their employers. There is nothing that can lead so quickly to violence on both sides.)

If the law for compulsory arbitration should be successful, and if Blum should take a stiff attitude with respect to occupations of factories, confidence in France would return rapidly, and I should expect to see a rapid improvement in the economic and financial situation.

Delbos is terrified with regard to the possibility of a general European war emerging from the conflict in Spain. I do not agree with him because I believe

that

that the Russians will not at this time dare to face war with Italy and Germany.

As I wrote you before, I am attempting to get out of the minds of the French the belief that they may count on us again to send our army, navy and money to Europe. I have, from time to time, felt like the lady who tried to sweep back the sea with a broom. The French want so much to believe that we shall do again what we did in 1917, that one is brushing back constantly a sea of hopes and wishes. I have made the point clear to all the members of the Government and all the other political leaders with whom I have come in contact, but it is impossible to restrain the comparatively ignorant and light-headed. Our friend, de Tessen, who is not over-burdened with brains, in a speech the other day said that he was convinced by his conversations with you that we would certainly, in case of need, do again what we did in 1917! He should be spanked and I shall spank him verbally when next we meet. But his attitude is characteristic of that of millions of Frenchmen.

I do not want to make this letter endless and I shall terminate it by a reference to a matter which is none of my business. I have been disgusted for many years and I think you have been, by the spectacle of American girls crawling on the ground in London to be

presented

presented at Court. The last straw for me was the case of Margaret McReynolds, when we were in London in 1933, which resulted, as I think I told you, in her papa, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House, weeping all over Claridges Hotel until I practically knocked down the Lord Chamberlain and got dear Margaret into Buckingham Palace. It seems to me that the present unpleasantness in London - whatever may be the outcome, and the outcome on this date, is still uncertain - offers an excellent opportunity for you to instruct our Ambassador in London that in future no Americans except those attached to the Embassy are to be presented at the Court of St. James. No explanation would have to be given. Everyone would select his favorite explanation and it would be all to the good.

It is Sunday evening and I can so easily imagine myself sitting with you in the White House and talking to you, that I feel like running on with everything that is in my mind. There is a lot in it but I shall burden you with just one more thing. I hope to Heaven that you will appoint Judge Moore Under Secretary of State as soon as you can conveniently. I feel quite certain that if he should be passed over after having

served

- 7 -

served well as Acting Secretary, he would curl up and die.

I wish to Heaven I could have a talk with you tonight.

Anyhow, my love and good luck.

Yours affectionately,

Bill.

William C. Bullitt.

RF: Franco

Personal and
Confidential.

Paris, December 20, 1936.

Dear Mr. President:

It was grand to hear your voice over the telephone. I heard you as clearly as if you had been in the next room and it took me exactly two minutes to get through from the Embassy to the White House. That is the result of the installation of direct telephone communication between Paris and New York. If by any chance you should ever wish to call me, tell the telephone operator at the White House to put the call through to France direct, not via England.

I have written you so often in the past few weeks that, in spite of the fact that you said you still liked to get letters from me, I hesitate to keep on writing; but I should like to make one suggestion to you which may possibly prove to be important.

I

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House.

I am more convinced every day that the only chance of preserving peace in Europe lies in the possibility that the French and the Germans may reach some basis of understanding. The new element which has created this possibility is the fact that the bombing plane has been developed to such a pitch of efficiency that the French Government knows the Germans can destroy the city of Paris in 24 hours and the German Government knows the French can destroy Essen and all the towns of the Ruhr in 24 hours. There is beginning to be a general realization, therefore, that war will mean such horrible suffering that it will end in general revolution, and that the only winners will be Stalin and Company.

For different reasons, the British, Italians and Russians are all opposed to Franco-German reconciliation. The only great Power which favors it genuinely is the United States. Poland desires it ardently and so do all the small countries of Europe, except Hungary and Bulgaria.

You will have seen from my recent cables that I have attempted to do what I could, in a quiet way and without involving the United States in the least, to encourage the idea of Franco-German rapprochement.

I think it might be most useful if, when you see de Laboulaye and Luther, you should stress the idea that peace in Europe is purely a question of Franco-German reconciliation; that the modern bombing plane has confronted Europe with the alternative of unification or destruction and that we ardently desire to see France and Germany reconciled.

If, on some occasion, you should have an opportunity to say to Ronald Lindsay that we should be shocked if we should find that England was not genuinely doing everything possible to promote Franco-German rapprochement, it might be very helpful.

The British, of course, will say that they favor it and will do everything possible to sabotage it. But they may be less active if they think your eye is on them.

Delbos again this morning reiterated to me his remarks about Great Britain's absolute opposition to any concessions to Germany in the matter of colonies. As he pointed out yesterday to me, it was the frown of Britain which prevented France from following up Schacht's conversations with Blum.

Inasmuch as their unexpected explosions - and should, I think, move only on firm ground after preparation