

● PSF

FRANCE: Wm. C. Bullitt

1938

*File
Private*

Personal and
Confidential

Paris, January 10, 1938.

Dear Commander-in-Chief:

Orders duly received and contents noted. Obedience, however, impossible due to absence of second in command who is in Switzerland taking care of his sinus as usual.

Don't worry about me. There is lots of life in the old carcass yet. The only time that I was really unbearably overworked was this summer, when everyone on earth was here for the Exposition. As you know, I am going to take a long holiday this Spring beginning about the first of March. I may, in addition, visit Senator Cuttoli in Algiers for a week the end of this month. That will depend on the date when Hugh Wilson will pass through Paris.

As I wrote you before, I believe that there is a real chance to bring France and Germany closer together
this

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House.

this year and I want to concert a lot of things with Hugh.

I was, of course, delighted at Joe Kennedy's appointment to London and I wish that I could have a talk with him before he goes to his post. There is a lot of information about the Embassy plumbing that he ought to have, and you and I are the only people I know who are sufficiently low-minded to discuss drains with him. You will, I assume, have Joe in Washington for several weeks before he leaves and I hope you will have a chance to remind him that (1) the British Government has every code of our Embassy in London. (You will remember Ramsay MacDonald's statement to me that every message sent or received by our Embassy in London is decoded at once and is on the desk of the Cabinet Minister interested the following morning.) (2) It is highly improbable that the British Government has missed the opportunity to put the most efficient dictaphones in our new Chancery, which is in a building only part of which is rented by us. (3) There are probably dictaphones in the Ambassador's residence and certain members of the staff of the Embassy are undoubtedly members of the British Secret Service.

This

This is the kind of thing that the Department is apt to consider too low to discuss with an Ambassador but it is something that Every Young Man Ought To Know.

Salmon, the head of the code room in the Department, is an admirable fellow and he has a number of new coding devices which should be private for a few messages at least. I think you ought to advise Joe to have a long talk with Salmon and ask for some device which will enable him, in time of need, to send you really confidential messages. I also think you ought to have Joe take to London the best expert on picking out dictaphones that the Navy or Army can produce and have a thorough inspection made both of his house and his office.

It is extremely difficult, of course, to discover the damn things without tearing a house to pieces. For example, recently in Moscow the French Embassy was about to move into a new habitation which had been renovated by Russian labor. The day the French Ambassador was to move in, the ceiling of his office fell, revealing a magnificent series of dictaphones established in the walls and ceiling. You will recall the fishpole dictaphone that the Russians planted in the wall between Joe Davies' bed and the desk where he dictated all his telegrams.

The

The British are not so crude as the Russians and an investigation might yield nothing. Nevertheless, I think it worth while to have one made.

Davies to Brussels was a stroke of genius. He can not do much harm there. And as there is almost no work to do he will be able to survive physically. As you doubtless know, Pletnev, the great Russian heart specialist told him that his arteries were in such shape that any serious work would kill him.

If you have not yet picked the man to replace Davies in Moscow, I suggest that you take an extremely stable career officer. By all odds the best man, because of his knowledge of the Far East, would be MacMurray. He would doubtless hate to go there, as anyone else would, but I think he would be excellent and the long suffering staff in Moscow ought not to have to suffer the infliction of another Davies.

I was most serious in my recommendation that Wiley should be sent to Riga. He is in Class I and has done service as Consul General in Antwerp. You will remember that you announced that you required service as Consul General as a prerequisite to appointment to the grade of Minister. You haven't yet appointed one of the men who

has

has done service as Consul General. You have appointed Atherton, without service as Consul General, to Sofia. I enclose a letter from Wiley which will give you some sense of his quality. Wiley knows the Russian scene so well that there is no one else so well equipped for the Riga post.

I have had another letter from Moore which is so full of depression that I am honestly worried about the old man. He seems to have been shelved completely and feels it terribly. Can't you have him put on the Personnel Board? He can be put on as the Secretary's representative, or a little amendment could be put through to the Foreign Service Organization Act to provide that, in addition to the Assistant Secretaries, the Counselor of the Department should be a member of the Personnel Board.

Your handling of the PANAY sinking was masterly. To turn it from a MAINE to a LUSITANIA was all that could be expected and you got more out of the Japanese than anyone here believed you could.

Henceforth, your chief job is going to be to maintain our national honor while avoiding involvement in war. The best way to do that, I think, is to be as wise as the

serpent

serpent before the event, not after.

When Saint-Quentin comes to see you, you will face the quintessence of the Quai d'Orsay. He thinks the Treaty of Versailles was the best treaty that could be devised under the circumstances and that French foreign policy since that time has been intelligent. When I asked him if he saw any possibility of preserving peace, he said that he saw none. He did not feel that there was anything that France and England could or should do except wait. I said to him that this seemed to me not the policy of a statesman but the policy of an undertaker. He replied that after all human beings were so helpless in the face of events that all they could do was to bury the dead.

He is upright and honorable, and his point of view and that of Léger and the rest of the permanent officials of the Quai d'Orsay seems to me fatal. They have so much obstructive power that it is doubtful that Chautemps or Delbos or Blum or anyone else will be able to carry out a constructive policy in the face of their intelligent and well-informed negation.

- 7 -

I enclose the small word which I have sent to the Department on Saint-Quentin. I think it might be useful if you should say to him that the United States intends to stay out of any war which may start on the continent of Europe just as long as possible.

I am looking forward with the most intense eagerness to seeing you in March. There is so much to talk over each day that I wish that I could have a foot on each side of the ocean.

Blessings and good luck.

Yours affectionately,

Bill

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

P.T.

January 13, 1938.

MEMORANDUM FOR

M. A. L.

Tell Bill that I shall be delighted to see his "Old Testament Duke" and that I am particularly anxious to meet him because on Christmas morning, having nothing else to do, I read by pure chance, before breakfast, his book "Les Campagnes Ardentes," which was crowned by the French Academy, and his book "Francois Ier" which received the Prix Gobert. I was so much interested that after attending church I read those successful and distinguished novels -- "Le Papillon Noir", "Le Seigneur Inconnu" and "Le Voyage de Satan."

Tell Bill that these are not nearly as interesting as fifteen or twenty of his other books, which I trust Bill will read and memorize before he gets here in March!

F. D. R.

PSF: France
Bullitt

DEPARTMENT OF THE
TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Paris, January 3, 1938.

Dear Miss Le Hand:

Antoine Pierre Marie, Duke de Levis-Mirepoix, an extremely well known French writer and historian, and what is more unusual, one of the few-honest, authentic, legitimate and certified dukes that still exist in France, left for a tour of the United States the other day on the same boat as Anne. He is going to spend four months giving lectures all over the United States to gatherings organized by the Alliance Francaise. He called on me just before leaving and said, as everyone does, that he would like to see the President. I hope most heartily that the President will see him if he can.

The

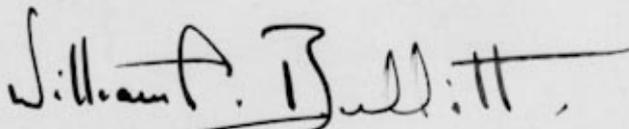
Miss Marguerite Le Hand,
Secretary to the President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

The Duke looks more Levi than Mirepoix, and perhaps the family foot slipped somewhere, but I can assure you that in spite of his looks he is a charming and intelligent gentleman and of real importance. The President may perhaps have read either his book, "Les Campagnes Ardentes," which was crowned by the Académie Francaise, or his book, "Francois Ier," which received the Prix Gobert. He has also written a number of highly successful and distinguished novels, notably "Le Papillon Noir," "Le Seigneur Inconnu" and "Le Voyage de Satan."

I told Levis-Mirepoix that he would, of course, have to have his request for an interview with the President presented by the French Embassy and he said that he had made all arrangements to have this done. He may not be in Washington for some time but I hope that whenever he does arrive, you will be able to dig this letter out of your memory and see that he has a glimpse of the gentleman whom I assume I am now to call the Commander-in-Chief.

Every possible good wish for the New Year.

Yours very sincerely,



William C. Bullitt.

*File
personal*

PSF
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Paris, January 20, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

You have doubtless followed with amusement the gyrations which resulted in the calling of Monsieur Chautemps to replace Monsieur Chautemps.

He has more common sense than any other French politician but I wish his present Ministry were a bit stronger. He and Delbos want to go ahead on the policy of reconciliation with Germany; but they are likely to be thrown out by the Communists and Socialists if they go far.

The curious thing about the "crisis" was that no one in France took it seriously. I have never heard so many roars of laughter from the leading politicians as during those days which were supposed to be critical.

When Herriot funk'd the Premiership, Central Europe went over the dam. Austria will fall into the hands of
Germany,

The Honorable

Franklin Delano Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House.

Germany, and France will do nothing except protest feebly. That, plus a prolongation of the present line in Rumania, will give Germany a controlling position in Central and Eastern Europe. If the Germans should have the common sense to refrain from violence in their dealings with Czechoslovakia, they should be able to get what they want without war.

That is, I know, a big IF, and I remember that everything was moving beautifully for Germany in 1914; but I feel that Hitler's present amiable attitude vis-à-vis France is based on the conviction that he will need to do nothing except be amiable in order to get what he wants in Central Europe. Incidentally, I believe that this outcome would be in line with the real policy of Neville Chamberlain and the instructions that he has given his Ambassador in Berlin. We may, therefore, see peace preserved by the simple process of England and France acquiescing in German domination over Central Europe.

I have spent too much time lately thinking of what you could do to help the chances of peace. I have come to the unpleasant conclusion that you can do nothing effective in Europe until you have an ambassador in Berlin and one in London who can discover for you what those

those Governments really want.

I remember talking over with you the idea that you might call a world conference in Washington to discuss international law. I feel now that, while such an appeal would be acceptable to American public opinion, it would seem an escape from reality to the rest of the world. It would be as if in the palmiest days of Al Capone you had summoned a national conference of psychoanalysts to Washington to discuss the psychological causes of crime.

Van Zeeland's report, which I have just read, seems cold porridge. It may have been a bit hotter before Neville Chamberlain recooked it but I find it difficult now to believe that it will excite the world.

I hope that you will consider with the utmost care the question of Hugh Wilson's successor as Assistant Secretary of State. Two requirements are absolute: (1) He should be a New Dealer; (2) He should know the difference between Budapest and Bucharest!

I have been told that you are thinking of appointing a well-known, though faintly disguised, Pennsylvania Republican to that post. I hereby rise in righteous indignation and inform you that he will be objected to by the Democratic Senator from Pennsylvania, the

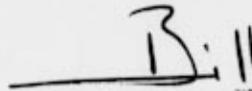
Governor

Governor of Pennsylvania, the entire Pennsylvania Democratic organization, and yours truly. Do you think that you could possibly persuade Roy Howard to take the job? The best Democrats in the Service now are, of course, John Cudahy and John Wiley.

I am leaving Paris tomorrow to spend three days in Lorraine, in the course of which I shall have to make eleven speeches at official functions and shall be decorated with an LL.D., by the University of Nancy.

Blessings and good luck.

Yours affectionately,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bill", with a horizontal line underneath.

William C. Bullitt

*"de la
personal"*

*France
PSF: Bullitt folder*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

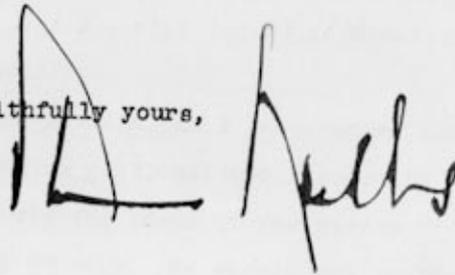
January 24, 1938.

My dear Mr. President:

It is probable that Bill Bullitt has written you directly regarding the new French Ambassador to the United States. In the event that he has not done so, however, I am sending you a copy of his despatch to the Department of January 10th, in which he gives us his estimate of M. de Saint-Quentin. I believe you will find it interesting.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



The President,
The White House.

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Unnumbered Paris, January 10, 1938.

Subject: Monsieur Doynel de Saint-Quentin.

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~ FOR THE SECRETARY

AND UNDER SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to supplement my telegram No. 19 of January 5, 7 P.M., with regard to Monsieur Doynel de Saint-Quentin.

Monsieur de Saint-Quentin, as I telegraphed the Department, is a charming gentleman who represents faithfully and perfectly the ideas of the career officials of the Quai D'Orsay. He enjoys the implicit confidence of Alexis Léger, Secretary General of the French Foreign Office, and may be expected to reflect his views rather than those of the Minister for Foreign Affairs or the Président du Conseil.

Monsieur de Saint-Quentin, who speaks excellent English, has never been in the United States.

He

He is polite, intelligent, and cold. He meets a question which he finds it impolitic to answer truthfully by diverting his reply into a collateral and innocuous channel. Like Léger, he fears intensely that the United States may become involved in war in the Far East and may draw in England and the Soviet Union; and as a result, that Germany will be able to overwhelm with impunity Austria and Czechoslovakia. Like Léger, he is primarily interested in preserving the traditional power and prestige of France in Central and Eastern Europe. He believes that war with Germany cannot be avoided by a policy of reconciliation but that if the United States should allow Germany to believe that our intervention in war on the continent of Europe would be almost inevitable, Germany might fear to take aggressive action. He believes that France and England should have recognized Italy's conquest of Ethiopia in the autumn of 1936 and thus have attached Italy to France and England.

In a word, Monsieur de Saint-Quentin is an upright and distinguished representative of those French diplomats who are thinking primarily of preparing a perfect White Book to be issued at the outbreak of the next European war.

Respectfully yours,

WILLIAM C. BULLITT

PSF: France
Bullitt folder
Bullitt

Feb. 2, 1938

Telegram from Bullitt
to Sec. Morgenthau

In re-long conversation Marchandean had with him.

SEE--Henry Morgenthau-Drawer 1--1938

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confidential*

C O P Y

Fin - 1 Bullitt

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Paris, France

DATE: February 24, 1938, noon

NO.: 294

RUSH

FROM COCHRAN.

Today at eleven o'clock I saw Marchandean, the Minister of Finance. I made reference to our conversation of February 18 in which he asked whether the American Treasury was disposed to open with France and England conversations under the Tripartite (see my telegram No. 268 of February 18, 6 p.m.).

I informed Marchandean that his inquiry had been communicated to Secretary Morgenthau. I said that Secretary Morgenthau had been away from Washington for a few days, but that upon his return he had authorized me to inform Mr. Marchandean that we are ready at any time to listen but that, in view of the international political atmosphere, it is essential that any consultations and conversations which may take place under the Tripartite should be strictly confidential and of a technical nature. Mr. Marchandean agreed that it is very necessary that the talks be secret, and that we use the methods of contact and communication heretofore utilized in technical monetary discussions. With this in mind, he said, Monick is returning to Paris at the end of the week to report

any progress that he has made in London, although Mr. Marchandean said that in view of the British Cabinet crisis he doubted whether much could have been accomplished. After Monick has made his report the Minister will get in touch with me again.

Yesterday the French control lost a little more than 1,000,000 pounds. The pressure on the franc was even greater this morning. The control had yielded 400,000 pounds by 11:45 a.m, even though the rate had been permitted to move to 154.45. My contact admitted that the cracks in the French financial structure were becoming obvious. Last night the Governor of the Bank of France attended dinner at the Elysees. I understand he gained the impression there that even Marchandean's Government associates and political friends do not accept as serious measures toward reconstructing France's finances the Marchandean proposals which I reported in my telegram of February 23, 4 p.m., No. 289.

BULLITT

EA:LWW

RR

GRAY

Havre

Dated February 25, 1938

Received 11:20 a. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

RUSH February 25, 11 a. m.

PERSONAL AND ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM
AMBASSADOR BULLITT.

"I could scarcely hear what you said on the telephone last night and assume that you had equal difficulty in hearing me. I tried to express to you my profound conviction that for me to leave the field of foreign affairs at this critical moment in order to become Governor of Pennsylvania would be an abandonment of duty. There are a number of men in our party who would make excellent governors of Pennsylvania, notably Joe Guffey and Dave Lawrence. My entire interest at the present time is in devising ways and means to keep the United States out of the series of wars which are on the horizon; and, as I said to you and perhaps you heard, if I should be nominated today for the governorship and should receive a wireless informing me of the nomination, I should at once refuse by wireless.

February 25, 11 a. m. from Havre

I shall come to the White House as soon as possible after reaching New York and I hope that you will not permit the party to put itself in the position of being damaged by my refusal to run. I appreciate greatly the interest of Earle, Guffey and Stern but it seems to me a peculiarly inappropriate time for a man who is experienced in foreign affairs to desert them for domestic affairs.

As I have told you often, I shall always be ready to do anything that you wish me; but I ask you to hear my views before making any decision. Love to you all. Bill."

RR HPD

WILEY

PSF: ^{The} ~~Franklin~~ 1/9 38
Bullitt

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE

AUX ETATS-UNIS

Washington, February 26, 1938.

Dear Marvin,

I am sending you herewith a personal letter which M. Georges Bonnet, former Ambassador here, is addressing to the President. Will you be kind enough to remit it to him.

M. Bonnet has asked me whether the President would consent to give him an autographed picture of himself, in souvenir of his mission to Washington. He would be greatly pleased and I do hope it will be possible for you to secure it.

I was precisely going to ask you the same favor. As you know, I am leaving Washing-

Marvin H. McIntyre Esq.
Secretary to the President
The White House
Washington D.C.

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ton around March 15. Nothing would please me more than to take back to France with me a picture of the President, whom I met for the first time during the War, whom I greatly admire, and who has been extremely kind to me on several occasions when I have met him.

With your permission, I shall go one day to the White House to bid you good-bye before leaving.

With my anticipated thanks for your courtesy, believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

Julius Henry

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

3/9/38

Photographs delivered in person to Jules Henry

3/9/38

1. "For Georges Bonnet from his friend
Franklin D. Roosevelt"
2. "For Jules Henry from his old friend
Franklin D. Roosevelt".

TMB

Le Ministre d'Etat
—
Secrétariat Particulier
—

Paris, le 13 février 1958
37, QUAI D'ORSAY (7^e)

Monsieur le Président,

A l'heure où mon successeur rejoint son poste, je voudrais vous exprimer ma vive reconnaissance pour la bienveillance que vous m'avez témoignée comme Ambassadeur de France à Washington.

Je me rappellerai toujours avec émotion l'accueil que j'ai trouvé dans ce beau Pays que vous dirigez avec cette générosité de cœur et cette claudayance qui font, dans le monde, l'admiration de tous les Démocrates.

Les mois que j'ai passés à l'ambassade de

France à Washington sont les meilleurs de ma vie
politique. J'aurais souhaité pouvoir y prolonger
longtemps mon activité. Mais j'ai dû revenir en
France pour répondre à un appel auquel je
ne pourrais pas me dérober.

En vous faisant de présenter à Madame
Roosevelt mes hommages et ceux de ma femme,
je vous prie, Monsieur le Président, de bien
vouloir agréer l'expression de ma profonde gratitude
et de mon très respectueux dévouement.

Georges Bonnet

Président de la
Monsieur

A

I

[April 1938?]

Tel personnel
under
Bullitt

You tell the President that today in the Sudeten area, for one reason or another there has been great disorder; that the Sudetons have been marching around with flags and there has been rioting and a large number of Sudetons have been shot and wounded by the troops and the police.

4.-24
At 5.30 the Sudeton leaders met and presented a 6-hour ultimatum to the Govt., which (ultimatum) expires tonight at 11.30, that is to say in just about an hour and twenty minutes from now.

The fact is this: That the ultimatum to the Govt. demands the withdrawal of the Czech troops in the Sudeten area and demands also that the authority in the Sudeton region be put in the command of the mayors. It amounts to a withdrawal of Czech authority in the Sudeton region.

The Czech Govt. has already rejected this ultimatum but has said that it does not consider negotiations closed. There is considered to be and there is considerable possibility that after the expiration of this ultimatum in an hour and 20 min., German troops may cross the Czech border, which means war.

The French Govt. has told the British that they should try to get the German Govt. into a conference right away to settle the question. There is no reply yet from the British but one is expected any minute. There is as yet no French mobilization.
I wish you would tell the President that there is something

which I would like to say personally and it is extremely difficult for me to dictate it because he alone knows the background. ..."

(Can be reached at his home in the country,
Chantilly 93. "It is important to have a
word with him, no matter what time."

"We may have a complete blow-up within the next few hours."

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

P.F.

For the kind attention of
Miss Le Hand:

Telegram No. 776, May 17,
noon, from Paris.

5/17/38

Bullitt

JR

GRAY

Paris

Dated May 17, 1938

Rec'd 8:03 a.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

776, May 17, noon.

PERSONAL FOR MISS MARGUERITE LE HAND:

The President said to me on the telephone last night that he had always intended to put through the supplementary appropriation bill for foreign service clerks. Indeed he was under the impression that the bill was already in Committee in Congress. When I explained to him what Messersmith had said to me yesterday morning the President said that he would take action today.

Will you please get in touch with Messersmith and finish the business?

BULLITT

DDM:HPD

private file

Bullitt

file copy

JR
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (D)

Paris

Dated May 17, 1938

Rec'd 8:10 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

777, May 17, 1 p.m.

PERSONAL AND ~~SECRET~~ FOR THE SECRETARY.

The Czechoslovakian situation is so critical that
while I will concede there is an excellent chance of
a peaceful settlement, I nevertheless believe the
Department should be prepared to face a major European
war before August 15.

BULLITT

HPD

PSF: France

file
personal

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Personal and

~~Secret~~

Paris, May 20, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

I hope this letter will reach you before Europe blows up. At the moment, it looks to me as if the Czechs had decided that in the long run it would be better for them to have general war rather than give the Sudeten a sufficient autonomy to satisfy either Henlein or Hitler. They will shoot some Sudeten, and Hitler will march across the Czech frontier.

The question of whether or not all Europe shall go to war is, therefore, ceasing to be a question of finding a basis for compromise between the Czechs and Germany. It is becoming a question of whether or not France will march when the Germans cross the Czech frontier. Neither you nor I can decide that question for the French Government; but we can both have a certain amount of influence on the decision.

I feel that it would be an unspeakable tragedy if

France,

The Honorable

Franklin Delano Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House.

France, to support Czechoslovakia, should attack the "Siegfried Line" between Strasbourg and Luxemburg, which is the only point at which attack is considered possible by the French General Staff. As you know, French airplane production is now about 45 planes per month; British about 80 per month. The Germans, at worst, even when changing types, produce 300 per month and at best 500 to 600 per month. The French have no anti-aircraft artillery worth mentioning, and are just beginning to produce it. There are only thirty thousand gas masks available for the entire civilian population of France. The slaughter of the entire younger generation of France would be certain and every city in France could be levelled to the ground by German planes. The French, even under such circumstances, would hold out and the war would be a long one, involving England and all Europe. There could be only one possible result; the complete destruction of western Europe and Bolshevism from one end of the Continent to the other.

The chances are today that the French will carry out their pledge to Czechoslovakia as a matter of honor - whatever the cost. If you believe, as I believe, that it is not in the interest either of the United States or civilization as a whole to have the Continent of Europe devastated

devastated, I think we should attempt to find some way which will let the French out of their moral commitment.

I do not believe that any general appeal for peace by you at the present time would be effective. Today the governments of both Germany and Italy hate the United States so heartily that neither one would accept any such proposal as you were thinking of making last January. Moreover, there would not be time to summon representatives to Washington. Both Germany and Italy might, however, accept a specific proposal of a limited nature.

I am fully aware of all the objections to the suggestion which I am about to make. If you should act on it, you would be accused of involving the United States in European politics and sacrificing another small nation to Hitler. But I feel that when the people of the United States realize, as they soon will, that general war in Europe is imminent they will not only accept but will demand some action from you which may promise to stop it.

If and when a German march across the border of Czechoslovakia seems imminent, I think that you should take action of the following nature:

Call to the White House the Ambassadors of England,
France,

France, Germany and Italy. Ask them to transmit to Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler and Mussolini your urgent invitation to send representatives at once to the Hague to attempt to work out a peaceful settlement of the dispute between Germany and Czechoslovakia. Add that, if the four governments desire, a representative of the United States will sit with them. You should also make a personal appeal of the sort that you know best how to make; referring to the fact that we are the children of all the civilizations of Europe, that just as we are grateful for Shakespeare, so are we grateful for Beethoven; that just as we are grateful for Molière, so are we grateful for Leonardo da Vinci, etc; that we can not stand by and watch the beginning of the end of European civilization without making one last effort to stop its destruction; that you are convinced that the only result of general European war today would be an Asiatic despotism established on fields of dead.

After a general conversation with the four Ambassadors, you might reinforce your action by personal conversations with each Ambassador, stressing to the German Ambassador the fact that France will fight and England will fight, that war in Europe today can end only in the establishment

of

of Bolshevism from one end of the Continent to the other, that your proposed conference will leave the Bolsheviks beyond the swamps which divide the Soviet Union from Europe and are Europe's real eastern boundary. I think that even Hitler would accept under such circumstances.

The conference in the Hague would probably have to recommend that a plebiscite be held in Czechoslovakia to determine the will of the different peoples of that country. If the Czechs should refuse to hold such a plebiscite, the French would have an escape from their desperate moral dilemma and general European war would be avoided.

You would be accused, or the man sent to the Hague as your representative, would be, of selling out a small nation in order to produce another Hitler triumph. I should not hesitate to take that brick on my head and I don't think you should either if, thereby, you could avoid a general European war.

I could make this letter fifty pages long filled with explanations, but as between you and myself I feel no explanations are needed. You, at least, will know that I have not become either a cynic or a lover of Hitler.

I have thought this matter over night after night and I am convinced that this highly unpleasant course is the one that we should pursue and the only one that offers a chance of success.

If you should consider that this proposal is sound, I think you should work out at once your statement to the Ambassadors in detail so that you can spring it at a moment's notice. The moment has not yet arrived, but it may soon.

It would be fatal, I believe, to communicate your intention to any government, including the British. They would at once relax their own efforts to reconcile the Czechs and Germans because they would feel that at last they were getting the United States tied up in European political problems. Furthermore, they would, in confidence, tell all their friends in Europe and you could certainly, in that event, count on refusals from Hitler and Mussolini.

You would, of course, make it clear to the people of the United States that your action was directed toward this one emergency and that you had no intention of involving the United States in all the disputes of Europe.

In addition, I believe that it would help immensely if you should call in St. Quentin and tell him that you

hope

- 7 -

hope France will not commit suicide and if you would authorize me to say the same thing for you to Daladier.

In any event, as soon as you have considered this suggestion, will you please send me a telegram containing one word, either "affirmative" or "negative".

I would give anything to be with you in the White House tonight so that we could talk over this proposal and all the objections and difficulties. I am aware of how intensely undesirable it is from a great many points of view; but I believe sincerely that it may be the only way to preserve from destruction the few shreds of civilization that remain in the world.

Please telegraph me as soon as you can.

Love and every possible good wish.

Bill

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

d-v foreign

9-15-38

Memo. for Missy:

The President wants you to get out of his confidential files, Bullitt's letter to him of August 17th; also letter of May 20th.

RB

Mrs. Larrabee:

For your confidential files.

roberta

Bullitt

Conf. file

NAVAL MESSAGE
(NAVY DEPARTMENT)

Bullitt
[May 21, 1938]

COPY

From <u>The White House</u>	ACTION	To	ACKNOWLEDGE
		Released by <u>Forster</u> (Signature) (Ext. No.)	The President, U.S.S. Potomac.
Date _____ If restricted, indicate below:	INFORMATION		To
		If SECRET or CONFIDENTIAL, use special blank. (DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE)	
	PRIORITY		
	ROUTINE		

~~SECRET~~ CODE

m-2

UNLESS DESIGNATED OTHERWISE TRANSMIT THIS DISPATCH AS NITE.

TEXT

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF TWO TELEGRAMS JUST RECEIVED IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT TONIGHT FROM BULLITT IN PARIS WHICH IS BEING SENT TO YOU AT THE REQUEST OF SECRETARY HULL. IN THE TELEGRAM DATED SEVEN PM TONIGHT BULLITT REPORTED THAT THE POLISH AMBASSADOR IN PARIS WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM WARSAW TOLD HIM THAT UNDOUBTEDLY POLAND WOULD IMMEDIATELY DECLARE WAR ON THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD THAT COUNTRY ATTEMPT TO SEND TROOPS ACROSS POLAND TO SUPPORT CZECHSLOVAKIA THE POLISH AMBASSADOR ADDED THAT IF RUSSIAN PLANES SHOULD CROSS POLAND ENROUTE TO CZECHSLOVAKIA THEY WOULD AT ONCE BE ATTACKED BY POLISH PLANES AND THAT THERE WAS A CONSIDERABLE CONCENTRATION OF POLISH WARPLANES NEAR THE POLISH - ROUMANIAN FRONTIER FOR THIS SPECIFIC PURPOSE PERIOD THE POLISH AMBASSADOR STATED THAT HE WAS CERTAIN ROUMANIA WOULD IMMEDIATELY DECLARE WAR ON THE SOVIET UNION IF RUSSIAN TROOPS SHOULD ATTEMPT TO CROSS RUMANIAN TERRITORY ENROUTE TO CZECHSLOV-

(Deliver to Communication Office.)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

NAVAL MESSAGE
(NAVY DEPARTMENT)

From	ACTION	To	ACKNOWLEDGE
			PRIORITY
			ROUTINE
Released by	INFORMATION	To	ACKNOWLEDGE
(Signature) (Ext. No.)			PRIORITY
Date			ROUTINE
If restricted, indicate below:			
If SECRET or CONFIDENTIAL, use special blank.			

(DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE)

4-7702

UNLESS DESIGNATED OTHERWISE TRANSMIT THIS DISPATCH AS NITE.

TEXT

I AKIA AND THAT IN THAT EVENT POLAND WOULD DECLARE WAR SIMUL
TANEOUSLY ON THE SOVIET UNION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLISH
ROUMANIAN ALLIANCE THE POLISH AMBASSADOR SAID THAT IT WAS NOT
EXCLUDED THAT THE POLISH AIRFORCE WOULD SEND SUFFICIENT PLANES
TO ROUMANIA TO ASSIST THE ROUMANIANS IN ATTACKING RUSSIAN
PLANES ATTEMPTING TO CROSS ROUMANIA ENROUTE TO CZECHSLOVAKIA
BULLITT BELIEVES THAT BONNET'S PREDICTION IS WELL FOUNDED
THAT AN ATTEMPT BY THE SOVIET UNION TO AID CZECHSLOVAKIA
WOULD RESULT IN DECLARATIONS OF WAR BY POLAND AND ROUMANIA
AND BULLITTS FEELINGS REGARDING THE GRAVITY OF THE PRESENT
SITUATION HAS NOT DIMINISHED IN A TELEGRAM DATED NINE PM TONIGHT
BULLITT REPORTED THAT THE CZECH MINISTER IN PARIS TOLD HIM
THAT THE CZECH GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE THE FOLLOWING CONCESSIONS
TO THE SUDENTENS ONE GERMAN TO BE USED AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE
IN THE LAW COURTS ETCETRA TWO COMPLETE CONTROL BY THE SUDENTENS

(Deliver to Communication Office. Will be returned to File Room after message has been transmitted.)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

3

Reference to
Log

NAVAL MESSAGE

(NAVY DEPARTMENT)

From	ACTION	To	ACKNOWLEDGE
			PRIORITY
			ROUTINE
Released by <small>(Signature) (Ext. No.)</small>	INFORMATION	To	ACKNOWLEDGE
Date			PRIORITY
			ROUTINE
If restricted, indicate below:			

If SECRET or CONFIDENTIAL, use special blank.

(DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE)

6-2702

UNLESS DESIGNATED OTHERWISE TRANSMIT THIS DISPATCH AS NITE.

TEXT

OF THEIR OWN SCHOOLS THREE REPRESENTATION OF THE SUDENTEN IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATION IN PROPORTION TO THEIR NUMBERS THE CZECH MINISTER STATED THAT QUOTE THEY ARE TO BE TREATED NO LONGER AS A MINORITY BUT AS A NATIONALITY UNQUOTE THE MINISTER TOLD BULLITT THAT WHILE HIS GOVERNMENT HAS FELT THAT THESE CONCESSIONS WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY THE SUDENTENS THE PICTURE HAS SINCE CHANGED HE SAID THAT HODZA HAD INVITED HENLEIN TO COME TO PRAGUE FOR A DISCUSSION BUT THAT HENLEIN HAD DISAPPEARED AND HODZA HAD ORDERED THE CZECH POLICE TO SEARCH FOR HIM DURING THE NEXT TEN DAYS THE CZECH GOVERNMENT HE SAID WOULD ANNOUNCE THESE CONCESSIONS WHETHER OR NOT THE SUDENTEN ACCEPT THEM THE CZECH MINISTER TOLD BULLITT THAT ABOUT A WEEK AGO HIS GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED THAT THE DEFENSES ALONG THE GERMAN FRONTIER WERE NOT ADEQUATELY MANNED AND THAT IT MUST CALL OUT ONE CLASS OF RESERVES TO AVOID A SURPRISE ATTACK THIS ACTION WAS NOT THEN A REPLY TO GERMANY'S

(Deliver to Communication Office.)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

NAVAL MESSAGE

(NAVY DEPARTMENT)

From	ACTION	To	ACKNOWLEDGE
			PRIORITY
			ROUTINE
Released by (Signature) (Ext. No.)	INFORMATION	To	ACKNOWLEDGE
Date			PRIORITY
			ROUTINE
If restricted, indicate below:			
If SECRET or CONFIDENTIAL, use special blank.			

(DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE)

4-7702

UNLESS DESIGNATED OTHERWISE TRANSMIT THIS DISPATCH AS NITE.

TEXT

STATIONING TROOPS ON THE CZECH BORDER YESTERDAY THE CZECH MINISTER TOLD BULLITT THAT THE TWO GERMANS KILLED IN BOHEMIA TODAY HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTING NAZI PROPOGANDA THEY TRIED TO ESCAPE ON MOTORCYCLES AND REFUSED TO STOP WHEN ORDERED TO DO SO THEY WERE THEN FIRED UPON AND KILLED THE MINISTER TOLD BULLITT THAT CZECHSLOVAKIA IS DETERMINED TO FIGHT TO THE LAST MAN SHOULD GERMAN TROOPS CROSS THE BORDER HE SAID THAT UNDER NO CONDITIONS WOULD THE SUDENTENS BE PERMITTED TO FORM QUOTE STORM BATTALIONS UNQUOTE OR TO ARM THEMSELVES BULLITT ASKED IF THE MINISTER DID NOT FEEL THAT WAR WAS IMMINENT AND HE REPLIED THAT WE MIGHT BE AT THE VERGE OF A WAR WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL EUROPE HE FELT THAT GERMANY COULD NOT BE SCARED OFF UNLESS ENGLAND AND FRANCE SHOULD UNITEDLY EVOKE THAT THEY WOULD MARCH TO DEFEND CZECHSLOVAKIA THE MINISTER SAID HE THOUGHT FRANCE WOULD MARCH BUT HE WAS DOUBTFUL ABOUT ENGLAND AND BULLITT TOLD THE MINISTER THAT IN HIS OPINION ENGLAND

(Deliver to Communication Office.)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

2

Reference p2
From

NAVAL MESSAGE

(NAVY DEPARTMENT)

From	ACTION	To	ACKNOWLEDGE
			PRIORITY
			ROUTINE
Released by (Signature) (Ext. No.)	INFORMATION	To	ACKNOWLEDGE
Date			PRIORITY
			ROUTINE
If restricted, indicate below:			

If SECRET or CONFIDENTIAL, use special blank.

(DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE)

4-7702

UNLESS DESIGNATED OTHERWISE TRANSMIT THIS DISPATCH AS NITE.

TEXT

WOULD NOT MARCH IN DEFENSE OF CZECHSLOVAKIA THE MINISTER SAID THAT IN THAT CASE WAR WAS INEVITABLE HE BELIEVED THE SOVIET UNION WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SEND TROOPS TO CZECHSLOVAKIA BUT THAT THE SOVIET AIRFORCE MIGHT BE OF CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE BULLITTS CONCLUDING SENTENCE READS AS FOLLOWS QUOTE THE IMPRESSION I GATHERED FROM THIS CONVERSATION WAS THZT THE CZECHS PREFER TO SEE THEIR NATION SUCCUMB IN A CONFLAGRATION WHICH WILL DESTROY ALL EUROPE RATHER THAN TO MAKE THE LARGE CONCESSIONS WHICH ALONE WOULD SATISFY HITLER AND THE SUDENTENS

(Originator's Desk Copy. Deliver to Communication Office. Will be returned to Originator after message has been transmitted.)

[May 21, 1938]

TELEGRAM

Reed ^{from} Hickerson ^{Bullett} State Dept
The White House
Washington

11:58 PM

Del'd to
Naval Comms
Lieut. Watson
12:20 AM
CML

The President

The ff is a summary of two telegrams just rec'd in the State Dept tonight from Bullett in Paris which is being sent to you at the request of Jrg Hull.

In a telegram dated 7 PM tonight Bullett reported that the Polish ambassador in Paris

Tully 1938

TELEGRAM

2

The White House

Washington

Who has just returned
from Warsaw tells him that
he doubts Poland
will ~~in~~ declare war
on the Soviet Union
thinks that country
attempts to send troops
across Poland to
support CZ since
the Polish Ambassador
advised that if
Russia plans

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

3

Shoues Crean Paland
Enroute to CZ via
Hay and Stone to
Attaced by Philip
Plan and that there
was a Cuddle
Concentration of Palant
near Plan near
the Point. Roumanian
frontier for this
Specific purpose

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

Y
The Polish ambassador
stated that he
was certain Romania
would im declare war
on the Soviet Union
if Russian troops
should attempt to cross
Romanian territory
en route to Czernia
and that is that
Even Poland would
declare war himself

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

5
On the South
union is made with
the Polish Rumanian
Alliance. The
Polish Amb said
that it was not
Excluded that the
Polish air force
had 750 sufficient
Planes to Rumania

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

6
to assert the Roumenians
is attacking Russian forces
attempting to cross Roumania
fronts to Cz Vlia.
Bullitt believes ^{that} BONNET's
prediction is well
founded that an attempt
by the Soviet
Union to aid
Cz Vlia wd result
in declarations of war

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

7
by Poland and Roumania
and Bullitt's feeling
Regarding the gravity
of the present situation
has not diminished.

In ~~a~~ a telegram dated
9 pm tonight Bullitt
reported that the
Irish Minister in
Paris told him

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

8

that the Czech
Govt will make
the following
concessions to the
Sudeters:

- 1- German to be used
as an official language
in the law courts etc
- 2 - Complete control by
the Sudeters of
their own school

TELEGRAM

9

The White House
Washington

3 Representations of
the Subject in
local Adm in
proportion to their
number.

The Creek Minutes stated
that "They are to be
treated no longer as
a minority but as a
nationality" ~~and~~

TELEGRAM

10

The White House
Washington

The Minister told
Bullitt that while
his Gov't he felt
that these concessions
wd be accepted by
the subjects the
picture has since
changed. He said
that Hodza had
invited Henlein to
come to Prague for

TELEGRAM

11

The White House
Washington

~~the~~ a discussion
but that Henlein
had disappeared and
Hodza had ordered
the Czech police
to search for him.
During the next
ten days the Czech
gov't. he said wd
announce their concessions
whether or not the
Sudetes accept them.

TELEGRAM

(2) The White House
Washington

The Czech Minister
told Bullitt that
about a week ago
his government had
decided that the
defenses on the
German frontier
were not adequately
manned and that
it must call
out one class of
RESERVE to avoid

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

13

a surprise attack
This action was not
then a reply to
Germany's stationing
troops on the Czech
border yesterday.

The Czech Ministry
told Bulletin that
the two Germans
killed in Bohemia
today

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

14
had been distributing
Nazi Propaganda. They
tried to escape on motorcycles
and refused to stop when
ordered to do so. They
were then fired upon and
killed.

The minutes told Bullitt
that Czinka is determined
to fight to the last man
should German troops
cross the border. He
said that under no
conditions would the
Judeans

TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

15
be permitted to form
"Storm Battalions" or to
arm themselves.

Bullitt asked if the
minister did not feel
that war was
imminent and he
replied that we
might be at the
verge of a war
which wd result
in the destruction of
all Europe.

TELEGRAM

16

The White House
Washington

He felt that Germany
cd not be scared
off unless England &
France should unitedly
vow that they wd
march to defend
@ZvKia. The Minister
said he thought France
wd march but he
was doubtful about
England. Bullitt told
the Minister

TELEGRAM

17

The White House
Washington

that in his opinion
England we had March
in defense of CZVka
The Minister said that
in that case war
was inevitable
He believed the Soviet
Union would not be
able to send troops
to CZVka but that
the Soviet air
force might be of
considerable assistance

TELEGRAM

18

The White House
Washington

Bullitt's Concluding
Sentence reads as
follows "The impression
I gathered from this
KVV was that the
OTechs prefer to see
their Nation succumb
in a Conflagration
which will destroy
all Europe rather
than to make the
large concessions

TELEGRAM

19

The White House
Washington

which alone wd
satisfy Hitler and
the "Audeters"

Foster
The White House

1938

PSF France
Bulletin

D R A F T

I am frankly disappointed to receive the suggestions contained in your 101 as they raise many doubts in my mind. Not only did Rueff's suggestion which you telephoned to me on Thursday appear unsound and in fact unreasonable, but I find no satisfactory explanation for today's suggestions. While this Government has made the efforts with which you are familiar to cooperate with the French Government in its desire to achieve exchange stability, and will continue to cooperate in this field, I do not feel that any of the recent suggestions fall within the spirit of the Tripartite agreement or the proper field of operations of the Stabilization Fund. Whereas some mention might be made of the discussions in Congress at the time of the passage of the Johnson Act it is clearly not the policy of this Government to extend unsecured credits for currency stabilization or other purposes to governments of countries in default on their obligations held by this Government.

Bullitt
France

File
Personal

Paris, May 27, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, I traveled to France via England and was in London when the PARIS-SOIR published the supposed interview at Havre with me which I enclose. I had no idea that it was even worth bothering about until a few days ago the American papers began to comment and I saw that the imaginary interview had been reproduced all over the United States. I don't know how it is possible to be discreet about interviews in countries where you are not. If you have a formula for this, I wish you would let me have it. I hope it didn't cause you any annoyance.

Good luck and love to you all.

Yours,

Enclosure.

Bill.

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

The White House,

Washington, D. C.

Paris dans 1940

M. Roosevelt viendra à Paris... en 1940

J.S.B.

Le Havre vient de voir débarquer une importante « cargaison » de personnalités dont M. William Bullitt, ambassadeur des Etats-Unis à Paris, Jean Kiepura, sa femme Martha Egger, M. Jules Michel, secrétaire général honoraire de l'Elysée, etc...

Naturellement, au cours du gala rituel au bénéfice des œuvres de mer, Jean Kiepura chanta. M. Jules Michel lui demanda s'il avait déjà chanté à l'Elysée.

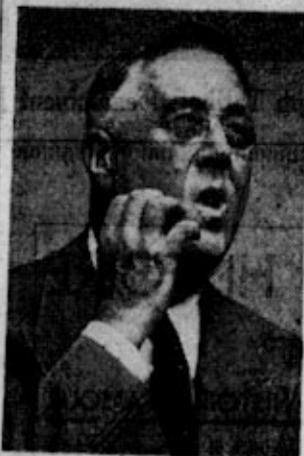
Non, répondit-il, mais c'est mon plus grand désir depuis que j'ai chanté à la Cour de Hollande.

Quant à M. William C. Bullitt, il conta qu'il avait pêché le saumon à Warm-Springs avec M. Franklin Roosevelt, leur pêche avait fait l'objet d'un véritable championnat, l'ambassa-

teur fut battu présidentiellement par M. Franklin Roosevelt.

Mais M. Bullitt a rapporté un propos fort intéressant du président.

Vous pouvez être sûr, lui dit ce dernier, que je ne me représenterai pas en 1940. La première chose que je ferai en quittant la Maison Blan-



Sur cette photographie, le président Roosevelt semble bien perplexe.

che, ce sera de prendre le bateau et d'aller de nouveau visiter Paris que j'ai hâte de revoir...

PSF
Bullitt

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

June 3, 1938.

60
100
200
MEMORANDUM FOR
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR PREPARATION OF REPLY
FOR MY SIGNATURE.

F. D. R.

Letter from Ambassador Bullitt, May
12, 1938, in re his talk with Guy
La Chambre, the new French Minister
for Air.

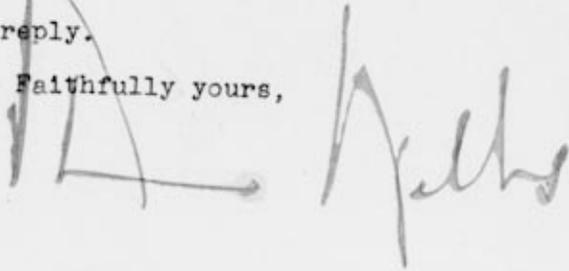
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

Bullitt
2

Dear Mr. President:

I return herewith Bullitt's
confidential letter of May 12 with a
suggested reply.

Faithfully yours,



Enclosures:

Letter from
Ambassador Bullitt,
May 12;
Draft reply.

The President,
The White House.

Dear Bill:

I was greatly interested in your letter of May 12 in regard to the condition of the French Air Force and its plans to purchase planes in this country. Do you think it possible that La Chambre can accelerate French production sufficiently to have 2,600 first-line planes in condition for battle next spring? The 1,500 already on hand, plus the 100 which the French are purchasing here, plus 45 per month for the next ten months would bring the figure only up to 1,850. Where are the remaining 750 to come from? Unless further orders are placed in this country immediately, our factories, which already have almost as many orders as they can handle, could not manufacture for delivery in France by next spring any considerable fraction of that number. Do you think that the French monthly production of 45 can be materially increased in so short a time?

Since your letter was written, the French have closed their contract with Curtiss-Wright for 100 planes of the type P-36, deliveries to begin in November of this year and to be concluded in April 1939, and they have arranged with J. P. Morgan to effect cash payments. Saint-Quentin called at the State Department last week and outlined the plans of the two French air missions which are coming here to make trial flights and to supervise the production of the Curtiss planes. The State Department is asking War and Navy to treat these missions as liberally as possible. In fact, all along we have done everything we properly could to facilitate French purchases of planes in this country. The delays which have ensued have been due to their own dilatory methods of doing business and not to any lack of reasonable cooperation on our part. I do not believe, however, that we can, with propriety, permit the diversion to the French of P-36 planes already under

construction

The Honorable
William C. Bullitt,
American Ambassador,
Paris.

construction under contract for our Army. To do so would contravene a wise policy of long standing to which no exceptions have been made since 1932. On general principles, I do not believe that we should permit the diversion to other governments of planes manufactured under contract for this Government unless the interests of our own national defense are directly involved, but should we in this case decide to make an exception as a friendly gesture to the French the result would probably be disadvantageous to the French themselves. The fact could not be kept secret. Everything of importance that happens in the aviation industry is known to everyone in the industry within a few weeks, and therefore sooner or later to the press. You can imagine what some sections of the press would do if they got hold of a story that we were actively aiding French rearmament to the extent of allowing planes constructed for our Army to be delivered to them. That would mean embarrassment to us, and in the long run to the French in their efforts to purchase arms in this country.

You did well to try to set La Chambre right on the question of the Neutrality Act. I hope that you cleared up any misconception which he may have had. As long as that act remains in effect, it would have to be applied to any major European war, and we could not conceivably connive at violations of the embargo provisions in favor of any particular power.

Affectionately yours,

Personal and
Confidential.

Paris, May 12, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

For four hours last night Guy La Chambre, the new French Minister for Air, gave me the low-down on the French air force. In spite of the fact that the Germans probably know as much about the French air force as La Chambre himself, I feel that I should not pass along anything by cable to the Department and shall, therefore, bury in my memory and yours what he had to say.

Briefly, the situation is this. The French General Staff estimates that at the present moment France must have for war with Germany a minimum of 2600 first-line planes. At the moment, France has

1500

The Honorable

Franklin Delano Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House.

1500. The present French rate of production is about 45 a month. La Chambre has promised the General Staff to have 2600 first-line planes in condition for battle by next Spring.

The weakest hole in the French air force is the almost total lack of pursuit planes. La Chambre is interested in getting pursuit planes from America immediately. He has not yet signed his contract with Curtis-Wright for the P-36s. Curtis-Wright proposed to him first to deliver three hundred planes in the autumn of 1939, beginning their construction after the delivery of similar planes to the United States Army, using the same machinery, at a cost of \$28,000 per plane. La Chambre has preferred to work out a contract for the delivery of 100 planes in April 1939 at a cost of \$34,000 per plane. This will require the installation of additional machinery by the Curtis-Wright people and there will be a supplementary contract providing that the French may purchase this machinery after the delivery of these planes and may request its delivery either in France or Canada, or any place else that the French Government

ment

ment may select.

La Chambre does not believe that it will be possible to set up factories operated on American lines in France as he feels that French industrialists and workmen are entirely incapable of using American methods at the moment. He may, however, set up in Canada a factory for Potez--the most successful of the French constructors--where American methods might be used, and the Curtis-Wright machinery may be transferred to Canada.

I was shocked to discover that in spite of everything that I had said to de la Grange and that the Department of State had said to him, he had said to La Chambre, who incidentally is an especially fine young fellow aged about forty, that if Germany and France should go to war, you would certainly circumvent the Neutrality Act and would continue deliveries of planes to France. I told La Chambre that in case of war between France and Germany, public opinion in America would be overwhelmingly in favor of application of the Neutrality Act and that you would have no
choice

choice but to apply it and prevent the delivery of planes and munitions.

British plane production has fallen off terribly due to change in models and defective organization, so that at the present moment, British production is about eighty a month. The British, however, hope within six months to get their production up again to two hundred and fifty planes per month.

Meanwhile, the Germans are producing between three hundred and five hundred planes per month, and the bottle neck in Germany is no longer the production of planes but the training of pilots.

Incidentally, the French have just enough trained pilots to handle the planes they now have ready for war. They have not yet trained pilots to handle their new program. The French have been shopping all over the world for planes but have found only one that they desire to purchase: a Dutch pursuit plane made by De Schelde. Fokker has two good planes that the French would be glad to purchase except for the fact that the chief engineer of the
Fokker

Fokker works is a German and the French have no desire to permit a German to work intimately with the French aviation industry.

La Chambre is not interested at the moment in the purchase of any planes in America aside from the P-36. Incidentally, toward the close of our conversation last night La Chambre said that he had asked the Curtis-Wright people if they could not deliver to the French Government two P-36s next month so that the French might familiarize themselves with the planes before delivery should begin. He said that the Curtis-Wright people had replied that all the production of these planes was contracted for by our Army and that they could not deliver any of these planes except from the stock produced for our Army with full consent and approval by our Army. He asked me if it might not be possible to obtain such consent and approval. I replied that I felt it would be most indiscreet for him to make any such request officially and added that I felt it would be extremely difficult to obtain such consent.

I told him, however, that I would let you know that he was most anxious to have two P-36s as soon as possible and I advised him to let the matter drop with his request to me. I said that you might do something about this and might not; but in any case action would have to come from you personally, and if the matter could be arranged I was certain that you would let me know for a direct personal communication to him without intermediaries. Please consider and answer this.

La Chambre also said that he was going to concentrate all purchases of planes in the United States and all negotiations for purchases in the hands of a new Air Attaché to the French Embassy in Washington who would be appointed this coming week. As the matter stands, it appears that the American plane manufacturers have become much too excited over the prospect of French orders. The essential French need is for planes to be delivered at once and none of our manufacturers is in a position to deliver planes of the highest quality immediately.

La

La Chambre expressed the opinion that the blow to French honor would be so great if Germany should march into Czechoslovakia that France would declare war. I employed Daladier's words, "With what?", in asking him to develop this thought. He said that the French General Staff at the present time admitted that it was impossible to attempt to attack Germany on the line of the Rhine between Switzerland and Strasbourg. Gamelin, however, believed that it was still possible to make a further attack on the "Siegfried Line", between Strasbourg and Luxemburg. The "Siegfried Line" was already a most formidable fortification. Within a year it would be as impregnable as the French Maginot Line. It was not yet impregnable and Gamelin had prepared plans for a frontal mass attack on the "Siegfried Line." Such an attack obviously would mean the most terrible French casualties and probably could be held by the Germans with one-third of the present German Army, leaving two-thirds free for operations elsewhere, since General Gamelin estimated that one soldier

behind

behind the present fortifications of the "Siegfried Line" would be worth four soldiers attacking.

I asked La Chambre if he did not feel that the Germans were so superior in the air that they might be able to drive the French completely out of the air after a few weeks of fighting. He admitted that this was a possibility but insisted that, even without an aviation force, the French Army could still attack.

La Chambre was rather contemptuous of the efficiency of the Russian air force. He said that the Russians had killed every airplane engineer and constructor that they had. They had no new planes and the best that they had were their imitations of American models four or five years old. The imitations were not nearly as good as the originals and in addition the officers corps of the Russian air force had been annihilated so completely that he did not believe the Russian air force could be considered an effective fighting force in spite of the number of planes it contained. Moreover, he did not believe that the Russians would decide to make war on Germany
to

- 9 -

to support Czechoslovakia.

Good luck.

Yours affectionately,

Bill

PSF: France
Bullitt

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

June 15, 1934

Dear Bill:-

I have not talked with the Secretary but Sumner tells me that the Secretary believes that our friend in Vienna worked with the crowd that was against him at London at the Conference in 1933 -- also that his habits were not of the best during the Conference.

This just for your information, and I suggest that you do nothing further about it until I have talked with the Secretary because you have no way of knowing the above, and, frankly, I do not know if the Secretary himself will substantiate this as a reason against Wiley's appointment.

As ever yours,

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

~~Personal and~~
~~Confidential.~~

Paris, June 30, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter which I have just written to the Secretary. I don't know whose diseased brain invented the idea that Wiley was an associate of Moley's and hostile to the Secretary. The fact is that Wiley had no personal relationship with Moley, and after seeing Moley in action in London, said to me that he thought Moley was a wild man, neurotic and unreliable, who knew nothing of how to conduct himself. I recall, however, that Hugh Cumming organized a private espionage on me, going so far as to order my private secretary to communicate to him everything that I wrote and said, and I suspect that the diseased brain is to be found in the head of that young man or one of his associates in the year 1933.

I hope the Secretary will have no more doubts
about

The Honorable

Franklin Delano Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House.

about Wiley and that you will announce his appointment forthwith. But if such doubts should remain, I feel that, in justice, Wiley should be informed of the allegations against him and should demand an immediate inquiry and confront his accusers in Washington.

I should, of course, accompany Wiley and the result might be a very healthy purge of rats. A career officer can have his life ruined by lies whispered in secret; but I know too much about the facts in this case to be able in honor to permit the wreckage of Wiley's career.

The comic element in this matter is that Wiley, instead of being an enemy, has great admiration for the Secretary!

Blessings and good luck.

Yours affectionately,

Bill

William C. Bullitt.

Personal, Private
and Confidential.

Paris, June 30, 1938.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The President informed me some time ago that he intended to appoint John C. Wiley, Minister to Riga, in recognition not only of his distinguished service as Counselor of Embassy in Madrid, Berlin, Warsaw and Moscow, but also because of the exceptional work which he did in Antwerp as Consul General and the magnificent service he has rendered during the past year in Vienna. The President has now let me know that you feel somewhat doubtful about Wiley because you were told at the time of the Economic Conference that he had worked with Moley and his associates who were hostile to you, and that his habits were not of the best during the Conference.

I feel that it is an imperative duty for me to remove your doubts with regard to Wiley, not only in justice to him but also in justice to our relationship which has remained so clear in spite of the efforts of Drew Pearson, Hugh Cumming, and others to wreck it. As you know,

Wiley

The Honorable

Cordell Hull,

Secretary of State.

Wiley served as my assistant at the Economic Conference and lived across the hall from me and was in contact with me constantly. I feel, therefore, that a shadow is cast on my own honor and my loyalty to you by any cloud of doubt with regard to Wiley.

I am under the impression that Wiley never talked with Moley until Moley descended on London. They may have been introduced before that but had no personal relationship. I remember clearly that after talking with Moley in London, Wiley expressed to me an extremely low opinion of Moley, whom he considered neurotic and untrustworthy. I recall that Wiley had to see Moley in London twice in the line of his official duty, but I know that there was never any personal social contact between them on any occasion. I am absolutely certain that Wiley was never a member of any group that was working against you. Indeed, in all the years I have known Wiley, I have never heard him express anything but admiration for the manner in which you have carried out the duties of your great office. Recently, when Wiley came to Paris for a conference with Ambassador Hugh Wilson and myself, he said that he considered you had achieved the greatest position of any Secretary of State since Seward.

AS

As to Wiley's habits during the London Conference, I am well informed. He was at the time head over heels in love with the lady whom he married subsequently who was living in Paris. On the moral side his life was irreproachable. I never saw Wiley under the influence of liquor on any occasion in London or at any subsequent time. One of his greatest assets, indeed, is his ability to keep his head when others have lost theirs.

I feel very deeply about this matter as I am certain that Wiley is the superior, as a Foreign Service Officer, of any man who is not today chief of mission. He has devoted his entire life to the career service and I can not endure the thought that his career may be wrecked because of statements which may have been made to you, which bear no relation to the truth.

If you should still have any doubts, I should like to return to the United States immediately to discuss the matter with you personally.

With every good wish to you and to Mrs. Hull, I remain,
Yours heartily and sincerely,

William C. Bullitt.

Personal and
~~Confidential~~

Paris, June 14, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

I have never been much angrier in my life than when you told me that some ----- had been trying to kill Wiley's appointment to Riga by alleging that he was a drunkard. As you know, I worked intimately with Wiley from the time of the Economic Conference in 1933 until 1936 when he left Moscow for Antwerp. I visited him several times when he was Consul General in Antwerp and he has visited me many times in Paris. I have never, on any occasion, seen Wiley drunk or anything like drunk.

The allegation is an outrageous lie and a foul slander. I feel so strongly about the matter that I am determined to sail for the United States tomorrow afternoon on the QUEEN MARY to get to the bottom of it unless I get a telephone call for which I am now waiting from Miss Le Hand to tell me that you are going to put through the appointment.

Wiley's qualifications for Riga are extraordinary.

He

The Honorable
Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

He knows Russia intimately and knows Poland and Germany intimately. He has served as Counselor of Embassy at all three posts. In addition to French, he speaks perfect German, which is the language used to conduct business and social life in Riga and he has close friends in that part of the world.

Don't let anybody persuade you to send him to South America. We need in Europe today every man we have who understands fully the European situation. I know no man who is better in a crisis than Wiley or more level-headed. He has a greater understanding than any member of the career service of European political and economic problems. In addition, he has filled with great distinction a consular post and you will remember that you informed the Department of State that you would appoint as Ministers only men who had had consular experience. You will also remember that he was the man who broke up the Belgian alcohol smuggling ring which was giving Henry Morgenthau so much trouble and that he received special commendations from the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury. As to his work in Austria - at least fifty persons have said to me in the past two months that Wiley's handling of the situation in Vienna has been masterly and he has brought great credit

P.S. Mrs Lettland has just telephoned to say that Papa will attend to the appointment and put it through. My profoundest thanks!
Bless you!! The Queen Mary will carry only Kennedy.
Love to you all.

Bill.

credit to the United States.

Mrs. Wiley has turned out to be one of the most attractive and helpful wives possessed by any Foreign Service Officer and incidentally, she speaks perfect Polish, Russian and German to say nothing of French and English.

I hope that you will have sent Wiley's appointment to the Senate before this letter reaches you. Riga has awaited a Minister for over a year and ought not to be made to wait longer. Incidentally, if you want any political support for Wiley, I can guarantee to have twenty Senators storming your office within twenty-four hours, to say nothing of a batch of Governors, headed by George Earle!

I am sorry to sound so insistent but my hatred of attempts to kill a man's career by lies of this sort is so profound that I am ready to jump on the QUEEN MARY tomorrow to spend two days and return on the same boat, although my daughter Anne is due to arrive here at the end of this week.

Kick the ----- hard for me and shoot Wiley's appointment to the Senate.

Yours affectionately,

Bill.

100-250
k-2
P.S.F. France Bullitt

Paris, June 21, 1938.

Personal and
Confidential

Dear Mr. President:

This is a very private letter which requires no answer.

Some days ago I received a telegram from Mrs. Roosevelt informing me that Hall was coming to Paris and asking me to do anything that I could for him.

This morning at 10 o'clock Bonnet told me that the Spanish Ambassador had informed him that the Spanish Government could buy more than one hundred planes in the United States at once for immediate delivery to Spain via France and had berated him for agreeing to the closing of the French frontier to military shipments. Bonnet added that the Spanish Ambassador had asserted that you personally had approved the sale of these planes to the Spanish Government and that you were arranging for the evasion of the Neutrality Act involved in their shipment to France, knowing fully that their destination would be Spain. I expressed my skepticism

to

The Honorable

Franklin Delano Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House.

to Bonnet and telegraphed the Department for immediate instructions, leaving out of my telegram, for obvious reasons, any indication that the Spanish Ambassador had alleged that you personally had approved this deal.

(See my telegram No. 970, June 21, 12 Noon.)

Shortly after I had sent this telegram, Hall telephoned to me, whereupon I invited him and his son to a ball. He said he wanted to talk to me at once. I asked him to come to the office this afternoon.

When Hall came in at 4:15 this afternoon, he said that he, acting through Harold Talbot of Cleveland, had managed to gather for the Spanish Government approximately 150 new and second-hand planes of various makes -- all of which he specified. He said that he had discussed this transaction fully with you and that it had your entire approval. He stated that you and he and Jimmy had discussed all the details and that you had agreed to wink at the evasion of the Neutrality Act involved, because of your interest in maintaining the resistance of the Spanish Government against Franco, and on Monday, June 13th, had sent for Joseph Green, who is in charge of such matters in the Department of State, and had ordered him to permit the export of these planes and to accept such falsified papers as might be presented and not scrutinize the entire

matter

matter too carefully.

I expressed no opinion whatsoever to Hall with regard to these statements; but informed him that my instructions from the Department indicated that the policy of our Government was to oppose absolutely the giving of licenses for shipments of planes to Spain via France, and that I had had no intimation of any change in this policy. He replied that you had thought of writing to me; but that since he would arrive in Paris as quickly as a letter you had preferred to have him explain the matter to me by word of mouth.

I informed Hall also that the French Government had closed the frontier to Spain absolutely; that the French Government had a real hope that the volunteers might be withdrawn at last from both sides in Spain and that the British were pushing for an armistice pending the withdrawal of volunteers. I told him that I could not imagine a moment more unpropitious for an attempt to organize the shipment of planes to Spain in contravention of the wishes of the British and French Governments and our own Neutrality Act.

I also told Hall about the conversation I had had this morning with Bonnet (omitting mention of your name) and the telegram I had sent to the Department asking for instructions.

instructions. He said he would come in to see me tomorrow morning and that he would telephone to Jimmy with great discretion this afternoon and say that the situation seemed to have changed since he had left America.

Shortly after Hall had left me, I received a reply to my telegram No. 970, June 21, 12 Noon, in two forms: First, a telephone call from Green, saying that there had been no change whatsoever in the opposition of our Government to the shipment of planes to Spain via France; that our Government was fully aware of the attempt that certain people were making to ship a large number of second-hand planes to Spain, and had definitely decided to refuse export licenses for the shipment of such planes. Later I received a telegram from the Department signed Welles, Acting, which confirmed Green's statements.

Tomorrow morning I shall show Hall the telegram signed by Welles.

I have not the slightest desire to know what lies behind this expedition of Hall's, and I am writing this letter for your own eye and no one else's, merely because I feel that since your name has been used by the Spanish Government in its conversations with the French Government, you ought to have a full account of the facts.

Good luck and every good wish.

Yours always,

Bill

PSF: Bullitt

June 25, 1938.

Dear Bill:-

Ever so many thanks for yours of
the thirteenth. May God in His infinite
wisdom prove that you are wrong. I know
you share this hope with me.

All well but terribly rushed
cleaning up.

As ever yours,

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

PSF: Bullitt

Paris, June 13, 1938.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Mr. President:

Here at Chantilly this evening with the night-
ingales singing and the river pouring its white
cascade below the still woods, I feel like a parti-
cipant in the last days of Pompeii.

I have talked with General Gamelin, Chief of
the French General Staff, twice this week, and with
General Requin, who is in command of the French
Army in the single area where attack on Germany
remains possible--the "Siegfried Line" sector be-
tween Strasbourg and Luxemburg.

You probably knew Requin as intimately as I
did when he was in Washington during the war as re-
presentative of the French General Staff. A few
nights

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

The White House,

Washington, D. C.

nights ago at Chantilly he showed me the map which he carries in his breast pocket, even when he is absent from the front, on which he has marked the lines of French attack against the "Siegfried Line", and of possible German attack against France.

As I have cabled, public opinion in France has solidified to such an extent that if the German Army should cross the Czech frontier, France would mobilize at once and march against Germany. Gamelin is certain of this and so is Requin, and there are few politicians who disagree.

Requin, who will command the French troops, looks upon this prospect of a frontal attack on the "Siegfried Line" with absolute horror. He expects to be able to advance, especially in the Saar district, twenty or thirty miles before he is stopped. He said that the battle in that area would resemble the Battle of the Somme on a much larger scale. It would be direct frontal attack on fully prepared positions. The chief advantage of the French would be the possession of tanks which are far superior to the German tanks. The casualties of the attacking

side

side, that is to say, the French, would be three to four times the casualties on the German side. "It means," he said, "the death of a race." The attack finally would be stopped and the armies would face each other in a deadlock. Gamelin agrees entirely with the foregoing estimate and both Gamelin and Requin believe that the Germany Army could hold such an attack of the entire French Army with from one-third to one-half of the German forces.

Both Gamelin and Requin agree that the German forces left free to attack Czechoslovakia would be sufficient to overwhelm the Czech armies in the course of two or three weeks at most. Meanwhile, both generals agree that German preponderance in the air would be such that Paris would be destroyed by air raids. They both feel that the French would continue to hold out on the Maginot Line and would wait for the pressure of the blockade - since they both assume that England would be in the war from almost the first day - to strangle Germany.

Gamelin

Gamelin is much more optimistic than Requin in his estimate of the time that would be required for the blockade to reduce seriously Germany's power to fight. Gamelin insists that even though the Germans should be able to acquire full control of the Rumanian and Polish oil fields, and even though they have considerable stocks of petroleum on hand and are making synthetic fuel, the ability of the Germans to continue the war would diminish rapidly after approximately two years. Gamelin said to me last night that he had had this subject studied with the utmost care and he was convinced that, if one should assume that the war-time need of Germany for oil would be twelve, the Rumanian and Polish oil, plus stocks on hand, plus the German production of synthetic fuel, would cover only four, leaving a gap of eight which would paralyze German aviation and German mechanized equipment after two years. He added that if Italy should enter the war on the side of Germany, the problem would be aggravated since Italy would be unable to obtain oil except from Poland and Rumania. He insisted

insisted that the Italians and Germans would have to have access to the oil of Iraq and Persia in order to continue to fight after two years. He was convinced that France and England could continue to resist that long, although both countries would suffer horribly from aerial bombardment.

Requin is not nearly so confident that the oil factor would come into play so soon or that it would be so decisive, and is much more apprehensive than Gamelin that the civilian population of France and England might suffer a collapse of morale in the face of daily bombardments of the most horrible sort which would make the bombardments in Spain seem infantile by comparison. He expects a war of at least six years.

Gamelin insists that if Italy should come into the war, French forces in North Africa would be sufficient to take Libya almost at once and considers that the Italians in Ethiopia could be isolated and destroyed. He also believes that the Germans and Italians could be prevented from
reaching

reaching Iraq and Persia. And he considers that no merchant ship of any country could use the Mediterranean.

The number of unpredictable factors is enormous. The French might jump at once on Spanish Morocco, which they believe they can take in a very few days. They would also probably despatch sufficient troops and munitions to wipe out Franco.

Poland remains in a tragic quandary. There would be an enormous sentiment in Poland for war with Germany, but there would be an equally enormous fear that if Poland should become involved in war with Germany, Russia would enter Poland from the east. The Polish Ambassador stated categorically to Gamelin in my presence two days ago that Poland positively would not march with France and positively would not declare war on Germany if France should go to war to defend Czechoslovakia. Moreover, the Poles and the Rumanians have both stated officially that if the Soviet Army should attempt to march across their territory to get to Czechoslovakia, both would declare war on the Soviet Union.

It

It is my impression, however, that neither the Poles nor the Rumanians would resist if the Russians should send planes to Czechoslovakia, flying them along the border between Poland and Rumania at night. Hungary, whose relations with Poland at the moment are close, would probably remain neutral as Poland would, during the first weeks or months of the war.

There is beginning to be a general conviction throughout Europe that the United States will be drawn into the war, if it starts, after a comparatively brief period. This conviction is helpful in so far as it may tend to diminish the readiness of Germany to go to war; but we shall find ourselves violently unpopular in both France and England when it becomes clear that we intend to maintain our neutrality. Day in and day out, I say to the French that, if war should come, the United States would declare immediate neutrality and the Neutrality Act would come into force at once. The answer invariably is, "Yes, we know that; but the Germans will behave in such a way that you will

soon

soon be drawn in."

I remain as convinced as ever that we should not permit ourselves to be drawn in. I believe that if war starts, the destruction on the Continent of Europe will be so great that, unless we are able to remain strong and relatively untouched, there will be no nation on earth left to pick up the pieces. If we should go in, we would make a mess of our own country. If we should stay out, we could at least help to keep alive whatever human beings may remain alive in Europe.

You perhaps saw the telegram in which I gave an account of Francois-Poncet's intention to attempt to work out a settlement of the Czech-German dispute by direct negotiations between France, England and Germany--represented by himself, Henderson and Ribbentrop. His idea, which is the idea of the French Government, is that the Czechs should be compelled to grant full autonomy to the Sudeten geographic area and that Czechoslovakia should become a neutralized state, of the sort that Belgium was before

1914, its independence guaranteed by England, France and Germany. He said he had no great hope that it might be possible to succeed in this negotiation, but he could see no other way to avoid war.

I understand perfectly the dilemma in which Benes finds himself. All his life he has been an adventurer and a courageous one. He knows that if he grants autonomy now to the Sudeten Germans, the Sudeten some day will vote themselves out of Czechoslovakia and into Germany, and he will go down in history as the man who began the disintegration of the Czechoslovak State. On the other hand, if he refuses to grant autonomy and makes only concessions which the Sudeten will reject and war comes, he will be the hero who resisted against great odds, and he will be able to fly at the last moment to the Soviet Union.

I have information from a number of reliable sources which indicates that Hodza and Krofta are much more inclined to make concessions to the Sudeten than Benes. Their view is that Czechoslovakia would be demolished by Germany and that, even if

the

the allies of the Czechs should win the war, nobody would ever again be so silly as to put together Czechoslovakia in its present form. The most they could hope for would be a small Czech state. They are, moreover, inclined to believe, as most people in France are, that the war would inflict such suffering on all the civilian populations of Europe that communist revolutions would take place from one end of the Continent to the other. Neither Hodza nor Krofta is anxious to see his country a Czech Soviet Socialist Republic directed from Moscow.

This letter will, I am sure, seem to you unduly pessimistic. I can assure you that it gives a faithful picture of opinion and atmosphere here. I know no informed Frenchman who does not feel that he is living in the last days of his civilization which is so lovely and which he loves so much.

The only cheery bit of news I have to communicate concerns your new Ambassador to Belgium. She has taken a large house in Paris, ostensibly for one of her daughters, and is having it done over for her own occupancy. One of the boys who
has

has just been yachting with her and her consort in the Black Sea came to Paris yesterday and informed me that she had said to him that she knew she would be bored by Brussels, so she had decided to spend all her time in Paris! War will, at least, save me from that. I don't know what else will, unless you tell the lady and gentleman that the Belgians will expect them to stay in Belgium, and that you will too.

I had Ickes and his little wife and Frances Perkins at dinner two nights ago. Mrs. Ickes is charming. How Ickes accomplished that is beyond me. I took the Ickes from the door of their plane to my house in the country and then put them in a small hotel, so that they haven't been found by the reporters and have had a happy time. Frances Perkins seemed well and lively and I kept her smothered in orchids the day she was here.

If I cable you that the Germans are about to cross the Czech frontier, I hope that you will issue an immediate appeal to the British, French and

Germans

Germans to meet at once at The Hague with a representative of the United States. You might be able to get a settlement on the basis of autonomy for the various minorities in Czechoslovakia, plus neutralization of Czechoslovakia and a guarantee of Czechoslovakia as an independent state by England, France and Germany. That might be the beginning of something like peace in Europe. At any rate, I can think of nothing else that you could do that would have the slightest chance of success, and we should not wash our hands by a pious and futile gesture.

I wish you could be here with me tonight. This place is so beautiful that you would forget even your stamps for an evening.

Blessings!

Yours affectionately,


—

cc
PSF: France: Bullitt

Y

Paris, July 19, 1938.

Dear Miss LeHand:

The Ambassador has handed to me your letter of July 7th regarding Mr. Robert L. Grière, a colored gentleman who wants a job in this Mission as messenger.

For your personal information, Grière is an American negro (high yellow). He came to Paris several years ago to live permanently because "the French don't discriminate against the black race like the Americans do".

While Grière was living here he had an affair with a very charming Norwegian girl of very good family and, when the girl became pregnant and produced a child, there was quite a scandal involving the girl's family, the Norwegian Legation in Paris, and Grière.

If, in view of the above, you still think

Grière

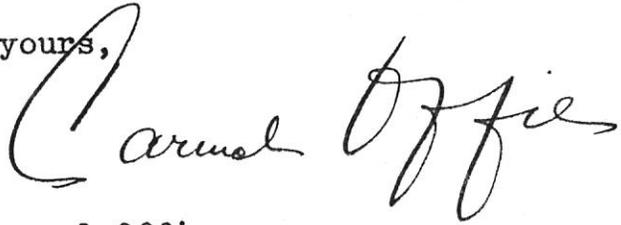
Miss Marguerite LeHand,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

- 2 -

Grière ought to be hired by the Embassy, let me know
and I will have his name put at the top of the eligible
list.

With every good wish and kindest regards, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carmel Offie". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Carmel Offie.

P.S. I will take it off!

S.O.B.

PSF: France: Bullitt

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RECEIVED
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Personal and
Confidential

Paris, August 31, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

I have your little note of August 15th appending Cordell's letter of July 21st - which I return herewith.

The upper brackets of the Foreign Service contain many morons, fairies and neurotics; but this is such a rare bouquet that I wonder who put it over on Cordell. I happen to know all the men but one personally, and I know a lot about that one; so here goes:

(1) John Campbell White - is Uncle Henry's moron son who has an excellent English accent and a large income but no other visible assets except a brother-in-law, Pierrepont Moffat, who doubtless was responsible for his heading the list. He is a snob and an ass.

(2) Clarence E. Gauss - is the prime Baptist
veterinarian

The Honorable

Franklin Delano Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House.

veterinarian of the Service. As Consul General in Paris he was totally incompetent, mean, back-biting, jealous, full of hatred and malice toward everyone. He was a total failure as Consul General here, and was hated by all his colleagues and subordinates, and loathed by Jesse Straus. He can do an adequate job as Consul General in China where there are many missionaries to whom a man of his stripe is not unendurable. Anyone less qualified to get along with foreigners of any sort or indeed, Americans outside the Monkey Trial Bible belt, I do not know. He speaks no language except bad English. His wife is a sour Mrs. Grundy and the pair might have been models for that superb painting of Grant Wood's "The Daughters of the American Revolution."

(3) Alexander Kirk - has been a comic fairy since his childhood. He was a class ahead of me at Yale and then at the Harvard Law School. He was the joke of both universities, and found it amusing to emphasize his effeminacy. He has lots of money, which comes from soap, and when I asked him years ago why he had gone into the diplomatic service, he replied, "To wash off the smell of soap. It is the only way I can meet ladies and gentlemen." He has

been

been at that occupation, especially gentlemen, ever since. He has a certain cleverness, and since his mother's death a year ago he has been much more serious, as they had always lived in the same house and her death made him feel lost. The last time I saw him he seemed to have dropped his manner of extreme effeminacy. Intellectually, he is the best man on the list, which does not say much, but I would rather let the Republicans promote him as they always have in the past. Incidentally, there is no reason why he should not be left as Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow for as long as he can stand it. He has always picked his own posts and it's time he showed he can stand a hard one.

(4) Louis G. Dreyfus - I have never met. But he worked for some years with Herbert Feis in the Department of State and Herbert, in whose judgment I have confidence, has said to me that he is an amiable idiot without a trace of brains. From other sources I have heard endorsement of the idiot end of this phrase, but I have heard the adjective amiable replaced by non-Jews with such adjectives as sly, fawning and undesirable. Why you should appoint a brainless Jew Minister at this moment, I can't see.

(5) Coert du Bois - is a neurotic. He has always been intensely severe with his subordinates and family, and the double suicide of his daughters in England drove him

naturally

naturally into a queerer state than before. I talked with him in 1935 in Naples and investigated him thoroughly because the Department had suggested that I should take him on the staff in Moscow in order to improve his state of mind. I decided then that he ought to be in a sanitorium and not a Mission, and that he would be a bad member of any official family. I think he ought not to be made Chief of Mission anywhere.

(6) Douglas Jenkins - is a mediocre little southerner who means well and can conduct a consulate with a fair degree of efficiency. I have seen him frequently and feel that if you had seen him as I had, you would be certain that he did not have the personal qualities to represent the United States except in a very minor post.

As you know, the weakest part of the Foreign Service is Class I, II, and III. There are few competent men in those classes and fewer still who have any distinction. The classes from IV downward contain many more men of ability. If you have to fill legations at the moment, I think you would be fully justified in taking men outside the career service.

Incidentally, when I was dictating to Offie a moment ago about Kirk, I began to wonder whether or not you intend to send an Ambassador to Moscow. If you do decide to send

one,

one, you should send an extremely experienced, reliable Foreign Service Officer. The burden of Moscow plus an Ambassador like the late eminent Joe Davies is too much for any staff to bear. Cruel and unusual punishment is forbidden by the Constitution! You will remember that when we discussed this question sometime ago, I said to you that MacMurray, now Ambassador in Turkey, was unquestionably the man best fitted for the Moscow post. He would hate to go there but he would do a better job for the U. S. A. than anyone else I can think of, and I fail to see why Foreign Service Officers should be permitted to refuse ambassadorships unless there is some extremely important personal reason. Dislike of a post is not important.

I have just had Joe Kennedy and Hugh Wilson staying with me in Paris. I think that they are both doing fine jobs and are the best men available for their posts. If you can find men of Joe's quality to take vacant legations, I hope you will appoint them. This is no time, however, to send out modern replicas of Pindell of Peoria.

Love and good luck.

Yours affectionately,



William C. Bullitt.

d 2
Foreign file

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

August 15, 1938.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. WILLIAM C. BULLITT

I send you this in
strict confidence of course.
What do you think of them?

F. D. R.

Letter from Secretary Hull in re
list of Foreign Service officers
who have demonstrated special capacity
for promotion to the grade of Minister.

Bullitt

Paris, August 17, 1938.

Personal and
~~Strictly Confidential~~

Dear Mr. President:

The French Government is now convinced that there will be another crisis during the first weeks of September. If it should appear that war is imminent, you will be urged to take all sorts of actions by all sorts of people. I have two suggestions to make - the objections to which will be as obvious to you as they are to me so that I need not detail them.

Fear of the United States is unquestionably a large factor in Hitler's hesitation to start a war. If, in September, Europe should again appear to be on the verge of war, a quiet conversation between you and the German Ambassador in the White House might have more effect in deterring Germany from acting against Czechoslovakia with armed force than all the public speeches you or anyone else could make.

You

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

You would not have to say anything except recite a few facts. Suppose you were to say that you hoped Germany was not about to place you in the same position in which President Wilson was placed in 1914. Suppose you should add that he must be as aware as you were that although public opinion in America before the commencement of the war in 1914 had been very favorable to Germany, public opinion in America was now most hostile to Germany; and that he must be as aware as you were that if war should begin between England and France on one side and Germany on the other, there was a possibility that the United States would be drawn in.

You might add that you would be glad if he would transmit what you had said to Hitler and bid him good-bye.

You would have done nothing except call his attention to certain facts which are public property and you would have committed yourself to nothing. I think the effect of such a conversation in Germany would be immense.

If events should go further and the mobilization stage should be reached or even hostilities commenced, I think you should propose at once a conference of the sort that I suggested to you before the crisis of last May 21st. You will recall that at that time I wrote

that

that if the worst should come to the worst, you should make a public appeal for an immediate conference at The Hague of representatives of England, France, Germany, and Italy to find ways and means of settling the dispute between Czechoslovakia and Germany; adding that a representative of the United States would participate in the conference if the four Powers should desire.

I think you should not take either of these steps unless Runciman should fail and war appear to be imminent. I will let you know at once if I think that moment has come. Meanwhile, I should appreciate it if you would let me have a line to tell me whether or not you consider these ideas cockeyed and if you have any alternatives in mind.

Blessings.

Yours affectionately,

Bill

William C. Bullitt.

Bullitt

*Good in
case LeHand
for apppt*

Paris, August 23, 1938.

Dear Miss LeHand:

Monsieur Georges Rivollet, former French Minister of Pensions, is sailing soon for the United States to attend the 1938 National Convention of the American Legion in Los Angeles as the representative of the National Federation of French War Veterans. I am enclosing herewith his schedule while in America. He will be accompanied by his daughter, aged nineteen.

1/

Monsieur Rivollet is Secretary General of the above Federation which corresponds to our American Legion. This organization has no president and is, therefore, directed by Monsieur Rivollet. Consequently, he is very important politically.

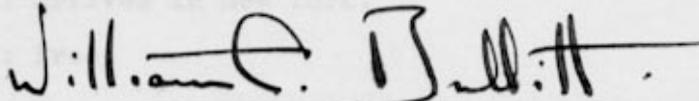
I don't think the President would have any special pleasure in seeing him but if the French Embassy in Washington requests an appointment for him with the President and it is accorded you will find him personally

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

personally agreeable.

With every good wish, I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William C. Bullitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

William C. Bullitt.

Enclosure:

Schedule of M. Rivollet.

ITINERARY FOR VISIT OF MR. GEORGES RIVOLLET TO CONVENTION
OF THE AMERICAN LEGION IN LOS ANGELES.

- September 7th: Sails aboard S. S. Normandie from
Havre for New York.
- September 12th: Arrives in New York.
- September 13th: Free.
- September 14th: Free until 11:35 P.M., when he takes
train for Los Angeles.
- September 18th: Arrives in Los Angeles at 8:30 A.M.
- September 19 - 20 - 21 : Attends convention.
- September 22nd: Leaves Los Angeles for New York.
- September 26th: Arrives in New York. Day free.
- September 27th: Free.
- September 28th: Sails aboard S. S. Normandie at noon
from New York for Havre.
- October 3rd: Arrives at Havre.

PSF
Bullitt

Paris, August 31, 1938.

PERSONAL AND PRIVATE.

Dear Mr. President:

Before you get this letter Europe will probably be even closer to Hades than it is today, and it is close enough. As you know, the Germans have one million eight hundred thousand men mobilized. Hugh Wilson, who has just been here, informs me that under the new German system of "mobilization en-route," men join their regiments while those regiments are on their way to the frontiers. The time between Hitler's decision to make war and the firing of the first guns on the frontier will be, therefore, not more than eight hours.

If we intend to do anything at the last moment to try to stop the holocaust, we shall have an almost impossibly brief period in which to work. Hugh
has

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

has promised to phone me instantly if he gets word that Hitler has made the decision. I shall phone you at once, and I hope that you will send for the German Ambassador immediately and talk to him in the manner I suggested in my letter of August 17, 1938.

Guy La Chambre, Minister for Air, explained to me last night the condition of the French frontier defenses. The Garde Mobile is now on the alert at all frontiers. In every village or hamlet close to the frontiers there is one house which has been soaked with concrete and filled with machine guns. It is expected that the Garde Mobile could hold up any surprise attack for forty minutes. At the end of 40 minutes, the first frontier guards would be in position and at the end of two hours the Maginot Line and all other defenses would be fully manned. Every road leading from every frontier is heavily mined and could be made unusable for a time.

Bonnet is inclined to believe that Germany will not risk war with France and England in the month of September, but many other Ministers believe that Hitler has already decided to strike in September.

My

My guess is that Hitler stands such a chance of drawing Hungary into the Nazi ranks before the first of January, 1939, that he will not make war in September. But the German mobilization has produced such excitement in Czechoslovakia that a false report may make the Czechs strike first and give the German Army an opportunity to strike back. If I were betting today, I should bet that there were fifty-five chances that there would not be war in September against forty-five that there would be.

If war should begin, the result would be such a devastation of Europe that it would make small difference which side should emerge the ostensible victor. I am more convinced than ever that we should attempt to stay out and be ready to reconstruct whatever pieces may be left of European civilization.

I remember that I promised you to be in Washington again by September 25th at the latest. I want to come home very much as I am extremely tired and need a holiday and want to see you all; but I do not see the slightest possibility of leaving Paris at the moment. If there should be a settlement

of

of the Sudeten dispute I would jump on the first boat, and I have engaged passage on both the NORMANDIE sailing September 21st, and the MANHATTAN sailing September 23rd. Anne must take one or the other to get back to school in time. If I feel it would not be a neglect of duty, I shall leave with her on one or the other; but the chances look black at the moment.

Love and good luck.

Yours affectionately,

Bill

*Telepersonal
under Bullitt*

JR
A portion of this tele-
gram must be closely
paraphrased before being
communicated to anyone.
(br)

Paris
Dated September 7, 1938
Rec'd 2:15 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

RUSH.

1409, September 7, 7 p.m.

I learned last night through inquiries made of me by the International News Service at the express request of Mr. Hearst that the Associated Press despatch reporting my remarks at the banquet at Bordeaux on the evening of September 3 credited me with the following ridiculous statement: "(GRAY) France and the United States are indefectively (sic) united in war as in peace." I of course said nothing of the kind. I spoke extemporaneously at the banquet on the subject of French wines. I then read a quotation from Thomas Jefferson and concluded with the following words:

"It is no secret that the people of the United States today feel for the people of France the most profound sympathy. We are united by our devotion to liberty, democracy and peace. We are united by our old friendship,
by

-2- #1409, September 7, 7 p.m., from Paris.

by the aid that each has brought to the other in an hour of need. Today we are working together to preserve peace. May we be as successful in that task as we have been in the past when we have marched together under the flags of war!" (END SECTION ONE).

CSB

BULLITT

*File personal
under Bullitt*

JR
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (br)

Paris
Dated September 7, 1938
Rec'd 3:20 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

RUSH.

1409, September 7, 7 p.m. (SECTION TWO).

As I read this last passage from a manuscript which I gave to the journalists at the banquet there is no excuse whatsoever for the falsification of my remarks. These remarks were correctly reported in the leading Bordeaux newspaper LA PETITE GIRONDE and also in LA LIBERTE DU SUDOUEST, but LA FRANCE DE BORDEAUX carried the erroneous report which was repeated to the Paris office of the Associated Press by the writer on that paper who is also the Associated Press spot man at Bordeaux. The Associated Press desk man questioned the authenticity of the report but his efforts to verify the statement did not go further than to query the Bordeaux spot man, who stuck to his story.

The Associated Press is today wiring a correction reporting my remarks as they were actually made. The Chief of the Paris Bureau has informed me that he is
taking

-2- #1409, September 7, 7 p.m. (SECTION TWO) from Paris.

taking disciplinary action against his Bordeaux man
which will probably result in his immediate dismissal.
(END MESSAGE).

BULLITT

PEG:CSB

PSF: Bullitt

Y

PS
Thank Office
very much &
give letter to the
President to put into
stamp

Paris, September 12, 1938.

Dear Miss LeHand:

1/

I take pleasure in enclosing herewith a stamp issued by the Soviet postal authorities in commemoration of the North Pole flight by the noted Soviet pilot, S. A. Levanevski.

As you know, Levanevski actually started this flight in 1935 but was forced to turn back after covering a little over a quarter of the way. This flight was postponed until 1937, and if you will remember, he took off last year and has not been heard of since. There were a hundred stamps issued in connection with this flight and this is one of the hundred.

I know that the President relies on you to get him really rare stamps and this, I assure you, rates that classification.

You must all be having a very trying time these days

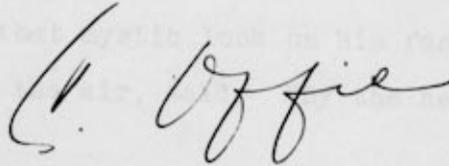
Miss Marguerite LeHand,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

days with primary elections and Jimmy Roosevelt's illness but I can assure you I'd much rather be in your boots than to be sitting here listening to people trying to figure out what Hitler is going to say or do next.

If Mr. Hitler permits, I ought to be seeing you about the early part of October. Otherwise, we will probably be blown into the air.

Every good wish to you.

Yours always,



Carmel Offie.

Enclosure:
Levanevski stamp.

Read the next page

By the way, there is a marvelous joke which I heard on your Boss which will amuse you:

One night Hitler, Mussolini, and President Roosevelt were dining together. Mussolini remarked, during the course of the dinner: "Gentlemen, I am pleased to inform you that I shall soon be the ruler of the world".

Mr. Hitler replied: "You will not. I shall soon be the ruler of the world."

Mr. Mussolini folded his arms and replied: "And by whose help?"

And Hitler, with that mystic look on his face, and throwing his fist into the air, said: "By the help of God."

President Roosevelt, who happened to be munching on a chicken bone at the time, suddenly looked up and said: "I will not!"

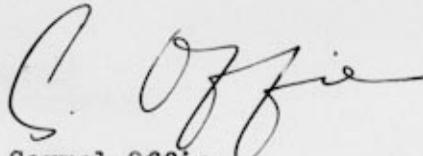
Mrs. Bernice Leland,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Paris, September 26, 1938.

Dear Miss LeHand:

1/ I am taking time out during this mad period to send you the latest stamps from the Soviet Union for the President's collection. The subjects of these issues are children's hobbies. They were issued on September 15, 1938, and I thought they might be of interest to the Great White Father.

Yours always,


Carmel Offie.

Enclosure:
Envelope containing 7 stamps.

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

Hyde Park, New York
October 18, 1938

Dear Mr. Offie:

The President asks me to tell you that he is very sorry for not having written you before to thank you for the stamps which you were good enough to send him. He is delighted with both groups and they are all safely tucked away in his albums.

The President asks me to tell you that he hopes very much that he will have the pleasure of seeing you while you are here.

Very sincerely yours,

M. A. LeHAND
Private Secretary

Carmel Offie, Esq.,
Secretary to Ambassador Bullitt,
State Department,
Washington, D. C.

mal/tmb

F. France
Bullitt

*file
personal*

Paris, September 20, 1938.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL.

Dear Mr. President:

I write you this while the Czech Govern-
ment is considering what reply to make to the
British-French proposal. It seems to me that
the French and British Governments have mis-
handled the matter abominably. They have acted
like little boys doing dirty things behind the
barn.

You may be sure that I will come home as
soon as I feel I can, as I am dead tired. Mean-
while the prospects for Europe are so foul that
the further we keep out of the mess the better.

The

The Honorable
Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

- 2 -

The moral is: If you have enough airplanes
you don't have to go to Berchtesgaden.

Good luck.

Yours affectionately,

Bill

→

File
Personal

PSF: Bullitt

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 23, 1938.

Bill Bullitt just telephoned the following which he thinks you should have during Cabinet meeting in order to telephone him back immediately.

He has just been informed by the British Ambassador that Chamberlain is having conversation with Hitler and is returning to London.

~~It might~~ The news is very bad. He and all of his party are returning by airplane tomorrow morning. It is the belief that ~~it means~~ this ends the negotiation but this is not certain. It is said that Hitler wishes his troops to occupy the Sudeten. Resistance and war will follow. It is

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
-2-

also certain that the Polish troops will march at the same moment. That may happen tonight and it is now 9.15 here. It may happen after Chamberlain sees Hitler this evening. Bullitt believes that the subject you and he have talked and written about should not be delayed. It should be ~~accomplished by~~ accompanied by a statement about no troops crossing frontiers. ~~Bullitt thinks that~~

Bullitt believes that this should be seen by you immediately in Cabinet meeting and asks you please to call back immediately. I have given Hack the telephone number.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*file
personal*

9/23 - 4.50 P

Bullitt:

"This is what I wanted to say (to the President):

"The British Ambassador has now communicated to me a telegram which he has just received from Chamberlain.

"This telegram shows that the situation is not so hopeless as it appeared to be from the communication that the British Ambassador here rec'd from the foreign office in London.

"It appears that there will not be an entry of German troops immediately into Czechoslovakia. The dispute is on the question of how soon those troops should enter and how far they should enter and on the withdrawal of Czech police from the Sudeten regions.

"Chamberlain will return to London tomorrow morning, arriving about Noon in London and he will have with him at that time written statements of Hitler with regard to exactly what he wants, with respect to the questions I have just given you.

"The result is that the situation, as shown by this communication from Chamberlain, is not so desperate as the situation previously shown by the communication from the foreign office in London.

"Therefore please say to the President right away that I do not feel that, in the light of this latter communication direct from Chamberlain, war is likely to break out within the next 24 hours. I think there still a breathing space and that therefore feel that he still has time to consider things."

file
confidential

PSF: Bullitt

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE:

September 27, 1938.
9:45 a.m.

SUBJECT: Telephone conversation.

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Bullitt;
Under Secretary Welles.

COPIES TO:

*** 1-1400

MR. BULLITT: Have you read Hitler's reply to the President? It was sent to you last night.

MR. WELLES: I have read it. Have you read it?

MR. BULLITT: Yes. It is, of course, * * * ultimatum. Have you heard yet that Chamberlain is to speak tonight.

MR. WELLES: Yes.

MR. BULLITT: The time is getting shorter and shorter and therefore any action to be taken will have to be thought about with great speed. I am thinking of an alternative which I should like to suggest to you to get your reaction.

MR. WELLES: Please do.

MR. BULLITT: In the first place I believe that the French Government this afternoon will issue a statement on all points of Chamberlain's statement of last night in which he said that the British Government would guarantee that the Czechs would carry this out rapidly and fairly. There is also discussion going on here of an attempt to appoint an international commission at once. I doubt if this can be done today. It will possibly take until tomorrow. Meanwhile time presses. I have ~~of~~ the following - that the President might very well reply to the Chancellor's note saying that he thanks him for his reply but everyone must recognize by this time that the conditions of peace laid down in 1919 did not produce happiness and tranquillity on the Continent. Many things have changed already and remain to be changed. The Czech Government * * * * The French and British Government have promised to see they are handed over expeditiously and fairly. The Chancellor takes the position that this handing over can take place at only the time and in exactly the manner which he himself orders, of one man deciding what appears to plunge the entire continent into war. The President suggests that a conference should be held to settle this and correlated questions. He suggests that on the 29th there should meet representatives of England, France, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. I have thought very

carefully about this. Italy is left out, Russia is left out.

MR. WELLES: Give me the list again.

MR. BULLITT: France, England, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and a representative of the United States, if these powers so desire, will also be present. We suggest such a meeting at The Hague on the 29th. Such a meeting would mean that no troops would cross the border. We should be very glad to receive the Chancellor's reply if such a conference would be acceptable to him. He would immediately get great pressure from Poland and Hungary to accept it which would put him in a bad spot. Have you received all the telegrams sent last night.

MR. WELLES: I have read them all very carefully. The second one is extraordinarily interesting.

MR. BULLITT: Daladier is perfectly magnificent. I am sending a telegram almost at once incorporating these ideas. I have just formulated them because I have just seen and been able to digest Hitler's message. I don't know whether this line of thought appeals to you. The only other line for the President would be to deliver in his reply to Hitler a terrific statement of what the consequences will be and where the responsibility will lie. I do not think this would be desirable. It would drive Hitler into immediate action.

MR. WELLES: I think it is out of the question. It is not constructive. More than that it puts this Government definitely in a position of partiality which we don't want to take.

MR. BULLITT: At the time the President considers appealing for a conference he might send for the German Ambassador and say to the Ambassador some very simple things, cite some facts well known to him - Germany's popularity in the United States in 1914, their popularity at moment well known to him, firmly trusts that Herr Hitler will not place him in the same position that Woodrow Wilson was placed in and with circumstances much more difficult today than they were at that time. I think a simple statement like that to the German Ambassador might have a very great effect. Any further conversation I think might suggest a modification of the Neutrality Act.

MR. WELLES: That cannot be undertaken at this moment. I am convinced of that. If you were here you would agree with me. Your first suggestion is in entire accord with my own inclination. I will take them up at once. I haven't seen the Secretary this morning. I will see the President in the next hour. I will take this up with him and see where we get.

MR. BULLITT: He may wish to wait for Chamberlain's statement tonight at eight o'clock. I think this is the only line of action which gives a further chance for peace. If Chamberlain speaks at eight o'clock tonight here - that

will be three o'clock in the afternoon with you - there will be plenty of time tonight after that to decide and get something out.

MR. WELLES: If anything is to be done it will have to be done in next twenty-four hours.

MR. BULLITT: It will also have to ask representatives of those six powers to be present on the morning of the 29th of September. Acceptance of this conference would of course mean that troops wouldn't cross the frontier. I have talked with Kennedy in London and there they are thinking about nothing except how fast they can get ready for war. He hasn't been able to see anyone of importance.

MR. WELLES: The only two people mentioned in his cable were Oliver Stanley and someone else - no one of importance.

MR. BULLITT: Here there is still some slight hope that by pushing this matter of a statement to guarantee to Hitler * * *. I doubt very much if it will be effective. I believe the chances are about ninety-five in a hundred of war beginning midnight Friday. I should appreciate it if you will call me back giving some inkling of the way your thoughts are running.

MR. WELLES: I will naturally call you back.

MR. BULLITT: Thank you very much.

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON

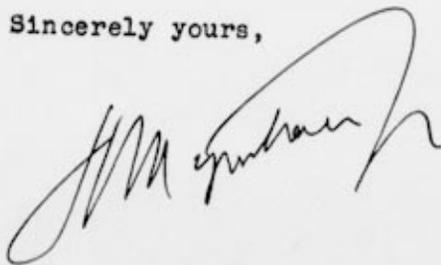
Frank

September 27, 1938

My dear Mr. President:

I am returning herewith
Ambassador Bullitt's letter to you
of August 8th, concerning proposed
credit for China.

Sincerely yours,



The President,
The White House.

Published in

Foreign Relations of the U.S.

1938

VOL. III PAGES 544-545
the Far East

PSP
France
Bu Hill

Paris, August 8, 1938.

Personal and
Strictly Confidential

Dear Mr. President:

From a multitude of reliable sources, I have been informed during the past two months that the Chinese will be at the end of their financial resources by the first of next January, unless they can obtain credits abroad. Chiang Kai-shek's will to fight and the courage of the Chinese people remain unbroken; but there will be just no money to buy anything. I have had this information in a series of messages from Chiang Kai-shek, T. V. Soong, and Doctor Kung transmitted to me by the Chinese Ambassador here, and I have had the same information from a horde of detached observers.

As you will recall, some months ago Bonnet said to me that he hoped it might be possible for the United States to extend some sort of a credit or
loan

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

The White House.

loan to China and that he was certain that if we should be willing to act, both France and Great Britain would act simultaneously though not jointly. Two days ago, Bonnet reiterated this to me. He added that he was certain that either England, France, or the United States could give credits to China without provoking any serious Japanese reaction. The Japanese were too involved in China and were too fearful of Russian attack to dare to act against either England, France, or the United States.

This reasoning seems to me sound. I believe we should, however, avoid putting ourselves out on any long limb. I do not think we should sell the Chinese arms or munitions on credit, but I believe we should give the Chinese Government a credit of one hundred million dollars for the purchase of flour and gray goods in the United States.

We shall have to take a loss on our wheat and cotton anyhow. If we sell the Chinese Government flour instead of wheat and gray goods instead of cotton, we shall get the benefit of the first processing and even if we should lose the hundred million, it would be money well spent.

I have talked over this idea with Henry Morgenthau and find that he is entirely in accord with me. As you know, he suggested to the Chinese Ambassador in Paris that the Chinese Government should send K. P. Chen to Washington and I have just received information that Chen will reach Washington about the same time that Henry returns.

If you should approve of this proposal, I suggest that you should let me know in advance so that I could try to push Bonnet into making good his statements to me with regard to the readiness of the French Government to take simultaneous and similar action.

I have thought about this a lot and I feel certain that we ought to do it. I hope you will too.

Love and good luck.

Yours affectionately,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Bill". The letters are stylized and connected.

William C. Bullitt.

France
PSF: Bullitt

Paris, September 28, 1938.

~~Secret~~ and Personal

Dear Mr. President:

The enclosed telegram I was about to send to you when the news came that Hitler had invited Chamberlain, Daladier, and Mussolini to meet him in Munich tomorrow at two o'clock. Inasmuch as the message contains military secrets of the highest importance, I felt that it was desirable, in view of the change in the situation, to send it to you by mail rather than by telegraph. Please keep it for your most private eye, and please give me an immediate reply - I mean immediate - to the question with regard to how far it might be possible to export parts of planes and motors and machine tools from the United States to Canada in time of war.

It is just as vital to have this information immediately now as it was when it seemed that war was certain; because it remains vital for France to start
building

The Honorable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

building planes on this scale at once. Unless France and England can manufacture in this way and on this scale, the time will soon come again when Hitler will issue a ukase, and make war when it is not obeyed by France and England.

I am so relieved this evening that I feel like embracing everyone and wish I were in the White House to give you a large kiss on your bald spot.

Love, good luck, and hurrah.

Bill

Encl.

France
PSF: Bullitt

SECSTATE

WASHINGTON

RUSH - September 28, 3 P.M. 1938

The following message is to be decoded by Mr. Salmon or the Acting Chief of the Code Room and carried to the President by him, and no copy made under any circumstances.

~~SECRET~~ AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Guy La Chambre, Minister for Air, has just given me the actual figures on the aviation situation.

If war should begin on the first of October, the French would have six hundred battle planes. This includes pursuit planes and bombers.

The British have agreed to send to France to support the French Army one hundred and twenty light bombing planes at the end of the first week, and one hundred and twenty more at the end of four weeks.

To the certain knowledge of the French Military Intelligence, the Germans have ready for battle at this moment six thousand five hundred planes of the very latest types. The division of these planes is believed to be two-thirds bombers and one-third pursuit planes.

The Italians have of the very latest types eight hundred pursuit planes and twelve hundred bombers. Both the Germans and Italians have large quantities of planes, not of the latest types.

The Soviet Government was asked recently by the

French

French Government if Soviet planes could fly to France in case of need. The reply was that no Soviet plane had sufficient radius of action to fly to France.

The Minister for Air said that it was certain that the German planes would be able to bomb Paris at will. The French pursuit planes were so insufficient in numbers that they would all have to be assigned to protecting the observation planes of the Army. There would be no planes for the defense of Paris.

Anti-aircraft artillery was also most inadequate in quantity. There would be a certain amount of anti-aircraft artillery available for the defense of Paris but almost none for the defense of other points and none to protect French troop concentrations.

The Minister for Air felt certain that the destruction in Paris would pass all imagination. He said that he had sent his wife and child to Brittany already, and he believed that every woman and child who could leave Paris should do so at once and every man who had no urgent reason to be here should do likewise.

The Minister for Air went on to say that there was no protection whatsoever against the large-sized German bombs except a shelter covered by at least fifteen feet of reinforced concrete. It was obviously impossible to create many such shelters. There were, however,

comparatively

comparatively few German or Italian bombing planes which could carry bombs of the largest size. Most of the German bombing, he expected to be done with small incendiary bombs weighing about twenty pounds. It would, therefore, be useful to have plenty of sand in houses since these bombs could be put out by two shovelfuls of sand but an unconquerable fire would result if water was spread on them.

The Minister for Air went on to say that the safest place for the next two years in France would be a trench provided one was equipped with a gas mask; that we should provide ourselves with gas masks immediately and we should dig trenches in whatever gardens might be available. A trench would be a sufficient protection except in case of a direct hit and in case of a direct hit, there would be no protection. He advised me urgently to have American women and children sent out of Paris at the earliest possible moment.

I have accordingly today given instructions to Murphy to inform each member of the staff personally and quietly that I believe he should send his wife and children out of Paris at the earliest possible moment.

The Minister for Air went on to say that the estimates of the General Staff of the French Air Force were that, at the end of a month under the present circumstances,

circumstances, France could not have more than three hundred planes and that if good weather should continue for very long, a time might come when the number of French planes would be altogether negligible.

He felt personally that the General Staff of the Army was underestimating the importance of the air factor and he thought that it would be most dangerous to add another frontier by an attack on Spain, even though this frontier might be in existence for only a brief period because Franco had many planes.

We then discussed at length the problem of producing a sufficient number of planes to overcome German and Italian superiority in the air. The Minister for Air was of the opinion that such planes could only be produced on the continent of North America and by American manufacturers. Since the Neutrality Act would prevent the manufacture of such planes in the United States, he proposed at once to attempt to build huge factories for planes in Canada, possibly just opposite Detroit and Buffalo, so that American workmen living at home could be utilized readily. He asked me for suggestions as to the persons to take in hand this immense program of plane construction on the success or failure of which, in his opinion, the outcome of the war would depend. He added that it was, of course, vital that it should be possible to ship machine tools
and

and plane parts and instruments from the United States to these Canadian factories.

La Chambre asked me if I could obtain in strictest confidence information for him if and to what extent it might be possible to export parts of planes and motors and machine tools from the United States to Canada without violating the Neutrality Act.

I believe that we should go to the extreme limit compatible with a reasonable interpretation of the law to permit such exports to Canada.

Will you please have someone study this question with the idea in mind that it may affect the whole future of freedom in the world.

Please give me an answer on this point at the earliest possible moment as no plans can be carried further until La Chambre knows the answer to this question.

La Chambre continued our discussion by asking me for my opinion as to the men best qualified to organize this effort on behalf of France. I suggested Jean Monnet (not repeat not Monick) who, as you know, has been an intimate friend of mine for many years, whom I trust as a brother. Monnet organized and directed the Inter-Allied Maritime Transport Council; the wheat and shipping pool and all the vast other Inter-allied organizations

organizations during the war when he was only a man of twenty-eight. He then became Under Secretary of the League of Nations and for many years has been engaged in private business.

Guy La Chambre was pleased by this idea and I suggested that Lindbergh, who is an intimate friend of Monnet's, should be associated with Monnet in this work. I suggested further that a French airplane constructor or expert should be added to Monnet and Lindbergh with Monnet as absolute boss. La Chambre was pleased by this idea and asked me to get in touch with Monnet and Lindbergh at once.

La Chambre also said that he had an option on one hundred more P-36s for delivery next spring and asked me if I thought he should exercise it in view of the terms of the Neutrality Act. I told him that I could make no predictions as to what would happen to the Neutrality Act, but I advised him to take his chance and put in the order.

I realize that at the present moment it may be impossible to modify the Neutrality Act in any way; but my personal feeling is that the horror and hatred evoked by German bombings will be so great that the people of the United States by next spring will not feel inclined to prevent planes purchased before the
outbreak

outbreak of war from being sent to defend whatever may be left of France from further German bombings.

I realize how carefully it is necessary to tread in this matter, but my personal feeling is that if war should break out this week, we should at the earliest possible moment permit the French and British to purchase for cash in our ports and carry in their own ships as many planes, munitions, and guns as they have money to pay for.

I thank you for your personal message which I received this morning. I was a great deal prouder of you today. Your second telegram to Hitler was a masterpiece. Congratulations and love to you all.

BULLITT.

J. P. B.

EG

*Re Graham
Hall*

Bullitt

GRAY

Paris

Dated September 29, 1938

Rec'd 7:03 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1640, September 29, 10 a.m.

Your 716, September 29, 2 a.m.

Please inform the White House that I communicated with Miss Eleanor Roosevelt, the President's niece, last Monday and made reservations for her on the PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT sailing today. I have also arranged for her friend Miss Nathalie Coolidge of Boston to accompany her.

BULLITT

RR

EDA
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased
before being communi-
cated to anyone (BR)

PS F: Bullitt
PARIS

Dated December 13, 1938

Received 6:12 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

2107, December 13, 7 p.m.

Your 915, December 6, 5 p.m.

FOR BULLITT.

Vincent Sheehan who has just returned to Paris tells Murphy that he is writing Miss Le Hand that his telegram concerning the treatment of the returning American volunteers from Spain was sent in a moment of agitation upon learning that he could not interview in Paris the group which arrived December 2. The group was on a through train to Havre without stopover at Paris. The men were accompanied from the Franco Spanish frontier by two of our consular officers and met upon arrival at Havre by Consul Wiley who maintained contact with them throughout their stay there. Sheehan says he will explain to Miss Le Hand that the men were not held incommunicado, that they were included in a blanket transit visa good only for passage through France to the port of departure, and at Havre were allowed to circulate freely while awaiting sailing which was delayed by the seamen's strike. During that time they were provided comfortable accommodations at the expense of the French line.

CFW:RR

WILSON