

● PSF

Great Britain: Harriman

1941-42

Harriman Folder
1-41
(original in State Folder)

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM NO. 1470 DATED APRIL 14 [1941]

FROM LONDON

RUSH - ~~EXTREME~~ CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE PRESIDENT
FROM HARRIMAN.

For the purpose of evolving plans for the aggressive defense of Libya and Egypt Churchill had an all day meeting yesterday with Chief of Air Force, First Sea Lord, General Dill and Foreign Minister and it was decided to inaugurate active air and naval campaign to sever Hitler's line of supply to Tripoli even though naval losses might result. I was told by General Dill that the Commander in Chief of the Near East greatly needed all types of transport vehicles, tanks, armored cars and anti-aircraft and tank guns.

The development of Basra or Suez as base for imports and assembly of as many of our aircraft as is possible with as many mechanics and engineers from the United States is urgently requested by Air Force Chief.

Shall inform Hopkins on the foregoing two matters when I am furnished with additional data.

As strategy of combined action by Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia with the cooperation of British expeditionary and Air Force had failed, military effectives sent to

Greece

Greece were a sacrifice to British honor and while this force will courageously continue to fight, the results are without their control.

file
Confidential
H.H.

PSF: *Hassim an Faldes*
Great Britain
1-41

London - May 7, 1941.

~~SECRET~~ 11/5/42
1930

Dear Mr. President:

I am taking advantage of Jim Forrestal's return to send you this letter.

The changes in the Government appear to have been well received by the British public.

Beaverbrook had been for some time asking to be relieved. He is none too well, suffering from asthma and an eye affliction. The Prime Minister speaks of his new post as being largely priorities but I gather from conversations with both the Prime Minister and Beaverbrook that he will end by being the number one trouble shooter.

At the moment he is getting into the tank situation. Members of my staff have been studying this subject for several weeks. The net is that the tank program had been pushed aside because of priorities given to air and sea. The Libyan campaign in both directions was a rude shock to many and there will be great pressure for increased production both in England and America. The need is for home defense as well as the Middle East. Those in charge of tanks tell me it is rather ironic that Beaverbrook is now to help them as he has been the worst offender in stealing things they have needed. Beaverbrook is not personally liked but people know he is the only man who can really cut the red tape and he is welcomed as an ally.

The new Shipping and Transport Minister, Leathers, is a business man. He has been manager of the Inchcape bunkering companies. He knows world shipping intimately, port problems, etc. He is a personal selection of the Prime Minister who knew him as a business man in pre-war days. No one else knows him and although I understand some of the politicians looked askance at the idea, the press has taken the appointment well. He was elevated from a junior position in the Ministry of Shipping (in charge of bunkering). As he has had no experience in politics he is being made a Peer, leaving the Parliamentary work to the Parliamentary Secretary.

The Prime Minister arranged for him to lunch with me alone the day after his appointment. I found him energetic and knowledgeable. He will be particularly helpful in coordinating shipping, ports and domestic transport which have been working to a considerable extent at cross purposes in the past. I believe he will do a good job if his head is not turned.

May 7, 1941.

I will undoubtedly see a good deal of Leathers as the Prime Minister insists that I keep in touch with all phases of the shipping problem. I sit with a Cabinet Committee which the Prime Minister calls together once a week on the subject.

Colonel Moore-Brabazon who takes Beaverbrook's post as Minister of Aircraft Production is an old flyer, a man of ability and drive but far more orderly in his approach. On the whole I expect it will be easier for us to work with the Ministry under the new head than under the old one man rule.

Cross, the ex Minister of Shipping, goes to Australia. Menzies picked him.

I got to know Menzies well, which is not difficult. He is the type of man you call by his first name almost immediately. His nose was a bit put out of joint in London as he wanted to be made a member of the War Cabinet. He seemed a bit soured just before he left. He was one of the few men who talked up to the Prime Minister and had a salutary effect in several situations. Actually the Prime Minister was influenced by Menzies' advice even though he would not admit it.

I feel that Menzies' presence here was valuable and hope he comes back although I do not agree with his point of view on all subjects. As these are outside of my assignment, I will not comment. I have had several discussions with Menzies and the Australian High Commissioner, Bruce, on the problems of Australia. I have urged them to present their problems through the appropriate channels in Washington.

I have become a general hand holder for all with problems about which they think America might help. It seems to be useful to listen to the stories and I usually find it possible to be of at least a little help in explaining how they can go about the presentation of their problems and to whom.

The Prime Minister continues to take me with him on his frequent trips to the devastated cities. He thinks it of value to have an American around for the morale of the people. He also wants me to report to you from time to time.

As we have the boats in service this year we may also require man power a principal bottle-neck next year. For example not pilots alone are needed but maintenance crews and radio operators. It is not ships alone but the officers and crews. Thus it comes to tanks, maintenance again is of vital importance.

May 7, 1941.

Gil Winant was with us the first trip - Swansea, Bristol, and Cardiff - and I understand he reported to you about it. Forrestal was with us the second - Liverpool and Manchester - and will tell you about them personally. I cabled you regarding Plymouth. This week we go to Dover. The reaction of the people of each town is somewhat different depending upon the individual characteristics of the area and the length of time since the last blitz.

It is very well worthwhile from my standpoint as it not only gives me a picture of the production problems but I meet the important local men.

The morale of the people is of such vital importance that I am having some talks next week with the thought of recommending to you that someone come over to help on civilian resistance. I want, however, to know more about the problem before putting it up to you. A most important part is the organization of mobile equipment in sufficient quantity and well supplied to be available at a moment's notice. I am not yet convinced that the shelters arrangements are good enough or the best that can be done. Still it is not easy and I don't know enough to be entitled to an opinion.

The question of man power will become more and more acute. Women are being inducted into increasing lines of activity. But when the air force is expanded to over a million men and other services enlarged, there will be greater and greater requirements for trained personnel and skilled labor. Would you consider it worthwhile to have someone like Ed McGrady come over here for a short trip to study the present and prospective problem?

The study I suggest is analysis of the man power needs in every line in connection with the military and production plans. I suggest Ed because, as you know, I worked with him in the N.R.A. days and because, in addition to the actual needs, the man should understand labor unions. Ed, too, has a very practical understanding of the production and associated problems.

Dr. Conant reviewed while here the needs for technical experts and technicians in certain lines. The whole field is one that will become increasingly important and unless we have the facts in advance I am afraid we may find trained man power a principal bottleneck next year. For example not pilots alone are needed but maintenance crews and radio operators. It is not ships alone but the officers and crews. When it comes to tanks, maintenance again is of vital importance.

The President

- 4 -

May 7, 1941.

I find everyone here from the Prime Minister down deeply appreciative of the increasing aid that you are giving. It is natural that they hope for a belligerent status but I am surprised how understanding all are of the psychology of the situation at home. It is because of what they went through themselves. There is both greater understanding of and greater frankness about their dependence on us for the final outcome.

I have never worked in a more congenial atmosphere than at Grosvenor Square, largely due to Gil's generous personality. I am impressed by the grasp and competence of Admiral Ghormley and General Lee. We are working together as one team. I deeply appreciate the opportunity you have given me to serve here.

Best regards to Harry and my other friends,

Sincerely,

L. A. Harriman

The President,
The White House.

Harriman Folder

My dear Mr. Stalin:

This note will be presented to you by my friend Averell Harriman, whom I have asked to be head of our delegation to Moscow.

Mr. Harriman is well aware of the strategic importance of your front and will, I know, do everything that he can to bring the negotiations in Moscow to a successful conclusion.

Harry Hopkins has told me in great detail of his encouraging and satisfactory visits with you. I can't tell you how thrilled all of us are because of the gallant defense of the Soviet armies.

I am very sure that Hitler made a profound strategic mistake when he attacked your country. I am confident that ways will be found to provide the material and supplies necessary to fight him on all fronts, including your own.

I want particularly to take this occasion to express my great confidence that your armies will ultimately prevail over Hitler and to assure you of our great determination to be of every possible material assistance.

Yours very sincerely,

His Excellency
Joseph Stalin,
President of the Soviet of
People's Commissars of
the U.S.S.R.

*Book
Harriman*

*Harriman Folder
1941*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PARAPHRASE

Telegram No: 4855

Dated: October 11 5 p.m.

From: London

Rec'd: October 11 12:30 p.m.

~~SECRET~~ FROM MR. HARRIMAN FOR MR. HOPKINS

As a supplement to our cables Nos. 3028 and 2616 there follow figures in hundred thousand dollars giving the losses at sea which have taken place in respect to goods of United States origin, and the percentage lost in relation to "shipments":

<u>Item</u>	<u>June</u>		<u>July</u>	
	Losses	Percent	Losses	Percent
Raw Materials	9	3.1	15	5.4
Food and Feed	7	10.5	nil	nil
Aircraft	nil	nil	13	3.5
Naval equipment and munitions	4	1.3	5	2.2
Total	20	2.2	33	3.2
	<u>January through June</u>		<u>January through July</u>	
	Losses	Percent	Losses	Percent
Raw Materials	144	6.7	159	6.6
Food and feed	12	5.1	12	3.2
Aircraft	99	6.5	111	5.9
Naval equipment and munitions	65	5.9	71	5.2
Total	320	6.4	333	5.8

10/11/41
S:BCC/bcc

Copies to:
Mr. Hopkins (4)
SA/E (1)
S (1)
DCR (1)

PERSONAL AND ~~SECRET~~

March 16, 1942.

Dear Averell:-

It is mighty good to get yours of
March seventh. I enclose very confidential
copy of a letter I want you to hand to Winston.
Read the copy but don't let anyone know you
know what is in it.

As ever yours,

Honorable W. Averell Harriman,
c/o American Embassy,
London,
England.

(Enclosure)

DECLASSIFIED
By Deputy Archivist of the U.S.
By W. J. Stewart Date FEB 9 1972

Personal and ~~Secret~~

London - March 7, 1942.

Dear Mr. President:

I have been worried about the Prime Minister - both his political status and his own spirits. He did not take well the criticism he found on his return from Washington. The criticism was not directed at him personally but against certain policies and against various individuals. Unfortunately he bared his chest and assumed the blame for everything and everybody - politicians and soldiers alike. The natural effect of this was to turn the criticism against himself.

He was forced, obviously reluctantly, to make changes, thus failing to get full credit. He has, however, quieted things for the present. His opponents have found that he has an Achilles Heel and will undoubtedly attack again. It is curious how, when criticism starts, a coalition government suffers from lack of party loyalty and support.

Although the British are keeping a stiff upper lip, the surrender of their troops at Singapore has shattered confidence to the core - even in themselves but more particularly in their leaders. They don't intend to take it lying down and I am satisfied we will see the re-birth of greater determination. At the moment, however, they can't see the end to defeats.

Unfortunately Singapore shook the Prime Minister himself to such an extent that he has not been able to stand up in this adversity with his old vigor.

A number of astute people, both friends and opponents, feel it is only a question of a few months before his Government falls. I cannot accept this view. He has been very tired but is better in the last day or two. I believe he will come back with renewed strength, particularly when the tone of the war improves.

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. letter, 1-11-72

By RHP Date FEB 9 1972

The President

- 2 -

March 7, 1942.

There is no other man in sight to give the British the leadership Churchill does.

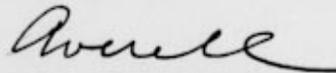
Cripps wears the hair shirt and wants everyone else to do the same. The British are prepared to make any sacrifice to get on with the war but are not interested in sacrifice for its own sake. It has been proved that workmen need good food and entertainment to keep up production over long periods. In his present position, however, I believe Cripps will do a lot of good in stiffening things up.

Eden you know all about. Anderson is an uninspired, competent technician. Bevin has never really risen above labor union politics. And then we have Max! There is no one else on the horizon.

Now that the political storm has blown over, the Ministers can give their full time to the war. There is no doubt the new team will on balance be a big improvement over the old.

I find on my return even greater opportunity for usefulness and deeply appreciate this opportunity you are giving me.

Sincerely,



The President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

TELEGRAM

Bob The White House

Washington August 14 1942

0329 ZM
FROM TEHERAN TO AGWAR
NUMBER 106 August 13 1942

Personal for the Eyes of the President only from Harriman

PRUMY, traveling companion, asks me to describe to you his inspection of four armored brigades training for the US tanks soon to arrive. One brigade is to have Grants and the other three Shermans.

In speaking to a number of selected group of officers and enlisted men he explained your personal interest in arranging for the dispatch of the Shermans and in his vivid way he has brought you personally to these men over with the tanks.

I was much impressed with the keenness of the men in their training on the few battle scarred tanks at their disposal by the confidence expressed in our equipment and by the determination they showed in the reaction to my companions remarks.

They are fit tough men and with effective leadership will use the equipment you are sending to good advantage.

New subject: Smuts expressed to me his complete approval of the changes in command and confidence in the offensive potentialities here, also enthusiasm for our other operational plans. However he emphasized the need for determination and particularly speed.

ONDRICK

755pm/d

Harriman 1942

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By J. Schauble Date FEB 9 1972

~~SECRET~~

CR 4364

FROM HARRIMAN; PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT.
I HAVE BEEN PRESENT AT FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON BURMA WITH THE PRIME-MINISTER AND WITH THE WAR OFFICE. AS EVERY ONE IS SO BEWILDERED BY THE TURN OF EVENTS IN SINGAPORE THEY ARE NO LONGER READY TO EXPRESS OPTIMISM IN ANY OTHER THEATRE IN WHICH BRITISH FORCES ARE INVOLVED. ON THE OTHER HAND IT IS QUITE CLEAR THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE WAR OFFICE HAVE BEEN CONFIDENT THAT REINFORCEMENTS BEING SENT WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO WITHSTAND JAPANESE ATTACK IN BURMA IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. THIS OPTIMISM HAS BEEN BASED ON THEIR ESTIMATE OF THE STRENGTH OF THE ATTACKING FORCES WHICH CAN BE TRANSPORTED AND MAINTAINED. THE JAPANESE WITH LOCAL LABOR ARE WORKING FAST TO IMPROVE ROADS BUT IT IS NOT BELIEVED THAT THIS WORK CAN MAKE A MARKED CHANGE BEFORE THE RAINY SEASON BEGINS IN JUNE WHICH IS EXPECTED TO FURTHER IMPEDE THE ADVANCE. ALTHOUGH THE PUBLIC GENERALLY HAD LOOKED FOR BAD NEWS FROM SINGAPORE, THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE JAPS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TAKE POSITIONS AND GAIN GROUND ON THE ISLAND WAS NOT ANTICIPATED AND IT IS CAUSING REAL DISMAY. YOU CAN WELL UNDERSTAND HOW KEENLY THE PRIME MINISTER FEELS THIS, COMING AS IT DOES ON TOP OF THE -

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

~~SECRET~~

C.R. 4364, PAGE 2.

OF THE -
REVERSES IN LYBIA. THE CABINET CHANGES ARE STILL GIVING HIM DIFFICULTY.
ALL IN ALL, IT IS A DARK MOMENT FOR HIM.

I GATHER THAT YOUR CABLE OF YESTERDAY WAS MUCH APPRECIATED.

ACTION: PRESUS.....

PRESONAL FILE.....

AUTHENTICATED *R.H. Jackson 14.1.72*
CODING WATCH OFFICER

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By J. Schambie Date FEB 9 1972

PSF: Harriman
[1942]

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Harriman

I hesitate to have you
go, for I do not want
anyone anywhere to have the
slightest suspicion that
you are acting as an
observer. You would I
know be useful but I
think it wiser not to run
any risks of misconstruction

Roosevelt