

● PSF

Switzerland

File Personal

PSF Switzerland

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

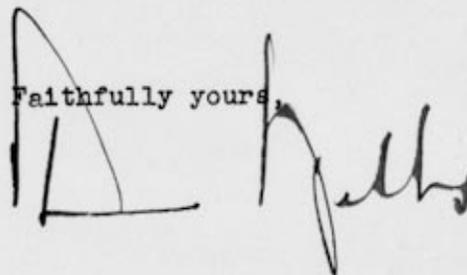
April 28, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

I am enclosing herewith a personal telegram addressed to you by Leland Harrison, which was received this morning by the Department.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enclosure:
From Bern, No. 41,
April 28, 1939, 11 a.m.

The President,
The White House.

JR

GRAY

Bern

Dated April 28, 1939

Rec'd 7:40 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

41, April 28, 11 a.m.

PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT.

My dear Mr. President.

When I heard yesterday afternoon from Sumner that the telegram I sent him after my conversation with him Wednesday had somehow been sent direct to you and since standing alone that telegram seemed so ungracious and inadequate, I endeavored to telephone to you last evening. When I was told I could not speak to you and was referred to Sumner I was glad to learn from him that he had informed you of our conversation of Wednesday and in particular my deep regret that it was impossible at such short notice to reach him in time to be of use in connection with the special purpose explained by Sumner and also my sincere conviction that my sudden departure would be misinterpreted at this time of crisis when your messages had been so enthusiastically welcomed and had at last pointed the way out of the present impasse

and

-2- #41, April 28, 11 a.m., from Bern.

and afforded some hope of peace to the man in the street.

May I repeat how greatly I appreciated this additional mark of your confidence which I shall never forget nor can I adequately express my sincere regret and my desire always to be of service to you.

Respectfully and very devotedly yours. Leland Harrison.

HARRISON

RR

file
personal

PSF: ^{Switzerland} folder
Bern - March 15th 1941

Dear Mr President

It was so very kind of you to send me the signed copy of your address to Congress, I have had it bound in a folder and stamped with the U.S. gold shield. It lies in front of your photograph on the table of our drawing room and, as the family bible, so shall it be to the Itavians! We can turn to it in any hour of need when the disgust we feel at the behavior of our neighbors to the north and to the south seems unbearable. We can be

² proud of our national leadership
while what must they in their hearts
feel about their's! -

Spring is upon us and the Swiss
are stirring uneasily. A few days
ago we had the pleasure of lunching
with the Swiss Comancher-in-chief
General Guisan. His army, like
himself, is full of bristle. There
is no appeasement in his line
of talk. The seven (not nine!)
"old men", the Federal Councillors,
are his chief worry, but no matter
if they quaver and quake it is
the temper of the Swiss people
that counts and there is no
mistaking that they intend to keep
their independence and their

General intends to help them do it. His one anxiety, like that of so many others, is that the British blockade should force the Swiss to become economically dependent on Germany. To fight does not frighten him. To keep this freedom a great national agricultural effort is being made this year and every non-military man, every woman & every child old enough, is being drafted to take their turn working in the fields. But even so, it seems certain essentials must still be had from outside for them to live.

The General spoke of von Dr. President with such warm admiration in his voice,

and when he was discussing the difficulties
surrounding his country I told him that
when I had had the honor of seeing you
for a few moments last November you
had spoken of your great interest in
Switzerland and had mentioned the
beautiful St Gotthard. He replied "tell
our President my finger is always on the
pulse!" - I do wonder if we will
ever have to hear the explosion but it
is good to know from the General that
he is not afraid of fire crackers!
They are our emblem of freedom are
they not each July 4th?

I do hope by July 4th I may get home to be with the children for the summer months, but if I should be blocked by them I love the comfort of knowing that you are taking care of them - and hundreds of others - in the country where they belong.

Again thank you Mr President for the copy of your speech and also for the very nice letter you wrote me. I value it deeply as I love your others for they are the expression of your friendship for us both.

Yours Sincerely
James

We have just heard your magnificent
speech of Today. It certainly brings
faith and hope, and for the future
charity; that is after the "Order" which
is "not new" and "not an order"
has been swept away. To us who
live near it we can only say it looks
more and more like dis order, and as
that a new kind to be sure, for
their definition of every decency
has become deformed and
depraved!

Bern

May 8, 1941

Mr. President:

On May 1st the Swiss Post Office issued a new series of Air-Mail stamps. I try to make a set together with a newspaper clipping description of the series which I hope you may find interesting.

Here in Switzerland all eyes and ears are turned to the West. I am told that the same is true

of the vast majority of the French and, of course, of all those who suffer under the Nazi boot - and many in Italy also.

I am too in an daze with conflicting rumors. Although economic pressure continues and restrictions increase, I still feel that Switzerland will not be attacked.

Nancy plans to return for the children's holidays and hopes that she may have the good fortune to see you again. She joins me in every good wish to you - and kind remembrance to Mrs. Roosevelt.

Trickily & sincerely, yours,

Wm. Franklin

The President,

The White House.

1940 PSF
Switzerland

Mr. Karl Bruggmann, newly appointed Minister
of Switzerland to the United States

Mr. Bruggmann was born in 1889; in 1917 he entered the Swiss Diplomatic Service, and after serving in the Political Department was appointed Secretary of Legation at Petrograd. He was transferred to Washington in 1920, to Brussels in 1923, and subsequently to Paris. In July 1927 he was appointed Counselor of the Legation in Prague, subsequently serving as Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, and in December 1935 as Minister Resident. He was made Minister to Czechoslovakia in 1937.

Mrs. Bruggmann is a sister of Secretary of Agriculture Wallace. She and their two young sons accompanied the Minister to Washington.

Mr. Bruggmann speaks English.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

*file
personal
Switzerland Folder*

December 1, 1941.

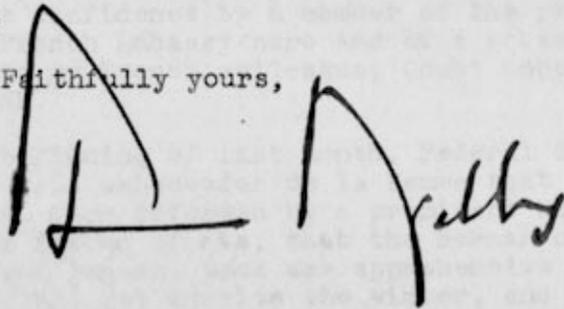
My dear Mr. President:

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a despatch from Leland Harrison written at Bern on November 6.

I believe you will find it interesting. Although the information is not of outstanding importance, the despatch gives, I think, a clear indication of certain trends in Europe which are worth following.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enclosure

The President,

The White House.

C O P Y

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bern, November 6, 1941.

No. 1928

Subject: Report of Initiatives for Peace.

~~Confidential~~ for the Secretary and the Under Secretary.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

As of possible interest, I have the honor to submit the following report of information which has been furnished in strict confidence by a member of the press section of the French Embassy here and of a subsequent conversation with my French colleague, Count Robert Renom DE LA BAUME.

About the beginning of last month, Federal Councilor PILET-GOLAZ told Ambassador de la Baume that he (Pilet-Golaz) had been informed by a prominent German industrialist, a friend of his, that the German opposition circle around General Beck was apprehensive lest German morale should not survive the winter, and that, with the collapse of the home front, would come a collapse of the German army, after which communism would flood Europe. The German opposition circle desired to know whether Pilet-Golaz could ascertain whether the English, should Hitler & Co. be discarded, would talk peace, so as to avoid this very threatening development. Pilet-Golaz told de la Baume that when he had approached my British colleague on the subject, expressing grave fears that communism was about to engulf Europe, the latter had simply shrugged his shoulders and said, "Let the Germans effectively dispose first of Hitler & Co. and then we can visualize peace talks." Pilet-Golaz was much perturbed by Kelly's indifference and insisted that de la Baume request the assistance of Pétain - and, through him, President Roosevelt - in interesting the English in peace talks in order to save Europe from communism.

On

On October 3 de la Baume telegraphed the whole story to the Foreign Office at Vichy. About a week later former Federal Councillor Musy invited de la Baume to visit him at his country place near Fribourg. De la Baume accepted and, while there, was told by Musy exactly the same story that he had heard from Pilet-Golaz. He mentioned this fact to Musy, who doesn't like Pilet-Golaz and who described him as a "parrot" of his, Musy's information and ideas. De la Baume telegraphed a report of this conversation also to Vichy.

On October 14, the French Military Attaché, Lieutenant-Colonel Gabriel A. CHAUVIN went to Vichy, and de la Baume, not having had any reaction whatsoever from the Vichy Foreign Office, asked Chauvin to ascertain, if possible, whether there had been any reaction to his telegram of October 3. Through his military friends Chauvin arranged an interview with Darlan when he was able to mention de la Baume's telegram. Darlan said that he had seen the telegrams, but that Pilet-Golaz was an unimportant politician and that Musy was a discredited one and that he, Darlan, was not impressed. A few more words passed between the two men. Then, after a silence, Darlan rose and, pacing the room, suddenly blurted out: "Do you know what is going to happen? I think that I can safely say - that is, I can tell you - that England is going to drop the United States and Russia and make peace with Germany on France's back." A few more sentences along this line and the interview was over.

On return to Bern, Chauvin reported his conversation with Darlan and also reported that even his "god-father", General Hunziger, had become infected with "attentisme" which, he said, was gaining ground in France. It seemed as if Darlan was using the threat of an "English-German peace at expense of France" as an argument to frighten his compatriots into a hurried peace with Germany.

Subsequently, on or about October 18, de la Baume attended a luncheon at the Rumanian Legation at which von BIBRA, Counselor of the German Legation, was also present. After luncheon and after much flattery, von Bibra declared that he thought de la Baume must be aware what a great thing it would be for Europe were France to take the lead and, making its own final arrangement with Germany in the New Order, urge the other,

more

more recalcitrant, European nations to do likewise; certainly the prestige of France would carry these nations into camp and France would have a very important position in the New Order. De la Baume replied that, although it would be fine, of course, were peace once again to be established in Europe, he had no instructions whatsoever as to his attitude toward the New Order, and that he, personally, could only hope that the position of France in Europe would remain an important one, or words to that effect. De la Baume then noticed that LAHOVARY, his host, was noting down everything that had been said. So he took pains to point out that he had spoken only as "one European to another" and that he had in no sense spoken for his Government, from which he had had, as he had already declared, no instructions as to the "New Order". Lahovary nodded that he, of course, understood.

A few days later de la Baume received a note from Lahovary containing a copy of a telegram from General Antonescu, asking Lahovary to transmit to de la Baume an expression of his appreciation for his efforts to bring France and Germany together and thus an early peace to Europe! De la Baume was furious and called upon Lahovary immediately in order to put in a waver of responsibility. The Ambassador then telegraphed the whole story to Vichy.

Last week, in conversation with my French colleague, I referred to the interview granted on October 3rd by Marshal Pétain to a correspondent of the U.P. in which the Marshal was reported to have expressed his readiness to join in any peace initiative on the part of the President in which he (the Marshal) was convinced the Pope would be prepared to collaborate. The Ambassador stated that he had no information regarding the interview other than what he had seen in the U.P. despatches carried by the Swiss press. Thereupon he immediately launched into an account of his conversation with von Bibra and Lahovary substantially the same as that given above except for this important difference that he claimed that he had advanced the idea that France should take the initiative merely as a "try out" to see what von Bibra's reaction would be. He said further that he had not hesitated to point out to von Bibra that Germany had estranged the occupied countries and had failed to "put over" their plan for a New Order; that for a united Europe, Germany had to have the assistance and good

respectfully yours,

offices

LELAND HARRISON

offices of France with the smaller states with whom she was still an important factor; and that France would have to be "well paid" for any such assistance on her part. Lahovary was, of course, delighted with any suggestion which looked like a peace possibility. But von Bibra also seemed impressed and had, so the Ambassador claimed, said that he would report the suggestion to Berlin. I am inclined to credit the Ambassador when he claims that the suggestion originated with him and not with von Bibra. However that may be, it was clear that the Ambassador has now made the idea his own, in fact yesterday, at a small luncheon, I heard him advance the same suggestion.

During our conversation, the Ambassador gave it as his opinion that once Hitler had reached a determined line in Russia, he would offer peace on "generous" terms, including the complete restoration of Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and France - Germany to keep her conquests in the East and to obtain the return of her colonies. He also told me in strictest confidence that he had been informed by our Chilean colleague, Mr. Carlos Morla LYNCH, (pro-German), that a German peace proposal had already been passed on to the British.

I should add that the Ambassador as he did yesterday, expressed the fear that should the war go on, the suffering of the people of Europe and especially of those in the occupied countries will become unbearable, that famine and pestilence will be rampant while Germany is being defeated, and finally chaos. Such arguments will undoubtedly make their impression. But I believe that the great majority of the Swiss look further and realize fully what the future will hold if Germany is permitted undisputed mastery of the continent of Europe.

In this connection, I am informed that the Swiss General Staff is apprehensive of German pressure for permission to pass troops through Switzerland to Italy once the situation in Russia is stabilized. The view, however, was expressed in no uncertain terms that should Mr. Pilet-Golaz be then prepared to give in, General Guisan would be definitely and unalterably opposed. It was also pointed out and I believe correctly, that General Guisan has and will continue to have the confidence and support of the people as well as the unquestioned loyalty of the Swiss Army.

Respectfully yours,

LELAND HARRISON