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State Dept. : Welles

Jan. - April 1942

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THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

January 3, 1942

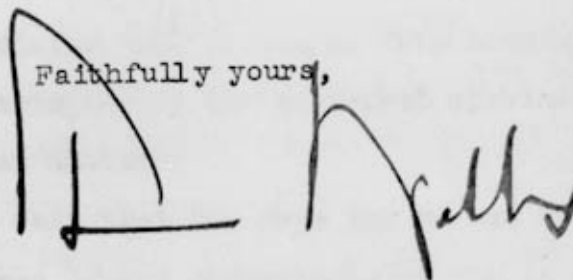
My dear Mr. President:

For your information, I am sending you a brief memorandum of a conversation I had this morning with the Minister of Switzerland.

I shall inform you of any further report which the Minister may later make to me.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enc.

The President,

The White House.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE:
January 3, 1942

SUBJECT: Desire of Swiss Minister to discuss with Prince Otto of Wurtemberg information obtained by Prince Otto regarding German peace proposals

PARTICIPANTS: Swiss Minister, Mr. Charles Brugman;
Under Secretary, Mr. Welles

COPIES TO: The President, S, PA/D, Eu

OFF 1-1493

The Swiss Minister came to see me this morning at his request, having asked for an urgent appointment upon an "unofficial matter".

The Minister said that two days ago he had been approached by Prince Adolph Schwarzenberg, who is now living in the United States and who is married to a sister of the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg. Prince Adolph was one of the largest landowners in Germany until he was forced to emigrate when his properties were confiscated by the Nazis.

The Minister stated that Prince Adolph had said to him that Prince Otto of Wurtemberg, a Benedictine monk, who had some years ago been forced to flee from

Germany and who is now living in a monastery in Washington, had received word in the last few days from a group of Germans in Switzerland that they were anxious to offer German peace proposals. The Minister stated that he was given to understand that this group of Germans in Switzerland were largely Bavarians who spoke for a section of the Nazi Party and possibly for an element of the German army. The Minister said that Prince Otto was a son of Duke Albert of Wurtemberg, a cousin of Queen Mary of England and of the Queen of the Netherlands and was a man of very high reputation.

The purpose of the Minister's visit was to inquire whether I saw any objection to his talking with Prince Otto of Wurtemberg in order to ascertain the nature of the information which he had received.

I said to the Minister that as he well knew, the Government of the United States was not interested in any peace proposals and that the President of the United States, speaking for the American people, had officially announced that the objective of the United States was the complete and final defeat of Hitlerism. The Minister interjected to say that he had referred to this of his own initiative in speaking with Prince Adolph Schwarzenberg. I went on to say that if the Minister decided

that it would be of interest for him to talk with Prince Otto of Wurtemberg in order to find out the information which he had received, I should be very glad to have the Minister tell me the results. I said, however, that I wished to make it completely clear that the Minister in any such conversation was not authorized by me, and should consequently not intimate that he had even discussed the question with me nor should he give any indication to Prince Otto of Wurtemberg that any information which the latter might give the Minister would be passed on to any authorities of the Government of the United States.

The Minister said that he would adopt exactly this line of procedure and would let me know anything of interest that he could ascertain.

U:SW:DMK

January 3, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

For your information, I am sending you a brief memorandum of a conversation I had this morning with the Minister of Switzerland.

I shall inform you of any further report which the Minister may later make to me.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

SUMNER WELLES

Enc.

The President,

The White House.

PSF: Welles Folder
State 1-42

January 8, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

There is enclosed a copy of a memorandum dated December 27, 1941 from the Polish Ambassador, Mr. Ciechanowski, containing information regarding the formation of a Polish Armed Force in Russia and requesting under instructions of Prime Minister Sikorski that consideration be given to insuring Poland a place equal to that of Russia and China in any alignment of Allied or Associated Powers.

Mr. Ciechanowski has been informed that a copy of this memorandum has been brought to your attention as requested by him.

Faithfully yours,

~~Sumner Welles~~

Enclosure:

From Polish Ambassador,
December 27, 1941.

The President,

The White House.

Original comes in Poland Folder

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personal*

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

Willis Tamm

February 13, 1942

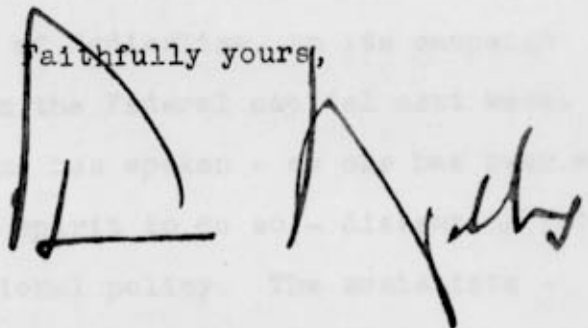
My dear Mr. President:

I am sending you herewith a translation of a letter dated February 6 which I have received from Dr. Damonte Taborda, one of the opposition deputies in the Argentine Congress and who was a member of the group of Argentine deputies which recently visited the United States.

I believe you will find this letter interesting, and particularly the second paragraph on page two, which deals with one of the questions that came up for discussion in the Cabinet meeting today.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enc.

The President,

The White House.

(TRANSLATION)

February 6, 1942

Mr. Sumner Welles:

Illustrious friend:

The glorious manifestation of "living forces" stubbornly organized by the totalitarian heads of the Government to give a triumphal welcome to the "conqueror" at Rio, Mr. Ruiz Guíñazú, did not have as many as two hundred persons, despite which fact he gave a beautiful address to his decimated admirers. The watchword is that Castillo imposed his point of view on all America. The press is gagged. Political propaganda before the elections of March 1 is severely controlled and censored. But the truth opens way for itself, slowly and inexorably. This will be the principal objective of Radicalism, in its campaign which is to begin in the Federal capital next week.

Until now no one has spoken - no one has been able or else has had the spirit to do so - dissenting from Castillo's international policy. The socialists - always mediocre - have not dared to come out unmistakably for rupture. I shall have the honor next week, and it will be the "slogan" of the campaign.

The Minister of War, Tonazzi, is very uneasy about
the

the armament drive of the neighbors. He talked sharply to R. Guimazú about it. He replied to a message of mine, expressing similarity of viewpoints. I shall see him this afternoon at four. The legalist generals are still more alarmed.

The Minister of Marine does not hide his displeasure with the United States. But he states clearly that the United States has been opposed chiefly because it is upheld by England. I shall see the British Ambassador. His position, before going to Rio, was one of frank alarm at the Government's totalitarian position. And the same Ambassador - Sir Owey - said to me: I do not understand how the United States can have such limitless patience. Sir Owey also introduced me to Mr. Evelyn B. Baring, cousin of Lord Halifax, who asked the English ambassador in the United States if he could travel through Latin America as an observer. He is a frank man. He states that England is only interested in Argentine meat and, so far as possible, in preserving its customers and markets in America in order, so far as is humanly possible, to prevent the United States from absorbing them...This is logical. But if that English interest becomes rigid, it may come to a clash with that of the United States, something absurd, and which I consider
absolutely

absolutely impossible. There are men like Mr. Castillo's aide-de-camp who assert that the Argentine Government is not interested in arms purchases in the United States, since it can make them whenever it wishes in Germany and Italy. But serious people, in order to counteract the impression of Rio, use the argument about England, not only as a support, but as an advantage to our old customers...The argument is constantly receiving encouragement. And it is becoming distorted. The former Argentine Ambassador in London, Mr. Le Breton - whom you know - has heard the same argument. Le Breton is on the line of resistance. Where Pinedo, Julio Roca, Julio Noble and the huge majority of the country are. I believe that this "English danger" may deserve attention, since you know that in Argentina the interest of the stock-raisers is usually the most intolerant, and any injury to their interests will help those who are fighting to overthrow Castillo.

Your statements made yesterday, carried by the Associated Press, concerning the entry of citizens of the Axis countries into Argentina, were very opportune, since the Investigating Commission is considering it right now, particularly as respects the border with Brazil.

The

The Governor of Rio Grande do Sul is very worried about this exodus. I will talk to Tonazzi about this also. And about the complications which it might cause in our foreign relations.

The Government is taking a series of measures regarding exportation. Among them, the naming of an Investigating Commission in the Ministry of the Interior, the chairman appointed being Mr. Castells, whose law office defended the sailors from the "Graf Spee" who fled from Martín García - a matter which had repercussions in the Chamber of Deputies. The only visible action of this Commission has been to suppress the communist newspaper "La Hora".

The Government will go to any excess in the March 1 election to assure its majority in the Chamber of Deputies, and will thus have its policy at Rio de Janeiro approved.

The Government is preparing federal interventions in the two provinces still governed by Radicalism, - Entre Ríos and Córdoba.

Please accept (etc.)

DAMONTE TABORDA

TR:AVA:MH

PSF State Welles Folder

February 21, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

I am returning to you herewith David Gray's letter to you of January 27.

X Ireland Folder

In reply to the specific inquiries contained in your memorandum:

(a) To embargo oil products to countries not receiving lease-lend aid would prevent oil shipments reaching Spain and Portugal, which would be contrary to our present policy--a policy regarding which the British are particularly insistent and which I believe to be wise under present conditions.

I think it would be unwise to place any specific embargo on oil products to Ireland.

(b) We have previously stated that we would do what we could to assist Ireland in obtaining food-stuffs. If we insist that unarmed neutral ships--namely, Irish ships--must be kept outside of American convoys, it would probably defeat our own purpose as above stated.

The President

The White House.

I have informed General Marshall of Mr. Gray's suggestion in regard to liaison between the American and British forces on the one hand, and Irish forces on the other. You may wish to send specific instructions, through him, to the American commanding officer. I think it would be helpful.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

SUMNER WELLES

Enc.

PSF Miller
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SW
OK
JHR

February 22, 1942.

My dear Mr. President:

The Administrator of Shipping has now advised the Department of State that the S.S. Brasil will not be available to be used for the exchange of diplomats. At the time the Department was notified, it was thought that similar accommodations, possibly on two smaller boats, might be arranged. This now appears to be impractical of arrangement. In consequence, the Department is faced with the recurrence of a problem for which it is very difficult to find a solution, and therefore I am presenting to you an alternative suggestion.

The Swedish Government has offered to charter us the S.S. Drottningholm, now lying in Göteborg Harbor, Sweden. It has the disadvantages of flying a neutral flag and of being manned by persons not ultimately in the control of the American Government. It is of course
advisable

The President,

The White House.

advisable that on a voyage of this kind the vessel be under the control of the American Government.

On the other hand the vessel is available and has a normal passenger capacity of 972 persons. Two hundred more persons might be accommodated on cots, or a total approximate capacity of 1,172. The maximum number we will probably need will be a vessel for 1,400. How it will be pared down from 1,400 to 1,172 is not now apparent.

The Department has been planning upon the departure from the United States on the trip to Lisbon for the first week of April. About five weeks would elapse before that date. It will take nearly a month to make the arrangements for safe conducts and the multitude of other necessary details in connection with a voyage of this character. Consequently it becomes urgent for the Department to have some definite allocation of shipping which will be used for the two exchanges, one voyage to Lisbon and the other voyage to Lourenço Marques with the Japanese and to get Joe Grew.

If you see no objection in view of the circumstances I have indicated, may I have your authorization to inform the Administrator of Shipping that this suggestion meets
with

-3-

with your approval in order that he may make the proper arrangements to charter the Drottingholm and place that vessel at the disposal of the Department of State for the duration necessary to effect a complete exchange of all the diplomatic and consular personnel involved.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

Sumner Welles

PSF: Welles Folder
SH
OK
JDR

February 24, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

From many quarters the Department is being urged to encourage a "Free Italy" movement embodied in a committee headed by Count Carlo Sforza. A careful review indicates him as the outstanding anti-Fascist leader; no other leader is in sight.

The political advantages of having a custodian for anti-Axis Italian sentiment are obvious. It would stiffen Italian-American sentiment; it might be of use in galvanizing anti-Axis elements in Italy; it could be of distinct use in mobilizing some two hundred thousand Italian prisoners held in the Near East and India. Practically everyone we have consulted agrees with this, including Bill Phillips.

Immediately after there would probably emerge the question of the possible organization of an Italian legion whose immediate effect would be more political and psychological than military, though it might prove a useful nucleus.

The President,

The White House.

-2-

Sforza is acceptable to the British who have, indeed, encouraged him in considerable degree already.

Donovan's people, O.F.F. and State agree. The War Department has no opinion but is chary of organizing foreign legions until the equipment situation is easier.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 2, 1942

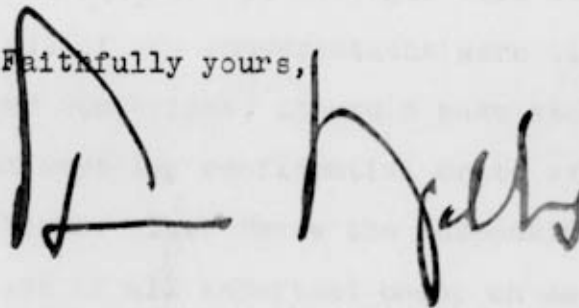
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Personal*

My dear Mr. President:

I have read with much interest Herbert Pell's letter to you of February 10. In accordance with the request contained in your memorandum of February 27, I am returning his letter herewith.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. H. Hays'.

Enc.

The President,
The White House.

Lisbon, Portugal
February 10, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

I have been for almost two months practically out of touch with the United States. After Hitler declared war our only means of communication was by telephone to Berne, from whence our messages were cabled to Washington. As all of our conversations were listened to by the Germans and Hungarians, it would have been manifestly unwise to send anything confidential or to ask for any detailed instructions. This threw the responsibility of most decisions, and of all important ones, on me.

When relations were broken the Hungarian Prime Minister told me that he thought we would leave Hungary in a couple of weeks. The process of arranging for a special train to Lisbon and getting the necessary visas took something over a month, although I did everything that was possible to hurry them, as I was afraid that the Germans would force the Hungarians to keep us under restraint as hostages for a very long time. I was responsible for about twenty five Americans connected with the Legation.

I arrived in Budapest last spring in a small car with practically no baggage, but many of the staff had most of their possessions there. I felt that the retention of their property in Hungary during the war would be a serious hardship for them, so I insisted on adequate baggage accommodations to transport their things. From beginning to end the Hungarian Government was extremely courteous and helpful but, like any other, required continual prodding. A few days before we left, the Germans actually did protest, but fortunately arrangements had gone so far they did not press their demand and force the Hungarians to recede from their agreement with me.

I am happy to say that my Legation was the first to arrive at Lisbon, and I imagine will be the only one which was able to get here without serious sacrifice of personal property.

The Hungarian attitude was peculiar and if it had not been so pathetic would have been ridiculously funny. For over a month after the declaration of war members of the Legation, and their wives and children, went freely around Budapest--not one of them saw a single sign of hostility and each was frequently a center of friendly discussion. It was impossible to go into a store without being surrounded by the shop people and customers, profusely expressing regret at the course which had been

forced on their country. We all received presents, messages and visits. My own rooms looked like a florist shop. The day after the declaration of war a Hungarian officer in uniform called on me. At one time or another I received sympathetic visits from members of the Government, the Cardinal Patriarch, three out of four members of the Habsburg family resident in Hungary, business leaders, and all but one of the Hungarian aristocrats of my acquaintance. They were all outspoken in their feelings. This performance was carried to such length that the German Legation protested, and we were told that our entire Legation would be moved to a hotel on the Island in the middle of the Danube. Finally it was agreed, as I was the most conspicuous, that I should alone be made the scapegoat and be asked to remain incommunicado in my rooms at the Ritz. I was left, of course, the privilege of communicating with the Legation. I accepted these conditions because I thought it was important to have the staff free to move in the city if possible, and also because I did not wish unduly to arouse hostility which might effectively defer our departure.

I was a happy man when I saw Nice through the car window and realized that I had the Axis behind me. Now that I have brought the Legation to Portugal safely,

without suffering or loss, I feel that my responsibility is pretty well ended.

I do not know when we will get to America, or when it will be possible to see you, or even to communicate with you again, so I am taking advantage of Ambassador Weddell's American flight to send this letter, for the length of which I apologize.

A great many Hungarians told me that superior German officers with whom they had talked, expressed no hope of ultimate German victory and seemed to be considering the possibility of a serious defeat. I have just heard the same thing expressed by a Swiss businessman who has been dealing with German industrialists. I think there is no doubt that we can look forward with absolute certainty to a victory as complete as we want to make it. Frankly, I hope that we will make it very complete indeed.

I fear that Europe will have to be rebuilt practically from the ground up. You must not think of the German policies from the point of view of an intelligent statesman. In considering the course of the Nazi Government you will get less and less help from your knowledge of economics or of politics and should rely more and more on what you know of mental aberration. It is by no means impossible that in their retreat, in the face of final defeat, the Germans will destroy every city

in that part of Europe which they control, not excepting Italy and the other Axis countries. It is no answer to say that the Army would take control from the Nazis, because although German officers might not give orders for the burning of cities, they certainly would not detail large numbers of men to put out conflagrations. It is quite possible that they will even destroy their own cities. The desire for destruction, like sadism, is a thing which can be aroused much more easily than we like to think.

In any case, the rebuilding and reshaping of Europe must be directed by the United States. For the next thousand years the course of the white race will be shaped for good or evil by the course of the United States during the next fifty. This is a responsibility we cannot escape. We will be responsible either for anarchy or for the highest civilization the world has ever known. In either case we will be responsible. To default is to decide for anarchy. There is no use blinking the fact that the Germans have finally destroyed the moribund bourgeois civilization. Another effort to revive it, to pull down the shutters, to repeat the cowardly cry, "back to normalcy" will take us much further back than I dare to contemplate.

I need not tell you that I am entirely at your disposal. I hope that you will be able to find some use

for such capacities as I have.

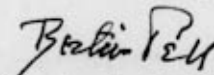
I am extremely proud to have been a humble part of that administration which just before the ultimate catastrophe prepared the United States to lead the new world.

Don't forget that I am an old friend anxious to help, not only to acquire a titulus tumuli, but, I think I can honestly say, inspired by a real desire to serve my country.

Olive sends her best.

I am

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Herbert Pell". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "Herbert" written in a larger, more prominent hand than the last name "Pell".

Herbert Pell

The President,

The White House.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 27, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

SUMNER WELLES:

TO READ AND RETURN.

F.D.R.

Letter from Bertie Pell, Legation,
Lisbon, Portugal. 2/10/42

(To go in speech material when S.W.
returns to us)

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*file
personal*

March 4, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE

In view of the position taken by the Secretary of the Interior in his letter of February 27th, I think we had better go ahead with the announcement of the joint communiqué with the British. The Secretary of the Interior does not mention in any way the necessity for and soundness of the survey. Apparently his entire answer is devoted to a personal attack on Mr. Taussig.

In the joint communiqué and in the press release it should be made abundantly clear that this study relates to the whole of the Caribbean area -- that is to say, the economic and social problems of a very large number of human beings in British, Dutch, French and American islands, and in the Republics of Santa Domingo, Haiti, Cuba and possibly Venezuela; that the study is intended to improve

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

-2-

the standards of living in all of the islands and countries concerned; and, finally, that the proposed Commission does not have any authority to put the recommendation into effect.

You might send a copy of this whole thing to Rex Tugwell, the Governor of Puerto Rico.

F. D. R.

157- Teller's Journal
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

February 28, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

For your convenient reference, I am sending you herewith a copy of your memorandum to me of February 9 with regard to the proposed joint communiqué to be issued by the United States and British Governments concerning the appointment of a joint Anglo-American Caribbean Commission.

As soon as I received your memorandum of February 9 I sent a letter to Secretary Ickes enclosing copies of my letter to you of February 4 and of the enclosures thereto, and stated that I was sending these papers to him by your direction in order that he might be assured that the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior was in no way affected by the steps proposed, and that it was your desire that the Governor of Puerto Rico be likewise satisfied that his jurisdiction was in no way impinged upon.

I had no acknowledgment from Secretary Ickes of this letter for over a week, and I consequently spoke with him personally. He told me that he had received

The President,

The White House.

the letter and that he believed it was under consideration by the Division of Territories in the Interior Department. He told me that he would look into the matter further.

When another week passed without any further message from Secretary Ickes, I spoke with him again on the telephone and suggested that it would be very helpful if he, himself, would draft the suggested statement on Puerto Rico which you desired, making it clear to the people of Puerto Rico that the creation of these commissions, far from prejudicing their interests, would on the whole greatly redound to the benefit of the Puerto Rican people. I mentioned that Rex Tugwell had told me that political agitation concerning these suggested commissions had completely died down in Puerto Rico and that he anticipated no further trouble.

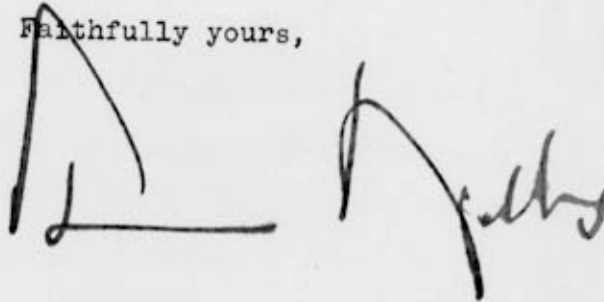
Today I have received, under date of February 27, a letter from Secretary Ickes, of which I enclose a copy for your information.

Secretary Ickes' letter, as you will see, does not deal with the merits of the steps which you propose to take, but is devoted solely to a violent diatribe against Charles Taussig. In view of all of these circumstances, in view of the long delay which has now occurred, and in

view of the fact that Mr. Caine, one of the British Commissioners, is due to arrive tomorrow in the United States, do you not feel that it would be well for me to agree immediately with Lord Halifax upon a date for the issuance of the proposed joint communiqué.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'D. H. Caine', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned to the right of the typed phrase 'Faithfully yours,'.

Encs.

COPY

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 9, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

SUMNER WELLES:

Please take this up, before any joint communique is issued, with the Secretary of the Interior and the Governor of Puerto Rico. I don't want a blast from either of them on the ground that they knew nothing about it. There is no need for a blast if they understand that the Interior Department's toes and the Puerto Rican toes are adequately guarded from being stepped on.

F.D.R.

COPY

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

February 27, 1942

My dear Mr. Secretary:

It is embarrassing to me to answer your letter of February 11 in the only way in which I can conscientiously answer it. I recognize, of course, the President's right to set up, in collaboration with the British Government, the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, and I accept in full good faith his assurance, through you, that "the steps contemplated do not in any way impinge upon the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior or upon that of the Governor of Puerto Rico." I know that the President does not intend that there shall be any conflict of jurisdiction, and the fact that he has named Governor Tugwell as a member of the Commission is in earnest of his own good faith in the matter.

However, during my nine years here, I have seen even the authority of the President disregarded and sometimes openly flouted. I have witnessed this in too many instances not to be fully aware that policies do not execute themselves. Men so naturally reach for power that they are willing to run the risk that is involved in encroaching upon the jurisdiction of another. They will take the chance of not being called to account.

So the important thing to me is not the intended extent of the power that may be granted, but the individual who is to exercise it. Unfortunately, my experiences with Mr. Taussig give me no confidence that he will refrain from reaching out for whatever he may desire to seize. He is an intriguer by nature. He loves to feel that he is at the center of great events and he would rather whisper than hold a frank, open conversation. I as thoroughly distrust his motives as I dislike his method of operating.

Without my being advised, let alone consulted, I discovered that Mr. Taussig was embarked upon a survey of Caribbean conditions which naturally was of interest to the head of the department within whose jurisdiction Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands lie. I do not know

whether it was as a part of Mr. Taussig's duty or merely a coincidence that, during that investigation, he spent some time in the Virgin Islands plotting with the then Governor Cramer to discredit my administration. During this same period he was plotting with another member of my staff to have the Division of Territories and Islands taken from Interior and made an independent agency. For some reason, from the very beginning, he has been antagonistic to this Department, or at least to its head.

I learned indirectly that Mr. Taussig had prepared his report on the Caribbean situation and, through the President, I asked for, and after some difficulty succeeded in obtaining, the first part of that report. The second, and the only really important part thereof, I have never seen. I understand that in that second part there might be some clue to what Mr. Taussig really had in mind, and perhaps still now has in mind, with respect to the Caribbean area.

It is with very real regret that I cannot bring myself to believe that Mr. Taussig, as the co-chairman of this commission, will not "in any way impinge upon the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior or upon that of the Governor of Puerto Rico." I wish that I did not believe, as I do, that this is precisely what he will do, unless someone holds him in check. And people are so busy in Washington these days that he would probably be forgotten after he gets his mandate until he gets out of bounds so far that protests will, of necessity, have to be made.

As I have said, I do not doubt the good faith of the President in this matter and I want to assure you that I do not doubt yours. But, unfortunately, I know my Mr. Taussig.

Sincerely yours,

HAROLD L. ICKES
Secretary of the Interior

Hon. Sumner Welles,
Acting Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.