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ROOSEVELT TO CHURCHILL
SEPTEMBER 1939 - DECEMBER 1940

Microfilmed at The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York

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11 September 1939

Letter from President Roosevelt to Winston Churchill,
11 September 1939.

PRIVATE

September 11, 1939.

My dear Churchill:-

It is because you and I occupied similar positions in the World War that I want you to know how glad I am that you are back again in the Admiralty. Your problems are, I realize, complicated by new factors but the essential is not very different. What I want you and the Prime Minister to know is that I shall at all times welcome it if you will keep me in touch personally with anything you want me to know about. You can always send sealed letters through your pouch or my pouch.

I am glad you did the Marlboro volumes before this thing started -- and I much enjoyed reading them.

With my sincere regards,

Faithfully yours,

The Right Honorable
Winston Churchill, P.C., O.M.,
First Lord of the Admiralty,
London,
England.

5 March 1940

Copy of telegram #418 from Roosevelt to Churchill,
dated 5 March 1940.

For exchange of letters between President Roosevelt and
Secretary of State Hull concerning this telegram, see
correspondence filed under date of 11 November 1941.

COPY:SS

TELEGRAM SENT

GRAY
March 5, 1940

3 p.m.

AMERICAN EMBASSY

LONDON

418


Your 490, February 28, 8 p.m.

Please convey following message to the Naval Person
from the President.

QUOTE Upon my return to Washington, I received your
message. I deeply appreciate your efforts. I am having
the situation thoroughly studied and will communicate with
you further as soon as possible. END QUOTE

Roosevelt.

HULL

(CWG)

Eu: JDH:DG

PA/D

A-B

**REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED**

0005

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Handwritten: "David Person"

C
O
P
Y

3/5/40

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Adolf Berle asked me to give this to you
this morning.

E. M. W.

(Pencil note)

"O.K.

F.D.R."

C
O
P
Y

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

March 5, 1940

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

Concerning the reply to the message from the "Naval Person", Secretary Hull asks me to suggest the attached cable. It merely buys us another forty-eight hours to work on the situation.

The principal point at issue is the Moore McCormick run to Bergen. If that line keeps its contract with Brazil, and turns over its ships to the Brazilian government, the ^{B'}Gergen run probably would automatically cease. If it is retained, arrangements could be worked out covering the situation: but they will take a few days.

/s/ A. A. B., Jr.

March 5, 1940.

AMERICAN EMBASSY

LONDON

~~REDACTED~~
Your 490, February 28, 8 p.m.

Please convey following message to the Naval
person from the President:

QUOTE Upon my return to Washington, I
received your message. I deeply appreciate
your efforts. I am having the situation
thoroughly studied and will communicate with
you further as soon as possible. END QUOTE

(signed in pencil)

ROOSEVELT

En:JEM:DG

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0008

16 May 1940

Telegram Nr. 872 from Roosevelt to Churchill, dated
16 May 1940.

Answers Churchill's telegram Nr. 1216, 15 May 1940.

For exchange of letters between President Roosevelt and
Secretary of State Hull concerning this telegram, see
correspondence filed under date of 11 November 1941.

**REGRADED
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COPY

GRAY
May 16, 1940

1 p.m.

NO DISTRIBUTION

AMERICAN EMBASSY

LONDON

872

URGENT. [REDACTED] FOR THE AMBASSADOR.

Your 1216, May 15, 6 p.m.

Please transmit the following message from the President
to the former naval person:

QUOTE I have just received your message and I am sure it
is unnecessary for me to say that I am most happy to continue
our private correspondence as we have in the past.

I am, of course, giving every possible consideration to the
suggestions made in your message. I shall take up your specific
proposals one by one.

First, with regard to the possible loan of forty or fifty
of our older destroyers. As you know a step of that kind could
not be taken except with the specific authorization of the
Congress and I am not certain that it would be wise for that
suggestion to be made to the Congress at this moment. Further-
more, it seems to me doubtful, from the standpoint of our own
defense requirements, which must inevitably be linked with the
defense requirements of this hemisphere and with our obligations

in the

0010

in the Pacific, whether we could dispose even temporarily of these destroyers. Furthermore, even if we were able to take the step you suggest, it would be at least six or seven weeks at a minimum, as I see it, before these vessels could undertake active service under the British flag.

Second. We are now doing everything within our power to make it possible for the Allied Governments to obtain the latest types of aircraft in the United States.

Third. If Mr. Purvis may receive immediate instructions to discuss the question of anti-aircraft equipment and ammunition with the appropriate authorities here in Washington, the most favorable consideration will be given to the request made in the light of our own defense needs and requirements.

Fourth. Mr. Purvis has already taken up with the appropriate authorities here the purchase of steel in the United States and I understand that satisfactory arrangements have been made.

Fifth. I shall give further consideration to your suggestion with regard to the visit of the United States Squadron to Irish ports.

Sixth. As you know, the American fleet is now concentrated at Hawaii where it will remain at least for the time being.

I shall communicate with you again as soon as I feel able to make a final decision with regard to some of the other matters dealt with in your message and I hope you will feel free to communicate with me in this way at any time.

- 3 -

The best of luck to you. UNQUOTE

Franklin Roosevelt.

HULL

(SW)

U:SW:IJ

0012

30 May 1940

Letter from Roosevelt to Churchill, dated 30 May 1940.

Answers Churchill's letter of 7 May 1940, enclosing a report "The Battle of the River Plate."

24 13
4
May 30, 1940.

My dear Churchill:-

Ever so many thanks for that remarkably interesting story of the Battle of the River Plate -- a grand job by your three cruisers.

You are much in my thoughts.
I need not tell you that.

As ever yours,

Right Honorable Winston Churchill,
Prime Minister,
London,
England.

0014

13 June 1940

Telegrams from the President to Prime Minister Churchill
and Prime Minister Reynaud, dated 13 June 1940.

0015

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

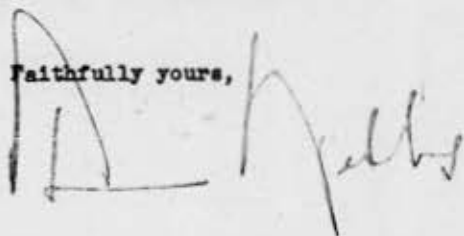
June 13, 1940

My dear Mr. President:

In accordance with your request, I am returning to you herewith the original drafts of the telegrams sent this morning after our conference.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "A. H. Hays". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Encs.

The President,
The White House.

Sand D

Kennedy:

Get following to P. M. as quickly as possible but with full secrecy:

Quats I have sent following to
Byrnes Subquats etc.

I cannot send squadron to

Berhaven as we have squadron off
Portugal and another visiting East
Coast South America - ~~another~~ Atlantic
Patrol from Havana Section to Trinidad is
~~and~~ in my judgment important
as it continues to provide widely
safely zone. Furthermore I think you
will agree that maintenance of
fleet in Hawaii is vital.

NOT TO BE RECORDED OR CONFIRMED UNTIL THIS COUPON HAS BEEN DETACHED BY THE TELEGRAPH OPERATOR

PREPARING OFFICE
WILL INDICATE WHETHER
Collect
Charge Department
OR
Charge to
\$

TELEGRAM SENT

TO BE TRANSMITTED
CONFIDENTIAL CODE
NONCONFIDENTIAL CODE
PARTIAL
PLAIN

~~Department of State~~

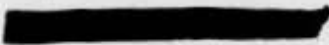
THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington,

June 13, 1940

AMERICAN EMBASSY

PARIS

 FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE
PRESIDENT.

Please do whatever may be possible to communicate
the following message immediately to the Prime Minister:

QUOTE Your message ^{of June 10} has moved me very deeply. As I
have already stated to you and to Mr. Churchill, this
Government is doing everything in its power to make avail-
able to the Allied Governments the material they so urgently
require and our efforts to do still more are being re-
doubled. *This is so because of our faith in and our support
of the ideals for which the Allies are fighting.*

The magnificent resistance of the French ^{and British} armies has
profoundly impressed the American people. [They hope and
they believe that the efforts of the Allied Governments
to overcome the powers which are seeking to impose on the
entire world the policies of force and tyranny can and must
be successful in order that the cause of human liberty and

Enciphered by _____

Sent by operator _____ M. _____ 19 _____

D. O. B.—No. 50

1-1402 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

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0019

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PREPARING OFFICE
WILL INDICATE WHETHER
Collect
Charge Department
OR
Charge to
\$

TELEGRAM SENT

Department of State

THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington,

TO BE TRANSMITTED
CONFIDENTIAL CODE
NONCONFIDENTIAL CODE
PARTIAL
PLAIN

-2-

democracy may triumph and thereby real peace may once again be established. I have the firm conviction that however desperate or dark the situation may now seem, if the conflict is continued with the magnificent courage so far displayed, the forces of evil cannot at the end prevail.]

UNQUOTE

When this message is delivered please make it entirely clear that it is personal and private and not for publication.

U:SW:MW

Enciphered by

Sent by operator M., 19.....

D. C. R.—No. 20

3-5452 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

0020

Undated
(12 July 1940)

Undated letter from Roosevelt to Lord Lothian, British Embassy, requesting him to express appreciation to Churchill.

Answers Lord Lothian's letter of 9 July 1940, transmitting a message to the President from Churchill.

My dear Lord Lothian:

Thank you for your letter of July 6th in which you were good enough to inform me of the appointment of the Duke of Windsor as Governor of the Bahamas. Will you express my appreciation to the Prime Minister for his thoughtfulness in desiring me to have advance information in this matter.

Very sincerely yours,

His Excellency
The Right Honourable
The Marquess of Lothian, G.C.B.,
British Ambassador.

813
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 11, 1940

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE SECRETARY OF STATE

For preparation of reply
to Lothian.

F. D. R.

Enclosures

fdp/tab

Secret letter to the President 7/9/40 from Lord Lothian, British Embassy, enclosing a copy of a telegram to the President from the Prime Minister regarding the appt. of the Duke of Windsor as Governor of the Bahamas. ~~It~~ Says the Prime Minister was particularly anxious that the P. should have advance information of this appt. However due to the receipt of the message in a corrupt form and also due to leakage it was necessary to arrange for the appt. to be announced "this evening by the British Broadcasting Company."

*file
personal*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

July 12, 1940

My dear Mr. President:

With reference to your memorandum of July 11, 1940,
I am returning herewith Lord Lothian's letter, together
with a draft of a reply which you may care to send to
him.

Faithfully yours,

Cordeell Hull

Enclosures:

1. From Lord Lothian,
July 9, 1940.
2. Draft.

The President,

The White House.

JUL 12 1940

My dear Mr. President:

With reference to your memorandum of July 11, 1940,
I am returning herewith Lord Lothian's letter, together
with a draft of a reply which you may care to send to
him.

Faithfully yours,

Cordell Hull

Enclosures:

1. From Lord Lothian,
July 9, 1940.
2. Draft.

The President,
The White House.

0025

19 August 1940

Letters from Roosevelt to Churchill (through Ambassador Kennedy) and Mackenzie King, dated 19 August 1940, enclosing copy of Alexander Kirk's letter of 29 July 1940 to the President.

Hyde Park, N. Y.,
August 19, 1940.

My dear Churchill:-

I think this will interest you.
It was over two weeks on its way from Berlin
and coming from an American, long a resident in
Germany, it has especial value. The writer was,
I think, inclined to be pro-Nazi up to the time
of the Munich Conference.

We are getting excellent reports
of the fine job your Air Force has done the
past week.

As ever yours,

The Right Honorable Winston Churchill, R.C.,
Prime Minister,
London,
England.

(Enclosure) Copy of Alexander Kirk's letter of July 29, 1940.

0027

Hyde Park, N. Y.,
August 18, 1940.

Dear Mackenzie:-

I think this will interest you.
It was over two weeks on its way from Berlin
and coming from an American, long a resident
in Germany, it has especial value. The
writer was, I think, inclined to be pro-Nazi
up to the time of the Munich Conference.

As ever yours,

The Right Honorable
William Lyon Mackenzie King, C.M.G.,
Prime Minister of Canada,
Ottawa,
Ontario,
Canada.

(Enclosure) Copy of Alexander Kirk's letter of July 29, 1940.

Hyde Park, N. Y.,
August 19, 1940.

Dear Alex:-

It is good, indeed, to get your letter --
and your "evaluation" of the situation conforms
to my own thinking.

You will have read of my meeting with
Mackenzie King on Saturday. A complete meeting
of the minds is always satisfactory and, in-
cidental, both the American and Canadian
programs are doing well.

My best wishes to you,

Always sincerely,

Alexander Kirk, Esq.,
American Embassy,
Berlin,
Germany.

Berlin, July 29, 1940.

My dear Mr. President:

I fully realize that you are not to be importuned with lengthy or superfluous messages but there is a matter much on my mind and one which I dare not treat by telegraphic report.

It is perhaps anomalous that at a time when the entire world seems to be concentrated on the mechanics of war the main emphasis in rumor and report, at least insofar as Berlin is concerned, has lately been on the subject of peace between England and Germany. It is futile to argue about the possible origin of these rumors for it is as easy to find support for the opinion that they are inspired as it is to believe that they are the manifestation of a natural inclination on

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The President,

The White House.

0030

the part of war-tired peoples. It is useless also to test the sincerity of these expressions, for again it is not only impossible to place the responsibility for their utterance on any particular source, but also to strike an accurate balance of the relative advantages from the German standpoint of an immediate peace with England. The fact remains that talk is insistent on this subject and within the last few days three private individuals, an American, a Hollander and a Swede, have brought me stories of peace efforts allegedly sponsored by high Nazi officials, but decidedly not by Hitler himself -- stories which I could not report in detail owing to the certain danger involved to the individuals themselves.

The purpose of this letter, however, is not to evaluate these rumored activities in relation to Nazi aims or policies. My purpose is solely to register my profound conviction that any concession on the part of the British Government now would destroy forever the chance of eradicating the forces which are threatening our own civilization. In saying this I am not thinking of England itself for, if I did, I might hesitate at the thought of the terrific devastation which may well be in prospect and of which the beginning is now being set

from

0031

from week to week. Hitler has always tried to attain his aims at the lowest possible cost to himself and has so far triumphed in that policy, but there has never been any doubt that in the last analysis he would and he must pay any price to attain his ends if they can not be otherwise achieved. There is every reason to believe that he wants to finish this particular phase of the war, whether for the purpose of turning his war machine in other directions or of indulging in expressing his colossal ego through rebuilding in his own way on the ruins of what he will have destroyed. A short war requires, in the first place, the speedy subjugation of England either through the peace he might be ready to negotiate now or through the same or worse methods than those which prevailed in France, and, in the second place, the certainty that with England silenced the forces of democracy would be annihilated. As regards the first requirement, the greatest triumph for Hitler would be a humiliating and unjust peace wrenched from England without a fight, for the hope is justified that even the conquest of the British Isles need not end resistance. As for the second requirement the greatest factor is our own country and, I firmly believe, the controlling factor. Hitler has never lost sight of the United States although there are times when

he

0032

he believes that he can disregard our part on the ground of the time element involved. Within the last few weeks, however, I feel that his anxiety on our account has redoubled. He sees what we are doing and that we shall not stop, and he must know that we constitute a problem which even he can not solve. It is natural to say that there is a limit to a one-man show and that in time Hitler must eradicate himself. That may be true but the rate of his progress reduces the saving grace of the time factor and the force which he has developed can be stopped only by force. The first stand in this struggle is for England to hold out against any peace efforts, and the second is for the British to exert all their material and moral equipment to resist an attack and continue the fight. The greatest part, however, I believe is ours. We must encourage in every way those who are in the first line of battle. We must prove our purpose in fact and example and we must prove it speedily and unflaggingly. We must hold to the principles which we know are right although their implementation may require newer methods and at the right moment we must be ready to say the word and do the deed that will save from destruction all that we know makes life a good and noble thing. It is the

conviction

conviction of the significance of our part in the struggle, both for our own salvation as well as for the benefit of the world, that induces me to write and I hope that you will consider what I have said in that light.

I can not close without expressing to you my gratitude for the consideration which you showed me during my stay in Washington and I need not say how gratified I am that the continuity of your policies, of which we ourselves were always assured, has now been brought to the conviction of the governments and peoples abroad.

Very faithfully yours,

Alexander Kirk.

Kirks
Summary
4

August 23, 1940.

Dear Joe:-

The President has asked me to send you the enclosed letter for Mr. Churchill. Will you please be good enough to see that he gets it?

We are all thinking of you much these days.

With affectionate regards in which the President joins,

As ever,

Honorable Joseph P. Kennedy,
American Embassy,
London,
England.

(Enclosure)

0035

23 September 1940

Telegram Nr. 3166 from Roosevelt to Churchill, dated
23 September 1940.

Answered by Churchill's telegram of 24 September 1940--
filed herein.

0036

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

September 23, 1940

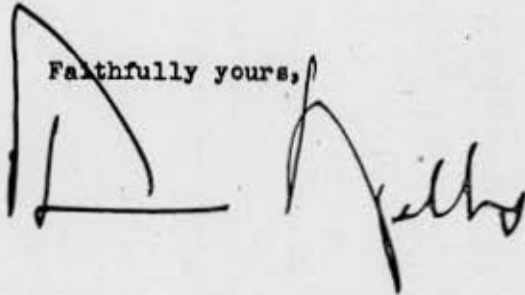
My dear Mr. President:

I am submitting to you herewith a suggested answer to Mr. Churchill's message to you of September 22.

General Marshall has told me that the loading of these rifles is going on day and night and that the details for the transfer of the rifles to the British Purchasing Commission are being concluded through the U. S. Steel Corporation.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

A large, stylized handwritten signature, likely of Cordell Hull, written in dark ink. The signature is composed of several sweeping strokes, with a prominent 'H' and a long, trailing flourish.

Enc.

The President,
The White House.

0037

H. H. H.

September 23, 1940

My dear Mr. President:

I am submitting to you herewith a suggested answer to Mr. Churchill's message to you of September 22.

General Marshall has told me that the loading of these rifles is going on day and night and that the details for the transfer of the rifles to the British Purchasing Commission are being concluded through the U. S. Steel Corporation.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

SUMNER WELLES

Enc.

The President,

The White House.

*For original of this letter and Conf reply to "Former Naval Person" of Sept 22 1940 from HHC.
See: Welles - Drawer 1 - 1940*

0038

September 23, 1940

AMERICAN EMBASSY

LONDON

[REDACTED]
Your 3166, September 22, noon.

PERSONAL AND [REDACTED] FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM
THE PRESIDENT.

QUOTE As soon as your message was received from
Lord Lothian arrangements were undertaken for the re-
lease of the 250,000 Enfield rifles to the Purchasing
Commission. I am informed that the rifles are already
under way to New York for shipment. UNQUOTE

"Roosevelt"

REGRADED
UNCLASSIFIED

"OK"
7 DR"

U:SW:DMK

Original sent to Hon. Sumner Welles
9/24/40
Haw

0039